



THE KING
AND
THE DINOSAUR

Dr. Rafael Socias Pérez





**“THE BEST CONTRIBUTION ONE CAN MAKE TO HUMAN KIND
IS TO AVOID GREAT MEN AND WOMEN BEING FORGOTTEN.”**

I learned that from the king and this story intends to do that.

Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez





FOREWORD

The reader will quickly note the enthusiasm of the biographer, Dr. Rafael Socías. Why wouldn't he be enthused to speak about two of the giants of medicine in the 20th Century? Moreover, he knew both of them personally and worked with one closely. That adds to his enthusiasm a large measure of historical validity.

Too quickly we forget important people whose contributions to progress in medicine have been seminal. They have built foundations upon which many of us have built our careers. We must always be thankful to these giants. Dr. D. Geraint James and Dr. Friedrich Wegener are the two of whom we speak.

Dr. Socías presents particularly personal and intimate portraits of James and Wegener. Years from now, when this book is read by new and aspiring physicians, they will feel as though they knew both personally.

Dr. Socías deserves the thanks of all physicians for composing this fitting tribute and preserving for all time the records of two magnificent physicians.

Richard A. DeRemee, MD

Rochester, Minnesota, USA.

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LONDON AND I





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11 March, 1983. The engines flared up. As the pilot positioned the aircraft on the runway and waited for the tower to give permission for take-off, Dr. Rafael Socías stayed glued to the oval shaped window just above the left wing. Mr. Rafael Montilla, Second Secretary of the Dominican Embassy in the United Kingdom, tried to calm down Rafael. Contrary to the weather report, the sky was cloudy and gusts of wind shook the palm trees. It might rain later that day. Only this morning he had been excited and beaming with anticipation. The future had stretched out like a wide sunlit corridor, becoming wider the further it receded.

The plane gained speed for take-off. His joyous anticipation waned. As the airport seemed to recede from view, the vibrations increased. The rotor blades gained momentum. Rafael's eyes automatically followed the rhythmical turns of the rotors. As they sped through the air they seemed to slice through his thoughts. His excitement fell into neat thin discs and tumbled down. Never before had he known this odd mixture of excitement and sadness. He felt heavy inside, missing already what lay behind. Two tears fell quietly on his hand. He had not been aware how much he belonged to this sunny island. The ferocity of the adventure that lay ahead hit him with full force. The blow shook his courage. Without any certainty of the immediate future he felt suspended between heaven and earth. The courage and illusion that had sustained him start to ooze relentlessly out of him, leaving him defenceless and vulnerable.

With the thunder of the departing plane the voice of his father surged in his mind, reminding him of timely wisdom. "You have decided to challenge your destiny. Only men with firm character can survive this. Man has been able to survive on earth because he has learned to adapt to his environment. The Eskimos have adapted to glaciers as the Taíno Indians did in this Island. You have chosen to challenge your habitat in search of an unknown world. You will be able to survive only if you have a goal and the character to reach it. Fecundity gives you life without you having to pay anything, and earth gives you everything without you having to create anything. But death takes everything away from you if you do not create something productive to keep your memory alive. You will have difficult moments and days of sadness. But do not give up because of that. It will be important for you in order to appreciate success and





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times of happiness.

Do not be afraid of loneliness. It does not exist as long as you have something to love and to live for. And do not forget that there are two things that never go together: mediocrity and talent. Mediocrity is a congenital disease of the spirit, one is born with it and dies with it, and there is no cure against it. Mediocrity conceives envy and envy destroys. Do not make enemies with them. Keep them at a distance; otherwise you would risk being its target. Never underestimate your colleagues. Believe that they are competent and that will make you improve yourself in your profession. Go my son, conquer that unknown world and take with you humility as your shield and honesty as your sword. Go!"

After the first meal a pleasant tiredness set in. The monotonous sound of the aeroplane dulled anxiety, homesickness and excitement. Conversations lost animation and voices dimmed down. Most passengers dozed off, Rafael too. After several hours he felt as if all he was ever going to do for the rest of his life was sit in that uncomfortable seat and fly, never touching heaven or earth, floating forever between waiting and action. Miles flew by and hours froze above the Atlantic Ocean until the loudspeakers announced the flight was approaching destination: Heathrow, London.

Rafael and Mr. Montilla went to deal with Immigration formalities in a state of sleepwalking. Mr Montilla said to Rafael: "Now you have to join this queue. Do you see that man over there? He is an Immigration officer. Tell him "my friend is a diplomat" and he will call me, I will stay here". And Rafael did so: "*Buenos días señor!*" "Good morning sir, what is the purpose of your visit?" Rafael did not understand and said in spanish: "*Mi amigo es diplomático, ése que está allá*" (my friend is a diplomat, that man over there). Rafael himself called Mr. Montilla: "*Montilla, ven acá*" (Montilla, come over). "Good morning sir", Mr. Montilla said, and gave his diplomatic passport to the Immigration officer who replied: "Good morning sir, could you please tell me what the purpose of the gentleman's visit is?" "He is a Dominican medical doctor who is coming to London with the purpose of learning English and taking a medical post-graduate degree". "Thank you. I will grant Mr. Socías a six month tourist visa and he has to renew it at the Foreign Office before it expires. Have a nice day and enjoy your stay in London", said the officer. Mr. Montilla thanked the





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officer and Rafael took his passport saying “*muchas gracias señor*” (thank you very much sir).

They went to Montilla’s house and Mr. Montilla called Dr. Pedro Pablo Paredes and Dr. José Silié Ruiz, Dominican friends of his. They took Rafael to the Shellbourne Hotel, at number 3 Lexham Gardens in South Kensington. It was a small hotel for 45 pounds a week, including breakfast; which belonged to an Indian family. A slim lady handed him a key to a little room. One small window successfully concealed what little light London’s days had to offer. The toilet and the shower were at the end of the corridor. Once the door closed behind her, Rafael fell on the chair. His heart sank, his body cried for rest, his soul felt chilled. Desolation settled in, but just for a little while as Rafael was not prone to having gloomy thoughts. However, this room could overwhelm even his optimism. Slowly, he unpacked and stacked his belongings on the wardrobe shelves.

After ten days in London, Rafael was missing Dominican food and was attacked by an irresistible craving for rice, beans, meat and salad. So far, Big Macs and kidney pies had been his daily diet on the way to Earls Court tube station. On a spontaneous impulse he decided to take another road that day, and came right across a window with the most delicious plates on display. There were five different types of rice, red, black and white beans and all sorts of meat and salad. His heart jumped and without any second thought he decided on treating himself to a scrumptious banquet. Once inside he first blew in his hands to warm them up and his stomach locked in on what looked like his favoured dish. He ordered with sign language. “They are very hot”, the waiter said. Rafael only understood “hot”. Well, hot, that’s just what this cold weather prescribes. The hotter the better, he said to himself. “Yes, hot, okay.”

Rafael paid and rushed back to his little room which would now turn into a secret gourmet niche. Impatiently he ripped the aluminium foil off and breathed deeply over the steaming Styrofoam plates. Ravishingly he devoured a big spoonful of rice, beans and meat. Then it happened. His eyes grew wide and popped out. His nose started running, his throat screamed. Fire consumed mouth and stomach. Fire burned his head and the heat made his body sweat





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profusely. Curses transpired from every tortured nerve. Fire screamed for water. He jumped up and ran to the bathroom. There, under the running faucet, he calmed the burning pain of spicy Indian food. Totally exhausted, he lay down on his bed. The spices had left him devastated. Body and soul had depleted the last grains of strength and left him naked in front of his own doubts and fears, facing an uncertain future in an unknown country.

The telephone rang. Yes, it actually rang! “Hello Rafael, how are you?” “Better than ever” he lied bravely and, trying to steady his voice, “enjoying London”. It was Mr. Rafael Montilla at the other end, from the Dominican Embassy. “What are you doing tonight? Why don’t you come to our party later this evening? There will be a cocktail party given in honour of the Dominican beauty queen Mariasela Álvarez, who has been crowned Miss World 1982, here in London. By the way, there will be lots of Dominican food, merengue and rum.” Rafael felt reborn, his doubts and anxieties brushed away in just a single stroke. “Listen, I will pick you up at eight.” The miraculous voice faded as the telephone clicked, and this previous state of disappointment not like the telephone call, but a million miles away.

At eight o’clock Mr. Montilla came by as promised. The consulate was actually near by, just around the corner at number 103 Lexham Gardens. Once there, Mr. Montilla introduced Rafael to the Consul and to Mariasela Álvarez. “It is a great honour for me to hold the hands of the most beautiful woman in the world”, Rafael greeted the freshly elected beauty queen. Mr. Montilla presented him to the other guests. While talking to Miss World about her trips to France, somebody knocked at the door. A beautiful lady with dark hair and grey-green eyes, short and slim, entered. “That is The Queen”, said Rafael to himself. It was Sofia, the secretary of the Dominican Consul, who caught his attention even more than Miss World.

Mr. Montilla noticed that and introduced Rafael to her: “Sofia, may I introduce Rafael Socías, he is from the Dominican Republic and just came from Santo Domingo two weeks ago, he is a medical doctor”. “Nice to meet you”, said Sofia. “Nice to meet you too, Sofia. Even your name is pretty; but not more than your eyes”. Rafael bent down and kissed her hand. “Sofia has been living in London since 1980, so she can help you find a flat”, Montilla suggested. “Would you do that for me?” Rafael asked her. “Yes why not”, .replied Sofia. “Good, let’s dance





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to celebrate it in advance.” Rafael felt light-headed. Inspired, he had turned into a good talker, a good dancer, somebody, anybody would enjoy to be with. It was a night that healed all of his wounds of that he had been through since he had come to England. The party lasted until midnight, an achievement in a British environment. A night full of merengue, rum and all the Dominican food Rafael had craved for.

Next day Rafael stopped by the consulate to see Sofía. He knocked at the door and Sofía opened it. Rafael asked to see the consul, but he was out. Then she told him that a friend of hers was leaving for Colombia for a two month vacation and would be willing to rent her flat for that period of time. “Splendid”, exclaimed Rafael. “We must celebrate that. What are you doing tonight?”

Rafael agreed to pick her up at seven. They went to the Forum Hotel in Cromwell Road. There, at the pub, they ordered wine and beer and had a wonderful time, talking as old friends. Then Rafael looked into her eyes, smiled and said: “Last night I had a dream and I saw myself in Paradise... and you were there”. Those words moved Sofía in such a way that she was left speechless. And that was rare with her. She couldn’t contain a smile, hoping it to be true and exclaimed: “Oh, it was just a dream”. Rafael immediately replied, “For the brain there is no difference between dreams and reality. It enjoys both the same way.” Rafael, as a medical doctor, gave her a medical answer. Sofía had no choice but to accept his answer, it was scientifically sound and heartily convincing.

At one point he had to go to the bathroom and noticed a beautiful young lady, sitting cross-legged on a Persian carpet under a silken canopy. Coming out of the bathroom, she said to him without even looking at him: “I can read your hand if you wish.” She was a gypsy who spoke to him as if she was looking at him with her mind and not with her eyes. “Sure!” he said. She took his right hand and took a close look at it. With a surprised look she scrutinised the hand, while Rafael felt like a school boy in front of his teacher. “You have a star in your right hand,” the gypsy said admiringly. “What does it mean?” asked Rafael, not understanding. “It means that you will be famous and successful.” “I hope you are right, thank you”, replied Rafael. Returning to their table he told Sofía about the good news. “Is there any place we can go to dance? Since I am going to be





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successful and famous, we ought to celebrate: let's dance." Sofia suggested to go to "La Bamba", a Latin hang out in Earls Court Road.

They took one of those enormous and Black English taxis, big enough to fit all their joy and excitement, with leg space for giants. No king ever felt more king-ly in his carriage, no queen more proud in her Rolls Royce. Their happiness remodelled the dull streets for an instant into chandelier lit promenades. The cab turned into a spacious aristocratic Rolls Royce while they drove through a city which tonight knew no dead end roads or red traffic lights. Nothing could impede the sense of well being. For the moment life was simply too good. True or not, reality or fairy tale, who cares!



The next day Sofia picked him up at 9 o'clock. It was a wonderful new day, certainly. She helped him pack and together they said goodbye to the landlady, to instant coffee, to the smell of curry, to scrambled eggs and instant junk food, to breakfasts that resembled a hospital diet rather than healthy food. The cab took them to number 57 Evelyn Gardens, in South Kensington. The room was on the third floor, not wider than an arm's length, equipped with a stove and a little grill, a table, a chair, a small sofa and a wash-basin. And yet, Rafael realised that being comfortable was not defined by the size of a room by the degree of one's contentment. This small room was able to contain a whole new life. One night Rafael sat down and wrote to his father.

Dear papa

I hope you are well and my brothers and sisters too. I miss all of you so much from this lovely place. London is an imperial city. It is the cosmopolitan heart of England, centre of wealth, history, science, and diplomacy, with a difficult language and terrible weather. But do not worry dad, I am not intimidated, at least not yet. "Any man is set to conquer the world", you said one day, and this is the time for me to prove it; isn't it?

Since I came to London I have not seen the sun or the moon, and at night there are no stars in the sky. It is always cold, cloudy and raining but without thunderstorms. The British speak in low voice and so far I have not heard a car horn or a dog barking. This is a very quiet city for a Dominican like me.

In this country everything is in the opposite direction. They drive on the left side and the steering wheel is on the right. I have seen the river Thames run from the sea to in-land, can you believe that? And when the telephone tone sounds engaged for us, here it is ringing. The English like to talk while they are eating, and use the fork up side down with the left hand, even if they are right handed. But they are very polite and helpful, and if they ask you for something they always say: could you please? , Would you mind? May I have? I am sorry and excuse me.

The currency is the Sterling pound. There are bills of 50, 20, 10, 5 and one



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pound. There are one hundred pennies in a pound and there are 50, 20, 10, 5, 1 and 1/2 penny coins!

Last week I went to the Gloucester Road tube station in South Kensington to buy a weekly ticket and instead of weekly I said “a quickly ticket”. The ticket officer just looked at me and said: “We do not have it. Next please”. I had to walk to the Hammersmith School on foot. Next day I went to South Thames College and after the class I told my teacher Judith what has happened to me with the ticket. She then told me how to buy a ticket in the United Kingdom. So, next morning I went to the same tube station to buy the ticket and I said to the same ticket officer: “Good morning, sir. May I have a zone one and two weekly ticket, please?” “Yes, sure, it is three pounds and fifty Penny”. “Here you are.” and I paid the ticket and he said to me: “Thank you very much. Have a nice day.” “You too, sir”.

The underground tube station system is divided into four zones, from zone one or inner zone to the peripheral zone, and each zone has a price. Most of the tube stations are very nice but others are too old. The British are always reading a book or a newspaper while they are travelling in the train. There is a coach for smokers which is full of smoke; you can not even see the person next to you.

I have begun my English lessons every morning at the South Thames College in Putney, from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon and it costs £15pounds every 3 months; and in the afternoon at Hammersmith School from 3:00 to 5:00 pm for £20 pounds every 3 months. I will start in September a part-time English course for foreign doctors at Southwark College. Oh papa, what a difficult language. They write words, parts of which you do not pronounce and pronounce parts of words that are not written. Different words have almost the same pronunciation; moreover, there are words with more than one meaning. This is a barbarian language!

There is a Royal Family here, Her Majesty is Queen Elizabeth II and her husband is Prince Phillip. They have three sons and one daughter; Charles, Andrew, Edward and Anna. Prince Charles is the oldest and in 1980 he married Lady Diana Spencer. She is so pretty, with blond hair, blue eyes, tall and slim. They have one son: Prince William. The Queen Mother, also called Elizabeth,





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is so sweet and always smiling, she is my favourite. Everybody loves the Royal Family and I have started to love them too.

The government is headed by a woman! Mrs. Margaret Thatcher; called “the Iron Lady”. There is a miners’ strike going on right now, because she closed down some coal mines and I think she is not going to change her mind. She is made of steel!

Oh papa! You won’t believe one of the games they play here. It is called cricket; it is like a baseball game. What a boring and complicated game! In the middle of the play ground or pitch are two creases or base separated by 22 yards and each one have a wicket which is 3 stumps with two small pieces of wood or bails on the top. The aim of the game is to knock down the bails. On the field there are eleven players, including two pitchers or bowlers, two batsmen, one in each crease and one wicket keeper or catcher, who is the only one that wears gloves. The ball is solid like a rock and the bat is flat like paddle. They only play two innings and in one inning they have to get ten of the batters out. The bowler starts to run and then jumps and throws the ball. If the ball knocks down the bails, the batsman is out. But if he hits the ball, it does not matter where to, and the ball touches ground, he starts to run to reach the other end of the pitch with his bat to make one run until the ball comes back to the wicket keeper. In one inning they can make more than five hundred runs!

The game could last five days or more! There is more, at 5:00 pm the game is stopped to have tea! Can you believe that? The English also like soccer or football but with much more passion than cricket, some of their fans are called “hooligans”. They are escorted by police on horseback before and after the game. Do you know what they do at the end of the game? They burn down the stadium and destroy the city! Last night I saw on television a policeman running in the middle of the pitch with his head in flames. The policemen are unarmed; they only carry a small telephone up in the right shoulder. There are also policewomen or PW. No one in this country can carry or possess a gun, it is forbidden by law.

This is a safe country. It only has four television channels: The Thames Channel, Channel Four, BBC one and BBC two. Channels only air news, education-





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al and entertainment programs, with zero violence. Rambo films are banned in this country. At lunchtime and after work, the English like to go the pub. The pub is like a bar or canteen where they can have beers with peanuts, sandwiches and salads. The pub is open from 11.00 AM to 3.00 PM and it opens again from 5.30 PM. to 11.00 PM. At 10.30 the bell rings and everybody stands up and runs to buy the last drink.

The first thing I had to do when I came to London was to register at the nearest police station and with a GP or general practitioner, who is the doctor of the area where I live. The British health system is different to the American health system, because there are no medical residences for doctors to do their medical postgraduate studies like in America.

The medical staffs in the hospital were composed of: House officer, Senior House Officer, Register, Senior Register, Consultant and Professor. When a medical student becomes a medical board or MB, he has to apply to several hospitals to get a job as a House Officer. To get a job as a register, he has to become “Member of the Royal College of Physicians” and to get this membership he has to pass the M.R.C.P. exam, which is very tough.

If he does not get through it, one of the alternatives would be to become a General Practitioner. If he gets through the M.R.C.P. exam and wants to become a Chest physician consultant, for example, he has to accumulate at least three years working in that field and that could take him three to four years, or even more. Foreign Doctors have to pass the Professional Linguistic Assessment Board or PLAB test, conducted by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom, to obtain a limited registration for a post-graduate medical training. This is the only way to get a paid job in a hospital. Another way is to get a non-paid job as a Clinical Assistant to the Consultant or Professor in a teaching hospital.

Soon after I arrived in London, I was invited to play in a friendly baseball game, between Cuban and Dominican Embassies. That day I met some Dominicans, among them were Dr. Alberto Santana a gastroenterologist, and Enrique Ureña, an architect. The Cubans won the game six run to four





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I have a very good friend here in London named Sofía López, last week we went together to see Tom Jones at the Royal Albert Hall. It was a great show. She has been very helpful to me and invited me tonight for supper in her apartment. I will let you know if she is a good cook.

Love to all of you, Rafael.

Sofía was preparing “chicken and cauliflower” for supper, when Rafael arrived at her flat with a bunch of yellow flowers and knocked at the door. She opened it and Rafael said to her: “Flowers need flowers”, and gave her two kisses and the bunch of flowers. “Oh, thank you, come in. How did you know that this is my favourite colour?” asked Sofía. “I just guessed!”, Rafael replied. Sofía smiled and said “You are very good at guessing”. “You too” Rafael replied, looking at the empty jar on the table. She smiled saying: “Let me take your raincoat and please do sit down”. Rafael took a look around, everything was well organized. “Would you like a glass of wine?” Sofía asked. “That would be lovely”, Rafael replied and she brought two glasses of red wine, sitting down and saying: cheers!

“You have so many books”, Rafael said. “Yes, I love reading”. She replied. “Particularly García Marquez, am I right?”, added Rafael who saw four books of García Marquez. “You mean the 1982 Nobel Prize of Literature, the Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez? Yes, he is my favourite. I have read all his books”, Sofía answered full of pride. Rafael then added, just to see her reaction “and all of the Vargas Vila’s books too?” She stopped smiling and stared at him, saying: “Why do you ask me that question, knowing that he has brought shame on Colombians and for the whole world? I will never read a single page of that frustrated atheist who did not have an atom of love in his heart, who also hated women and even the Christian church. Tell me if you are fond of him. Because if it so, you will not eat here tonight”.

Rafael, who was waiting for that reaction smiled, looked up at her and said: “I am not fond of him, actually”. Although she did not really believe him, she smiled too. Rafael knew she was wrong but he needed to calm her down, so he said to her: “You know, I have been to Bogotá twice, in 1974 and 1975, I was





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a medical student at that time. I stayed at the Tequendama Hotel and went to Zipaquirá to see the Salt Cathedral, the Guatavita Lake and the Tequendama Falls”.

“Oh, really, I am from Bogotá. Did you like it?”, asked Sofía “Oh, yes. Bogotá is a beautiful city; the Colombians are very polite and they speak perfect Spanish with a lovely accent. In the Spanish spoken world, you are the British!” She liked that and Rafael continued: “The Colombians work hard and the women are so beautiful. Colombia is a rich country with a huge natural beauty. You should be proud to be a Colombian, shouldn’t you?” Rafael asked, and took a sip of wine.

“Of course I am. But most people do not see it. They only see us involved in drugs, or as guerrillas and having much corruption. I know that, corruption is universal but in Colombia it is endemic, and also the principal cause of social disparity in Latin America. A lot of judges, journalists and politicians have been killed because of their fight against corruption”. Rafael interrupted Sofía, saying: “Or to be slandered and deported”. “Not really, at least in Colombia”, Sofía replied and then he asked her: “Is it not true that Panama used to be part of Colombia?” “Yes, Panama was part of Colombia but it was sold to the United States for a couple of dollars”, she answered confidently. “Do you know how and by whom it was sold?” Rafael asked her. “I do not quite remember it very well”, she admitted.

Rafael took her to the point he wanted her to be, then took a sip of his wine and started to explain to her how Panama was sold to the United States: “Everything started on the 31st of July, in 1900, when the vice-president of Colombia José Manuel Marroquín led a coup d’état and took prisoner the president of the Colombian Republic, Manuel Antonio Sanclemente. He was sent to jail and tortured, and asked to sign his resignation. But he was inflexible, like the law, and refused to sign it. He was the symbol of law, and Marroquín was the usurper and the traitor. He did not sign his resignation and so was killed by a soldier, under an order from Marroquín.

After Marroquín had killed the law in Colombia, he decided to go on and mutilate it and sent his partner Rafael Reyes to Washington, to negotiate the





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sale of the Isthmus of Panama. The deal was that Marroquín promised to pass through the Colombian Congress the Hay-Herran Treaty that ceded the entire sovereignty of the Isthmus of Panama to the United States. Marroquín would receive in return 250,000 dollars. The Colombian Congress, under the leadership of Joaquín Fernández Vélez, did not pass the Hay-Herran Treaty. Marroquín did not want to give the money back to the Americans, so he withdrew the troops from the cities of Colon and Panama and the Isthmus was taken by the Americans to build the Channel of Panama.

But that was not all. In the next general elections, Joaquín Fernando Vélez was elected President of the Republic of Colombia by an overwhelming majority. Marroquín was scared, because he knew that Fernando Vélez would make him pay for his treason. Knowing that, Marroquín decided to falsify the Padilla Act to change the election results. He gave the presidency to his partner Rafael Reyes and this savage Nero stuck his sword into the heart of the already mutilated Republic of Colombia.

He dissolved the Congress because they confronted him. The magistrates of the Supreme Court were all fired because they questioned his legality. The municipalities of Medellín and Cartagena opposed his fiscal measures and all of them were sent to jail. The freedom of the press was abolished and anyone who dared to criticize him took the risk of being sent to jail, defamed, deported or assassinated. This jackal devoured all the vital organs of the Republic of Colombia. Only one thing was left: “the State Treasurer” and he subsequently devoured that too”.

“It is very interesting. How do you know all that?” Sofia asked him. “I love history and one day I came across two books for the price of one: “Caesars of the Decline” and “The Human and the Divines”. I bought them, believing they were about the life of Caligula, Nero or Greek mythology, but they were not. They were about all the corruption and criminality of American presidents of the last hundred years. A young revel writer exposed them as if embalmed them like mummies, and preserved and showed them to future generations at the history museum. But he had to pay for that, and by the age of 22 he had already been sent to jail and deported to Curacao. He was a solitary man with





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a solitary soul. He was not a flatterer, he was a great critic with radical ideas, most of which I don't share but understand anyway. His books are not suitable for minors. While the intellectuals of his time wrote books and poems of love, he wrote books about unfaithful women, things that were forbidden in those times. Because of that his enemies used to say that he hated women.

Although he never stepped foot on a church, he recognized that Jesus loved and never denied him like others. But he strongly criticized the Christian Church because it didn't condemn or denounce all these corrupt people and criminals of America and for that reason he was declared an atheist. While he was living in the heart of New York he wrote a book called "Before the Barbarians" where he condemned the American invasions in Mexico, Cuba, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and others countries. For those reasons he was declared enemy of the United States of America and had to migrate to Europe. All his books were banned in Colombia and many other countries in America as well. He was a lover of liberty and justice, and also a dictator's hunter. Even Lili's, a Dominican dictator called by him "the black panther", is also caged in the pages of his books to be judged by history. He will also be judged in turn, that is why he wrote:

"Caesars of failure, without any prestige, other than their Crime;
I sculpted them;
and, despising them, I immortalized them;
It is a legacy I leave to Posterity: deigned once to possess it...
Each book is a dialogue to Posterity; and so is this one...
Free men will come tomorrow, deign to read
this book of vengeance and justice ...
They will read it in the pure sunlight
without complicities and without suborns;
And, they will thank the only hand that it was capable





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of writing the story of those despots,
because it was the only one that
they could not buy”. José María Vargas Vila.

Sofia was in shock, confused and speechless. She didn't know if to be proud of or ashamed of, but of one thing she was certain: Rafael was not an ordinary guy. Supper was served.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays Rafael spent the afternoon at the Dominican Embassy, catching up on the political situation back home on the daily newspapers. At the same time, he took advantage of an excellent opportunity to establish good relations with the Embassy staff and the Ambassador, Mr. Alfredo Ricart Pellerano, who also acted as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in London. At night Rafael studied English with Sofia's help.

One evening Sofia invited Rafael again for supper. Chicken legs and steamed cauliflower were on the menu. The next invitation, just the following day, was identical to the previous one: Chicken legs and cauliflower. When Sofia invited Rafael again, he simply asked: “grilled chicken legs and steamed cauliflower?” “Yes, don't you like it?”, asked Sofia. “Oh no, I love it. But I thought I could cook for a change tonight.” replied Rafael. They went on foot to the Waitrose supermarket on King's Road and found everything he needed: fish, rice, beans, green and yellow plantains, all kinds of vegetables, pears, kiwi, meat and cream, and Rafael prepared a real banquet. “You are a man of many hidden talents. Where did you learn how to cook?” Sofia was definitely impressed.

“I was brought up by my father and on weekends he used to go fishing. Before he left he would go shopping and asked us: “Do you want to eat? Here is your food. All you have to do is prepare it”. That way I could learn how to cook. The same way I learned how to iron, to wash clothes and do all the household chores a mother usually does.” “What happened to your mother? Why were you raised by your dad? Isn't that quite unusual?” Sofia could not restrain her curiosity and Rafael did not mind. “My parents got divorced when I was five years





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old. In court, my father convinced the judge that children should belong to the father.” Sofia jumped and Rafael kept eating unperturbed. “No way! Children belong to us”.

Rafael did not reply. “Tell me, how he did it?” she demanded to know. Only then did he stop eating, leisurely took a sip of delicious wine, sat back in his chair and started teaching her about “Dominican” ways in the countryside. “It was very easy. My father asked the judge: “if you deposited a one pound sterling in a bank and in nine months that pound increased up to seven pounds, to whom would the money belong? , to the bank or to you?” “To me, naturally”, answered the judge. “Then the children are mine”, said my father. “You are right” sentenced the judge. “Get the children!” Sofia exploded: “*Latinos machistas!* (Latin male chauvinist!). Don’t you know that it is we who carry the baby for nine months in our womb? We nurture them 24 hours a day to keep them alive.” “Of course I do”, responded Rafael. “And I agree with you. In fact, that is what my mother argued too. But then my father came out full force, astutely and vehemently convinced him of his own right, saying: “I don’t care what the bank does in order to make my pound grow. That is their job and that is what they are made for”. And the judge slammed his hammer, “Case closed”. Sofia was left simply speechless Rafael noticed that and said: “To be honest, my mother told me that my father’s story was not quite true. The truth was that she could not afford to have the four children, so my father kept the three boys and my mother kept my sister, Ana”.





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The days passed pleasantly. Rafael was content and full of hope until he had to renew his tourist visa, valid for only six months. The Foreign Office realised that Rafael was studying hard, and agreed to extend his tourist visa for six more months. At the same time, they advised him, that he would have to get a student visa at the next renewal. A condition for that would be that he would have to take a full time English course which cost five hundred pounds a year. That was too much money just for English lessons. But Sofia had already discovered that the Brompton Hospital, a specialist centre for chest diseases, offered yearly courses for eight thousand pounds sterling. Study programmes were available. It was money that blocked his hopes from becoming a reality. But, where to get the money from? Sofia was realistic “you will have to find a job if you want to pay the initial fee of four thousand pounds before starting the course. The easiest job available is washing-up.” “It doesn’t matter. I would rather do washing-up in London than go back to Santo Domingo.”

Having decided to get a job, they both went to High Street Kensington roaming around until they found a sign, advertising a vacancy for washing up in a pizzeria-disco belonging to some Italians offering to pay sixty five pounds a week. Rafael agreed to take the job. The pizza man who was from Iraq advised Rafael to be careful with the manager, a guy from South Africa, whose face seemed to be in perpetual rage and anger. Rafael immediately started to work. What a job! From seven thirty in the evening to one-thirty the next morning. He had to do everything nobody else wanted to do. Only his iron determination helped him through.

It was already 1:30 am and Rafael finally was ready to leave, when he was ordered by the manager to finish another stack of dirty dishes and take care of the garbage. And again, already fetching his coat he was about to leave when he was ordered to clean the toilets. As it turned out, he continued until 3 o’clock in the morning. The cold weather and rain of an English night and his sunny Latin temperament, all conspired to make his life as miserable as possible. It was a week of pure hell.

When he went to collect his pay-check, the manager told him that he would only receive fifty pounds; fifteen had to remain as a guarantee. Otherwise,





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they would not be sure if he'd return the next Monday. Rafael protested and cursed and he felt very frustrated. He became angry and resorted to Spanish, demanding to be paid the sixty five pounds and the manager refused. The noise attracted the owner of the place who inquired what was going on. Once informed about both sides of the story, he had the manager pay the whole sixty five pounds. It was obvious that this Latin meant trouble. Better get rid of him at once. Naturally, Rafael never returned and became unemployed again.

Three days later Sofia discovered another advertisement in Fulham Road at the Parsons Green Restaurant, which was near their house. What a difference right from the start! Even though he started out with a low salary of sixty five pounds a week, he felt comfortable with the rest of the staff. Carlos, the cook of the restaurant was from Venezuela, the assistant a refugee from Chile and an automatic dishwasher did most of the dirty work. With salsa, merengue and bolero, life in that kitchen was very different.

Everything went well until Sofia decided to leave the Consulate. Once she resigned from the consulate she would have to return to Colombia. After four years and without diplomatic status, no further extension was possible. For Rafael this was bad news. With all his might he tried to make her change her mind. But she would not yield. One day Rafael told her: "I have a good relationship with the Ambassador. Let me try to help you. The Ambassador's secretary suffers from diabetes and has to call in sick often. I think he needs another secretary. I will suggest he appoints you". "Well, I think you are dreaming," said Sofia. "If I resign from the Dominican Consulate surely the Embassy will not give me another job. Get real Rafael". The next Tuesday Rafael went to the Embassy as usual, but this time to talk to the Ambassador and to explain Sofia's situation. Mr. Ricart and Rafael got on well. After listening to him the Ambassador remarked pointedly "Ah, you don't want your girlfriend to return to Colombia, do you?" "She is not my girlfriend, we are just good friends!" "If she is not your girlfriend, she will be one day," he smiled and left his office. That was all. The days turned into weeks. No word from the Embassy. Their desperation grew by the hour.

Rafael continued to visit the Embassy, but the Ambassador never mentioned anything about the proposal. Had he forgotten all about it? The last days drew





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closer. The ticket was issued, the suitcases packed. She was going back to Bogotá. Their despair turned into resignation, their sadness into quiet attempts to comfort each other. The night before the departure Sofía stayed home in her room. She tried to read something in order to dispel her sad thoughts when someone knocked at her door. She stopped reading and opened it. It was Rafael, this time not smiling but with a serious expression on his face, unusual for him. Just as uncommon was his greeting: “I don’t want to see you.” Sofía was startled, “Why?” “Because it is the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic who wants to see you. You have been appointed! Burn your ticket!”, and his face broke into a great smile and he waved two bottles of red wine he had kept hidden behind his back.

With shouts of joy they hugged each other, dancing around. Happiness returned to 57 Evelyn Gardens. Rafael opened a bottle of wine and gave her a glass but Sofía still was in a state of shock by the news. “Let’s go out for dinner,” Rafael suggested. They found a nice, cozy Italian restaurant near Piccadilly Circus. It was raining, and although they did not have any umbrella, they decided to go for a walk after dinner. Walking along Regent Street Sofía came across an advertisement at a job agency. She stopped and asked “Rafael, do you know how to take blood?” “Of course I do. Remember I studied medicine.” “Would you like to work in a hospital as a phlebotomist?” Sofía inquired. “Oh, yes!” exclaimed Rafael. “Wearing a white coat in a hospital in London is what I came for”.

The next Monday the agency sent him to the homeopathic hospital. He felt he was ascending the social scale, from the white coat of the restaurant to the white coat of a hospital. He started working immediately. He was an expert phlebotomist. One shot and he found the vein. The nurses congratulated him for his skill and precision. Rafael spent his free time reviewing patient’s records, talking to the students, visiting the wards and attending lectures as if he belonged to the medical staff. One Friday a nurse asked him to take blood from a patient in ward II, the ward for women. When he arrived the nurse was nowhere in sight. Which of the three patients was it? Rafael mused and decided on the obese one who seemed to be in worse condition than the other two. He started to search for the vein but no a single vein was visible or palpable. In the first attempt no blood would come out. Another attempt and again no luck.





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Two more shots and nothing. Five shots and still nothing. After six attempts Rafael was sweating profusely and the patient finally screamed “Help, help me. There is a murderer here who is trying to kill me!” At that precise moment Rafael got lucky and hit a vein. “Calm down. I just got the vein.” Near exasperation, Rafael decided to take 15 ml of blood for a complete routine blood test, and returned to his office.

Ten minutes later the telephone rang “Who gave you orders to wake up my mother and take blood from her, stupid. She is in heart failure. You are responsible if she dies. I want you in my office immediately.” The voice of the dean of the hospital shrieked, the phone clicked and Rafael stood petrified, with the handset still in his hand and his mouth open in desperate gasps. Then he swallowed, took a deep breath and pictured himself in jail with a pending accusation of murder in the first degree and subsequent deportation back to his country. He felt horrible. The shock was too great. He felt totally unable to confront his boss, took his coat, left the hospital and never returned.

But he was obsessed with the possible murder of that poor lady. Every morning he went out to buy a newspaper, searching for an obituary. He watched all the news programmes, expecting his photograph to pop up. He spent five days in agony. Finally he could not bear it anymore and telephoned the nurse at the hospital in order to know if the lady had died. That made matters only worse. “Rafael, where have you been? They are looking for you.” He froze. He wanted to put the phone down but was unable to move. In his mind he saw himself already in jail. “Because of all the blood-tests you ordered they found out that she had pancreatitis. Her serum amylase was very high. They are looking for you in order to thank you.” His life saved, colour returned to his face. Of course, the nurse did not notice any of the emotions that had been flooding his soul.

Six months elapsed rapidly and again the visa had expired. Now he would have to pay for a student visa. Sofía noticed his worries: “Rafael, there are two vacancies as attaché to the Dominican Embassy. Why don’t you contact Santo Domingo to see if they can appoint you?” “What, me a diplomat in London? That would be the pinnacle of my career!. I will call Dr. José Joaquín Puello Herrera and Rafael Pellerano Gómez to see if they help me, they both are good friend of President Salvador Jorge Blanco”. “But you have to hurry up; there are



lots of people after this position.” When calling Santo Domingo news was bad. The Dominican Government was not appointing anybody. The dealings with the International Monetary Fund were imposing harsh conditions as part of an austerity plan.

At the Home Office the news was equally bad. Only three months were granted this time and not a single month more, unless he would comply with the regular student’s requirements. After the designated time Rafael sent his passport in again, explaining in writing that he lacked only one thousand five hundred pounds to have the total four thousand in order to be able to register at the hospital. Time passed and no news from the Foreign Office. They were waiting for the registration form that vouched for Rafael’s studies. Two more months elapsed when he finally received the passport and a grant of just fifteen days of grace period. It seemed hopeless.

It was April 17th, 1984 and Mrs. Thatcher was in an official visit to Portugal. People were gathering outside the Libyan Embassy protesting against Gadaffi’s regime. According to some witness someone fired from inside the Embassy and killed a Woman Police Officer Constable Yvonne Fletcher. Everybody was devastated by this crime, including Rafael.

Frustration set in and Rafael went up to Sofia’s room in order to tell her about his visa. He knocked at the door. Sofia opened it only a bit, sadness and tiredness reflected on her face and said “I don’t want to see you tonight” and closed the door again. Rafael was surprised and went down the stairs, wondering what had happened to her, when he suddenly heard Sofia shout: “It is the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic who wants to see you. You have been appointed!” “Nooo! I can not believe it” yelled Rafael, realizing that Sofia had tried to do to him the same thing he had done for her a while ago. He raised his arms as a sign of victory in the hallway and raced up stairs again

He hugged Sofia, whirling her round. She had already set the table with fine china, wine, candles and... chicken and cauliflower! Sofia invited the new Attaché to take his seat, they made a toast with wine and she served him first. While she served herself, Rafael looked at his plate and then, as she was taking her seat he looked at her thoughtfully for an instant and said: “I love your



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chicken, I love your cauliflower, and I love!" "Let's eat", interrupted Sofia, trying unsuccessfully to hide her nervousness, guessing at what he would say. Tears appeared in her green-grey eyes, like morning dew covering the tender grass. She raised her glass saying "For your new future!"

The next day everybody celebrated Rafael's appointment. The whole diplomatic staff and the Ambassador were happy. This appointment changed Rafael's life profoundly. At one moment the Ambassador called him into his office to explain the privileges and obligations of his new diplomatic status. After that preamble, he informed Rafael that the Consul would be on vacation in the Dominican Republic for two weeks, and if he would mind running the consulate in his absence. That was too much for Rafael. Only two days ago he had visualised himself repatriated to Santo Domingo, and now he was going to act as the Consul ad interim.

After all formalities at the Foreign Office Rafael were accepted as a diplomat and when the Consul left, Rafael took charge of his new functions. In the huge office Rafael first swivelled round in the big leather chair. His secretary served tea and read the daily agenda to him. There would be an important reception for the consuls of the Commonwealth that very same evening. Punctually, the limousine picked Rafael up, now the representative of the Consul. At the party everything went well and a young couple invited him afterwards for a drink, but Rafael declined the invitation politely. He had already another important engagement. The limousine took him back and on the way Rafael told the driver to stop at the Parsons Green Restaurant in Fulham Road. "I have a meeting here. You don't have to wait for me. I'll see you tomorrow. Thank you". And as it suits a VIP he gave the chauffeur a generous tip, his very first in the United Kingdom. And the consul of the Dominican Republic went right away to the kitchen, rolling up his sleeves, started to work and told Carlos, the cook, that this would be his last night on the job.

Rafael's life changed from that of a low-class worker into a diplomat's. Cocktail parties and receptions were now his main occupation. One day the Ambassador organised a party at his house in honour of the new ambassadors appointed in London. Diplomats representing many countries were present. Talking to Ambassador Alfredo Ricart about his family, Rafael commented that his older



brother, Bienvenido, was suffering from a rare disease called Sarcoidosis. This name resounded somehow in his mind. The Ambassador kept repeating it to himself until he got hold of his memory and said: "Oh, Sarcoidosis. Yes. Here in London is "The King of Sarcoidosis". He is Dr. David Geraint James. He was supposed to attend this party as he did last year. His wife is Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock, known as "The Queen of the Liver". She is an eminent specialist on liver disease and Dr. Alberto Santana, from the Dominican Republic, is working with her at the Royal Free Hospital." "Really?" exclaimed Rafael in disbelief. "Yes, and Dr. James is a good man. He has spent all his life teaching foreign doctors from all over the world. We can contact him through the Embassy." At that precise moment Mr. Frank Guerrero Prats, First Secretary of the Dominican Embassy joined them, and the Ambassador told him about his conversation with Dr. Socías. "Let's go to my house after the party, and from there I will call Alberto to join us later to talk about it", Mr. Guerrero suggested and so they did when the party was over. One hour later Dr. Santana arrived and after listening to Rafael, he advice him to write a letter to Dr. James explaining his special interest in Sarcoidosis. He also said he would be calling Dr. James in the morning, adding that Rafael could consider himself as already working with Dr. James. Rafael smiled and Dr. Santana concluded saying: "Have in mind that Dr. James is not an easy man at all". Rafael stopped smiling.

Dr. Santana kept his word and a month later Rafael received a latter from Dr. James saying: "Dear Dr. Socías. Thank you for you letter of 31st. July which was awaiting my return. Yes, of course I shall be delighted if you can join me here. I hold a Sarcoidosis clinic every Monday afternoon from 1.30 pm onwards. You can spend as much or as little of the week as you can manage. You will find it very interesting and productive. Yours sincerely, Dr. Geraint James, Dean". Rafael almost fainted. He had the feeling as if in this letter he was holding his future in his hands. After that Rafael decided to bring his family over, his wife and his daughter Gilda Claudette Socías Almodovar, and he rented a second floor flat at number 99 Comeragh Road in West Kensington.



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THE KING





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After a year in London, Rafael at last started his postgraduate training in chest medicine with Dr. Geraint James, at the Royal Northern Hospital, in Holloway Road, London N7. One important step had been taken which would open up further opportunities for his future career.

Ward II was a circular room for men only, and Ward III was for women. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays Dr. James made his rounds in both wards, which started at ten o'clock. Everything had to be impeccable. Clean, white bed-sheets, the patients had to be bathed, shaved and weighed. The whole medical and paramedical staff was waiting for Dr. James, arranging beds and coats, asking each other if Dr. James was going to be in a good mood. "I hope so" a nurse said. "Last week he was terrible." Listening to this conversation only increased Dr. Socías's anxiety when suddenly, before he realised it, everybody interrupted the conversation and scurried to take his or her respective position. Dr. James had arrived.

"Hello dear. How are you today?" "Fine, thank you, and you?" "Oh, I am very well. Hello Dr. Green, what have we got today?" As they approached the first bed Dr. Green presented the fist patient, Mr. Jones. Dr. James greeted him and looked around as if searching for something or someone. Then he turned to Rafael, who was just next to him, and said: "Oh, here you are. Let's see how far you can go. Tell us, what this is?" and he pointed at Mr. Jones's deformed hands. Rafael felt his body shrinking suddenly and something weighing him down. All his blood went to his head and the whole world was watching while he kept staring at the anonymous deformity of those hands. Fifteen medical doctors of many different nations were standing by, observing his ignorance impatiently, yet relieved, as that moment of shame had spared them for the time being. And at precisely that moment Rafael lost his speech. Not a single word came out while the clock ticked the seconds away.

Finally, Dr. James said impatiently "Come on, we haven't got the whole day, have we?" That is when Rafael's heart started to race like crazy and his lungs faltered. Glued to his spot he felt unable to move even the tiniest muscle. His body just refused to obey, when Dr. James gave up and said "Well, say something, even if it is in Spanish, but say something!" But Rafael's head started spinning





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and he was about to faint when the registrar intervened and said apologetically “I think he has never seen rheumatoid arthritis before.” “Rubbish” snorted Dr. James, and turned to the next bed.

“Let’s try this one. This is Mr. Norman. He is 65 years old and has been suffering from angina. Now, take a deep breath and tell me 10 causes of angina in 10 seconds. Start it now!” And as he said so he raised his left thumb and took a deep breath himself. “Anyaina?” mused Rafael to himself. “I don’t know what anyaina is” he said finally, recovering his speech. “You are joking”, exclaimed Dr. James totally surprised. “I think Dr. Socías does not understand what anyaina is”, said the registrar volunteered again. “Anyaina is a chest pain coming from the heart.” Again it was the registrar who came to his rescue. “Oh, yes, yes, angina”, blurted Rafael out, a big smile of relief twisting his face and he said: “Diabetes, obesity and hypertension”. “Only three?” replied Dr. James sternly. “Any cleaning lady could give me at least five causes of angina.”

After the massacre in Ward II they went to the third floor, Ward III, which was only for women. The first bed was occupied by Mrs. Scott, 28 years old, who suffered from shortness of breath. Her chest X-ray showed bilateral hilar lymphadenopathy. As Dr. James asked for her chest X-ray Rafael, who stood right beside him, knew instinctively that it was going to be his turn again. “Tell me if you see any abnormalities on this chest X-ray”, Dr. James asked. Everybody was looking at Rafael again, who stood motionless in front of the X-ray viewer, aware that he had never seen a BHL before.

As he took his hand out of his white coat pocket and got closer to the viewer, he noticed something strange around the heart area. “I think the anomaly is here” he said, pointing toward it. “That’s the heart!” shouted Dr. James. “Are you sure you are a doctor?” Rafael was still looking at the X-ray, immobile as a statue, filled to the brim with frustration, humiliation and disappointment. Then the group went to the tea room to have some cookies, coffee and tea. In the way the registrar asked to Dr. James: “do you think that he will make it?” Referring to Dr. Socías and Dr. James smiled saying: “He is excellent. He stood beside me all the time while others were hiding.”

Rafael felt totally confused. All his impulses yelled at him to run away. Get away





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from the hospital. He was sure that he was not prepared to be with Dr. James, and he definitely would not survive another shameful situation as the one he had just undergone. He decided on leaving and went to the library to collect his stuff and tell Dr. James, on his way out, that he was going to leave and that he would only return when he was better prepared. Sheila, the librarian, noticed that something was awfully wrong with Rafael and asked him with her lovely British accent: “Dr. Socías, how did it go on your first ward round with Dr. James?” Dr. Socías forced a smile on his lips, but his eyes showed that he was about to cry. “Oh, it was a disaster. I couldn’t answer a single easy question. So I am leaving the hospital and I am going to tell Dr. James. I know he is upset with me.”

“Nouuu” said Sheila, slurring the “u” as the British do. “He is not upset with you. He loves teaching. And what has happened to you has happened to all the doctors here who joined him, when they had their first round. It doesn’t matter how much you know about medicine. He will always know more. They call him the Brain of Britain. He is The King of the doctors; he has spent his whole life teaching young doctors like you. I am sure that in a couple of months you will learn more about medicine than you have learned so far in your whole career. And let me tell you something...”

With these soothing words Rafael felt like coming back to life, bit by bit, piece by piece. “Let me tell you that you won’t learn only medicine with him, but the history of medicine as well. You will learn about humanism and even geography.” “Geography?” wondered Rafael, coming out of his stupor of shame. “Oh, yes. Dr. James loves the history of medicine. You are going to learn from Dr. James, trust me. It doesn’t matter if you cannot see it yet. Just show him that you are interested in medicine. He will do the rest. He has his special ways. Now go back to the lecture theatre. They are all gathering together there for a short break and a lecture on X-rays. Dr. Lawton is giving the lecture. He is one of the best radiologists in the country and I think they are going to take a photograph of the new group.”

Rafael put his white coat back on again and, comforted with Sheila’s wisdom, hurried back to the lecture hall. At the doorstep, Dr. James saw him and greeted





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him with a broad smile. “Oh, here you are. Dr. Socías, I want you to meet Dr. Lawton.” And turning to Dr. Lawton he continued “This is Dr. Socías from the Dominican Republic, a Caribbean island. He is the official doctor of the Embassy and is staying here in London with us. He is really good.” Confused and proud of such an introduction, Rafael shook hands with the radiological celebrity. “Go and have some coffee and sandwiches,” encouraged Dr. James.

There were two large tables with big hot water containers and two milk jars, coffee, sugar, styropore cups and piles of tuna and ham and cheese sandwiches. The wall was almost completely covered with portraits of famous doctors who had made history. Sir William Osler, Jonathan Hutchinson, Caesar Boeck, Louis Siltzbach, among many others, and many photographs of Dr. James with different groups of doctors and students. It was Dr. James’ habit to have a picture taken every six months with his medical staff students. Then Dr. James shouted: “Come here, let’s take the picture. With this photograph you can get a job anywhere.” The picture was taken.

1.30 pm, Dr. James’ Sarcoidosis clinic was about to start: “This is the biggest and most famous clinic for Sarcoidosis with a population of almost a thousand patients. Most of them are from the West Indies, where Dr. Socías comes from.” Said Dr. James. The group consisted of doctors and students of different countries and each one was introduced. When Rafael’s turn came he responded that he was from the Dominican Republic, which prompted Dr. James to ask an Iranian doctor where the Dominican Republic was. Perplexed, the Iranian remained mute and Dr. James demanded: “Say something, is it the second on the left after the traffic light or is it just across the road?” mocked Dr. James, and said: “Dominican Republic is the second largest island of the Caribbean. The largest one is Cuba, and then comes La Hispaniola which is divided into two parts, one for Haiti and the other for the Dominican Republic.

When the turn for an Iraqi doctor came, Dr. James couldn’t resist commenting: “You see, although they have been fighting for eight years already, here they are friends. And I pray every night for them to get through the MRCP successfully because they need them for the war.” Everybody laughed even them. When the turn came for a Nigerian doctor, it was Rafael’s time of shame. “What is the capital of Nigeria? Rafael did not even know where Nigeria was and Dr. James



said: “come on, have a guess, is it Hong Kong, Moscow or New York?” “I don’t know”. Dr. Socías responded. “It is Lagos”, Dr. James said.

The last one was Kevin Flint, an outstanding fellow researcher from Middlesex Hospital. Dr. James introduced him to the group saying that he was doing research on inflammatory diseases such as Sarcoidosis and asthma, and performing bronchoscopy on those patients to examine the behaviour of the mast cells and T-cells. When Dr. James finished the introduction, Dr. Flint asked if someone was interested in bronchoscopy and Rafael said he was. They arranged for Rafael to go every Tuesday and Thursday to Middlesex Hospital.

The first patient came in and Dr. James greeted her with a special smile reserved only for his patients. “Hello dear, how are you today?” “I am fine actually”. Dr. James opened her records and said: “She is Mrs. Rose from East London and in 1941, when she was 5 years old, a bomb was dropped on her house and, as you can see, she got cut in her face. 40 years later she develops a granuloma in this scar on her face and she came to see me, not because of her scar, but because of her shortness of breath. The biopsy of her scar shows sarcoid granuloma, her chest X ray shows bilateral hilar lymphadenopathy with pulmonary infiltration; her erythrocyte sedimentation rate was raised as well as her serum angiotensin converting enzymes. So, she had?” And Dr. James looks up to Dr. Socías who responded without thinking: “Sarcoidosis”. “Yes, very good”, exclaimed Dr. James.

Next patient came in, a young lady with red spots on her legs. Dr. James asked an Iranian doctor: “Tell us what is it?”. “Erythema nodosum”, answered the Iranian. “Yes and the most frequent cause of it is?” “Penicillin drugs”. “No, in women the most frequent cause of it is the contraceptive pill”. After the patient left, Dr. James asked the Iranian doctor what he had learned from that patient and he said “Well, I learned about the symptoms and causes of erythema nodosum”. Dr. James interrupted him and said “no, that is not all what you have learned from that patient. Now you know that if a beautiful girl invites you to a pub and she has red spots on her leg, you know that there is no danger of pregnancy. She is on the pill! When I was a medical student I used to go to the underground and while others were reading the Times I was making diagnose



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of rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lung cancer, emphysema, chronic bronchitis and if a girl was on the pill or not. Observation is the best way to enjoy medicine.”

A new patient came in and Dr. James sent Rafael to record the medical history and performs routine examinations. Carefully, he questioned the patient about everything he thought of importance related to her case. Once he had finished, Dr. James came in and asked, reading the record sheet: “What is her religion? When and where did she spend her last summer holiday? Does she like the pub? Is she a vegetarian? Nothing is recorded here. You didn’t talk to her. If you don’t like to talk to the patients, then you have to become a radiologist or a pathologist to report pneumonias or Papanicolaou smears without talking to them. Talk to her, and do not examine her until you get her diagnosis.”

Three difficult months passed with ups and downs. Dr. James was preparing the MRCP course which was held twice a year for doctors from the U.K. and overseas countries which had belonged once to the British Empire. In order to become Members of the Royal College of Physicians, the doctors had to pass the MRCP exam. Otherwise they would not be able to become a graduate in their own countries, which still retained the British setup for the medical establishment. Dr. James had spent his whole life preparing young doctors for these examinations the oral part or viva and the writing part.

The course started at 9 o’clock. The Royal Northern hospital was crowded with doctors from all over the world. Dr. James asked Rafael to check if everything was ready, including the slide projector. Once that was done, Rafael returned to his teacher’s office. The first thing Dr. James said to him was: “You know, the Queen is coming today for a lecture.” As he used to call his wife Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock. “Oh, splendid! Dr. James, I was curious to know if you have ever worked with her?” Rafael asked intrigued. “Oh, yes, my first job as a registrar was with her. She was already a professor back then.” “So you had an interview with her?” “Yes, I did.” “How many questions did she ask you?” “None”, Dr. James responded. “None?” replied Rafael surprised. “What did you talk about then?” “Actually, we didn’t even talk.” “You didn’t even talk?” said Rafael intrigued while Dr. James kept working with his slides, undisturbed and concentrating. “How did you get the job?” Rafael’s curiosity had become uncontrollable. “It was very simple. When I came to Hammersmith hospital, where she



used to work, her assistant asked me to wait for a moment.

Then she showed me in. The Queen was sitting, reading the Times newspaper and drinking tea. She did not even bother to answer my greeting. I just sat down. She continued reading the Times unperturbed, as if nobody was there. After five minutes I stood up, took the matches out of my pocket and lit her newspaper. Then I left. When I was about to open the door she dropped the newspaper and said: You have got the job”.

“I cannot believe that”, said Rafael. “I must ask her if that is true.” “You can ask her. I know she is going to deny it, but it is true”, replied Dr. James. Just at that moment she came in, and Rafael dared to ask her. “Oh dear, he was just pulling your leg”, Dame Sherlock replied. Rafael remained kind of disappointed, because the story was so fabulous that he would have liked it to be true. So he said to her “I don’t know if it is true or not, but what I know is that he has the guts and character to do such a thing, doesn’t he?” She smiled “Oh, yes, absolutely”, she replied very ladylike, very British, leaving Rafael doubtful of her answer and perplexed by her medal of Dame that she was wearing.

Dr. James entered the lecture theatre. With a broad smile on his face he shook hands with everybody, asking them where they came from and what speciality they pursued. He liked to get to know his audience very well. Making friends with them was one of his characteristics, and he enjoyed it thoroughly. Later, he would remember each of the attending doctors with a special piece of information from everyone. There were some empty chairs in the front line so Dr. James shouted “Come on girls! Come forward. Be friendly, I only ask those who are in the back. Where is my friend from the United States?” asked Dr. James and someone from behind raised his hand.

“This is a sad, sad story of a 75 year old American lady who developed leukaemia in the United States. She was treated aggressively with steroids and combination of chemotherapy. When she turned 75 she told her grandson “David, before I die I want to show you London.” Her doctor said to her, before you go to that dirty city I will vaccinate you, and so he did. When she finally came to London, she had developed ulceration on her elbow and upper left arm due to septicaemia, and she came into my care. She had already a T-cell deficiency



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because of leukaemia, steroids and chemotherapy. Why, oh why did this doctor vaccinate a 75 years old lady with immune deficiency? We saved her and she enjoyed London so much, that at the end of the tour she said “I will never, never go back to live in the United States.” Next, please.

The next slide showed a female hand and a dark spot under the ring finger. “Do you recognise this as a sign of diabetes?” Nobody replied. Dr. James looked at his registrar and asked him “Is this a medical group? They are not hospital administrators, are they?” “Of course not”, replied the registrar. “They are not very responsive. Come on! I just only trying to warm you up before the Queen arrives. In Europe this is called the ‘brass ring sign of diabetes’. And you learn two things. You learn that she is diabetic, which makes her body sweats in this way when she wears any brass. Secondly, you learn that she married a dirty dog of a husband who gave her a brass wedding ring. Will you remember that for the exam?”

Now Miss Middlesex: these are two-a-penny in the exams”. An expression he used when something was common and easy in the exams. “And the examiner will ask you: why is he breathless.” The patient in question was a man around 70 years of age, bald, skinny, upper body naked and a blue scar on his skull. The student was completely lost. “How green was my valley and how blue are my scars” Dr. James recited. “You see this blue scar, he was a miner who cut himself in the mine and the carbon dust got into the skin and the scar became blue. So he developed pneumoconiosis. And always look at his hands to see if he got rheumatoid pneumoconiosis or Caplan’s syndrome. Poor Caplan has gone.”

Dr. James asked Rafael, who was sitting in the front line: “Tell us who Anthony Caplan was, where was he?” “He was in Cardiff”, Dr. James interrupted him, and continued: “Yes, he was in Pontyfreed as a junior doctor,” and said: “I can tell by the chest X-ray when a miner with pneumoconiosis has rheumatoid arthritis, without even looking at his hands. He showed them that and was transferred from Pontyfreed to Cardiff. So he got a bigger job, a bigger car, and a bigger house, didn’t he?” these last words were meant for Rafael. “Yes, and a bigger cigar. You missed that one.” Dr. James and the audience burst out laughing. “So with one observation he wrote the paper and became a consultant. That is what medicine is all about: observation”.





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Back to the patient, he said, “I feel sorry for him, because he got this pension from the mines and went back up to the Rhondaa Valley, in Wales, and one day his wife said to him: “I am sick and tired of you being in this house all day. Go out and get a hobby”. So he started breeding pigeons. And, as you know, he got more breathless because he developed an extrinsic allergic alveolitis and that is why he came to see me. Next please.

Where is my friend from Uganda?” Someone raised his hand from the bench and Dr. James said: “Here are two photographs of the same man, one with his eyes closed and the other with his eyes open because he has Myasthenia Gravis, an autoimmune disease and his doctor gave him intra-venous Tensilon. How long does it take for this reaction to work?” The Ugandan doctor was thinking about it and Dr. James shouts: are you still here?” “Yes, I am”. “Well, shout out, five minutes, ten minutes”. And he replied: “30 seconds”. “Good guessing! Do not bother to come for the rest of this course or to do medicine, stick to the casino, you are very good.

“Where is my friend from Japan? You do not see that in Japan, do you?” “No, what is that?” “This is Lupus pernio, the chilblain nose of Sarcoidosis. If you want to see a patient with lupus pernio, you buy the London Evening Standard newspaper outside the Regents Palace Hotel. There is a chap who sells the newspaper who has got lupus pernio. And you say to him: why do not have plastic surgery?, and he says: Well, I cannot afford it. I go to the MD exams, I go to the MRCP exams and I get paid for showing my nose to the examiner and the students and by the time I have finished the exams I had done quite well. Sarcoidosis is a multisystem granulomatous disorder of unknown aetiology, more common in young-adults between 20 to 40 years of age, affecting skin, eyes, lung, liver, kidney and heart. There are two types of Sarcoidosis: Acute with an abrupt onset and pulmonary infiltration with or without hilar lymphadenopathy, and chronic Sarcoidosis with an insidious onset with pulmonary fibrosis with or without calcification.

This 25 years old Welshman wanted to enrol in the army and his chest X ray showed this unilateral hilar lymphadenopathy and nothing else, what do you think?” “I think this is Sarcoidosis”, answered the Japanese Doctor. Dr. James





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replied: “all that glitters is not Sarcoidosis”, his famous expression in his lecture “Sarcoidosis and others granulomatous disorders”. This is a T-lymphocyte lymphoma or Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Also think of B-lymphocyte lymphoma produced by the Epstein-Barr virus and Tuberculosis. Next please.

This is a sad story of a young Englishman, who was a bachelor of twenty years of age and taking a music degree. He went to the United States once too often. He came back under my care and, do you see (Dr. James showed a slide) that terrible papilledema with haemorrhages and exudates? This is the absolutely characteristic “crumbled cheese appearance” of cytomegalovirus choroiditis. And as you can see, he came from San Francisco”. With those words, leaving everybody perplexed and unable to follow his logic, he showed another slide of a chest X-ray with two metal rings and continued lecturing: “As you know, some people wear rings in their ears, some people wear rings in their noses. But in San Francisco you wear rings in your nipples. So he had a cytomegalovirus choroiditis and there were signs of pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, too. The liver biopsy showed granulomata and mycobacteri intracellule, a sign of acquired immune deficiency syndrome. And all that because he has been to the United States.”

With those words he clicked another slide which read AIDS and a list of high risk people to get infected, and asked his audience: “What does the “A” in Aids stand for?” One answered “auto-immune”, another “acquired”. Dr. James continued: “I always used to say, that the “A” stands for “Apart”. Apart from drugs and promiscuity, but every single one of my Aids patients in London has been to America. So this “A” could be for America. And now in America they think this “A” stands for Africa. Fortunately, the Aids virus is not as contagious a virus like chicken pox or measles; it would be a disaster for humankind. Can you imagine the transmission of this virus by air or saliva? We all would get it! Thank God, this virus has its specific way of transmission: from blood to blood or sperm to blood. Men with HIV infections can transmit the virus sharing syringes with other persons; the sperm of those patients is full of HIV virus and can infect women through the vagina and uterus and in homosexuals through the anus. Woman with dry vagina has sexual intercourse, and if she is bleeding due to her menstruations, The penis can get traumatized and the virus gets





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into the body through micro scratches.

Let's see if I can continue. Where is my friend from Iran?" Someone in the bench stands up. "Tell us what have you learnt about AIDS so far?" "I have learnt that HIV is not a contagious virus". "Yes!" Dr. James interacted. "You have learnt three things. You have learnt to stay apart from drugs. Also, to have one partner and to be patient". "Patient for what?" asked the Iranian doctor.

"Well, you have to be patient with your partner until her vagina is lubricated. You don't want your penis to get scratched, do you? Keep those things in mind, will you? Well, the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome AIDS is a catastrophic disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus HIV, which is a new, clever, and deadly virus that produces in its hosts recurrent bacterial, virus, fungal and arthropodal opportunistic infections, as well as malignancies such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, oat cell carcinoma, and cutaneous and visceral Kaposi's sarcoma.

I call AIDS "The H disease." And I want you to find 6 'Hs'. Let's see if you are all with me. There is one "H" for homosexual, a second one for heterosexual, a third one for heroin, fourth for haemorrhages, five for T-helper-cells, because the virus goes into them and makes them helpless. Then we have another 'H' for haemophilia and the last "H" stands for Kaposi." "No", responds the audience. "Well" says Dr. James, "actually it is two 'Hs' for Kaposi. One for Hungary and another one for people who get Kaposi sarcoma, all tend to be HLADR5."

With those words he showed another slide. "This is doctor Moritz Kohts who went from Hungary to Vienna and became a doctor. He fell in love with the daughter of the professor of dermatology, Ferdinand von Hebra, and became his pupil. So Dr. Kohts changed his name from Kohts to Kaposi in honour of his little hometown in Hungary. And he also changed his religion and became a devout Catholic. He married the daughter of the professor and became a professor himself. And the Kaposi's lived happily ever after.

That is the end of my story. But before I leave I want you to remember that the examiners are all deaf and under beta-blockade. So you have to speak loud and clear and, moreover, full of confidence. Make your talk interesting for them.





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And never ever talk like politicians, talking too much and saying nothing. Well, I must stop to make room for the Queen”. The expression he used whenever he had to introduce his wife for a lecture after him.

The day ended very well. Everybody had been working hard, Dr. James most of all, with his sheer unlimited energy, but even he felt tired toward the evening. Happy and tired after an accomplished day, everybody retired. Rafael tidied up the slide projector and some papers Dr. James had left behind, and took them to his office. Dr. James was still in, browsing through some documents on his desk when Rafael came in and Dr. James told him immediately: “I just received this book about “Multiple choice questions on Respiratory Medicine” written by Dr. Norman Johnson, consultant physician at the Middlesex hospital. This book contains the 200 questions that each doctor should know before taking the MRCP exam. Take it with you and do not worry for the answers, you would find them at the end of the book.” Rafael took the book and asked him: “Dr. James how was the MRCP exam in your time? Was it as difficult as today? “No, it was much more difficult back then.” “How many questions did they ask you when you took the MRCP exam?” “None”, he replied. “None?, What did you talk about?” “Actually, they did not even talk to me.” “Oh, not again”, referring to the interview he had with his wife.

“How did you get through the MRCP exam?” “It was very easy. I had to examine a lady about 68 years old. It took me about 10 minutes. Then I returned and told the panel, “I am about to tell you the sad, sad story of Mrs. Mary, who was raped in Vancouver during her summer holiday 42 years ago”. The panel of aging doctors on beta-blockers woke up and jumped up and when I finished the story, they said to me “welcome to the Royal College of Physicians”. And that was it, let’s go. By the way, I used to say that this happened to one of my registrars, but don’t listen to that.” Dr. James had this incredible talent of leaving the interrogator even more confused after answering his questions.

Leaving the office together, Dr. Socías asked: “Dr. James, who was Wegener? You have never mentioned anything about him”. “Good question!” replied Dr. James. “And the answer is “I don’t know”. I have never heard or read anything about him. I do not know where he comes from or if he is dead or alive”. “I will find out for you!” Rafael said and they got into the elevator. “Good”! Dr.





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James replied and said: “Before you do that, go and see Mrs. Smith. She has been admitted because her Sarcoidosis has become active again”. “Can I see her tomorrow?” asked Rafael. And Dr. James replied: “Well, if you want to be a chest physician, go and see her now, but if you want to become a medical forensic specialist go to the half moon pub, just across the road, have a couple of pints of beer and come tomorrow to the morgue. Maybe you will find her there.” And with these words, Dr. James stepped out of the elevator. Just before the door closed behind him again, he turned around and shouted “And don’t forget the peanuts!” Rafael left without choice, and punched the button to go right up to the third floor.

October 12th 1984. Anniversary of the discovery of the American continent by Christopher Columbus. It is the day in which the meeting of two races, the Indian race and the European race, is celebrated. That day, the Tory party was celebrating its annual convention at The Grand Hotel in Brighton. The whole Cabinet and other members of the party were staying for three days. At 11:00 o’clock a huge bomb explosion occurred, destroying most of the building of the hotel and injuring some members of the Cabinet. Fortunately, Mrs. Thatcher was not wounded and she did not cancel the convention.



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Dr. James does not waste time. Ever. He is the kind of man who does not conceive a day without learning or teaching something. Thus, no a single occasion for teaching ever slips through. Everything concerning the patient is of importance to him. He observes everything with the utmost attention and interest. He does not get tired of repeating that observation and communication with the patient are the bases of medicine. Every little detail, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is in fact important to him.

Wednesday morning, Dr. James arrived at Ward II to start his ward rounds. When they reached Mrs. Becker, the registrar told Dr. James that she wanted to go home because she felt fine. The blood pressure was normal, so were her blood test results. Dr. James asked the registrar if he thought that she was ready to go home, and he answered affirmatively. Dr. James approached the patient, put his left arm on her shoulder and just said calmly to her: “stay with us for two more days.”

Friday morning, “Dr. James is not in a good mood today”, said the registrar to the new group of students who joined them that day from the Royal Free and Middlesex Hospital. “Last Wednesday he was terrible. He didn’t let me dismiss Mrs. Becker who I believe was ready to go home. But Dr. James just was in the opposite mood. So prepare for the worst today.”

Dr. James arrived at Ward II and did not look very happy. The first bed was empty. But not for Dr. James who asked a student from the Royal Free hospital “tell us all about him”. “About who, I do not see any patient over there.” The patient in question was taken to the X-ray Department. “You don’t need to see him to know his problem. Just have a look at his belongings and use your imagination”. Dr. James replayed and the students kept silent. Dr. James stood next to the patient’s night table and said “Just say this is a patient around sixty years of age with a lovely family, a daughter with two kids and a devoted wife wishing him to come home soon. It is all up there on the mirror. And he suffers from...?” “I have no idea”, the student said. Dr. James continued: “Diabetes. Because he is drinking this special juice for diabetes over there, you see? It’s sugar free. And he has only one leg”. Pointing to the pair of shoes under the bed... “No, he has two shoes” answered the young student. “Well, one of the shoes is wrinkled, the other one like new, because he has prosthesis on his left leg”. And



Dr. James moved to the next bed, stiff legged as if he was wearing prosthesis. Students therefore saw how a patient with prosthesis walks, and that the tip of the shoe is not bent nor affected by the way of walking.

They went to ward III and Dr. James asked another student from Middlesex Hospital: "Tell us what that is". She responded confidently: "She has a facial palsy or Bell palsy". "Very good!, and who was Bell?", asked Dr. James. "I don't know." "What is the name of this ward?" "I don't know." Turning to Rafael, who already knew that Dr. James does not forgive the students for ignoring the name of the ward, he demanded "tell her who Bell was". "Dr. Bell was an ophthalmologist from Middlesex Hospital who first described this condition and there is a ward that bears his name in that hospital" Dr. James looked at her steadily, shaking his head "don't you feel ashamed that this foreign doctor, from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, knows who Dr. Bell was and, moreover, he knows that there is a ward that bears his name in the hospital where you have spent more than two years? It's a shame!"

Then they reached Mrs. Becker's bed. The registrar mentioned that he was going to repeat her chest X-ray that day. But this time Dr. James didn't let him finish. "She doesn't need it. Send her home", he sentenced. From there the whole procession of white coats proceeded to the tea room. On the way, Dr. James stopped and asked the registrar: "Did you see Mrs. Becker's book?" The registrar, taken off guard, blushed and said puzzled: "No, it is something special what about it?" Sternly Dr. James asked back: "That is exactly what I wanted you to tell us". The registrar kept silent. Nobody had any idea where he was heading. He was known for unexpected behaviour, his questions were feared by everybody and not even his closest assistants were able to predict what would come next. His inquisitive, unyielding look made everybody think hard about Mrs. Becker's book, as if a life and death decision depended on it. "Go and have a look at it.", Dr. James demanded.

The registrar went obediently and did as he was told. In the corridor he met the group again and said "I saw the book". "Tell us all about it", asked Dr. James. "The book is a paperback about the Falklands War, published by Random House", told the registrar meekly, hoping to be off the hook. "That is it?" Dr.



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James's reaction of disbelief reduced the registrar's self-confidence to its minimal expression "What was in it?" Dr. James wouldn't let go. "A library card", answered the registrar knowing already that little details counted so much for Dr. James. "Very good! Let's see now, what is more important, the library card or the book?" asked Dr. James. The registrar, unable to follow and already confused, gave up. "I don't know", he capitulated.

Dr. James and his disciples kept walking until they reached a little living room where they used to discuss the cases and share some tea, coffee and biscuits after the ward round. Everybody was lost wondering what the connection was between the book, the library card and the patient. Everybody had served himself in complete silence. Dr. James knew that all were intrigued as if they were living through a suspense novel by Agatha Christie. Finally, he broke the silence and said to the registrar: "When Mrs. Becker came in the hospital she was carrying that book. I took a look at it and asked her about it. She told me that it looked interesting, but that she had not finished reading it yet. I noticed that the day she had taken out the book from the library had been just the previous day before coming to the hospital. But she had already read half of it. So what have we got here? A good reader who has been in hospital for a whole week and who we know has not read a single page because the library ticket which she used as a bookmark had not been moved. Today the bookmark was at the end of the book. This means that she is now ready to go home, but she was not in that condition last Wednesday. I wanted her to go home capable of inserting herself into the normal daily routine. You see, that kind of information will never be provided by any lab results nor any X-ray, but by observation."

Then Dr. James asked to one student from Royal Free Hospital "Tell us about the erythrocyte sedimentation rate of Mrs. Becker, was it normal?" "No, it was raised". "And what does it mean?" Dr. James asked. "It means that she has an inflammatory process". "Yes, you have got the MB. Now, go for the membership. What kind of inflammation?" "An inflammatory infection, I would guess". "No, it means that she has a chronic inflammatory process, either immunological inflammation such as Wegener's Granulomatosis, Sarcoidosis, Giant cells arteritis or infectious inflammation like Rheumatic Fever, Tuberculosis and many others. That is your answer to the examiner". Dr. James finished his cup





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of tea and said: “Next week the Queen is going to give a lecture in Tokyo, and you know what they did? They sent her two airplane tickets, one for Mrs. Dame Sherlock and another one for Mister Sherlock. They do not even know my name! I told her that I am not going anywhere. So, I will see you next week”. And he left. The following week, Mrs. and Mister Sherlock went to Japan for a week.





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January, 1985. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Foreign Minister, announced that the British Government has decided to close down around five British embassies in countries with poor commercial relations. Among them was the British Embassy in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Ambassador in London, Mr. Alfredo Ricart, went to Santo Domingo for consultations with the Dominican Government. A week later, he returned to London and brought with him the bad news: “the Dominican Government has decided to close down its Embassy in London, too”. Everybody was shocked. The Ambassador started to pack up and before his departure Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, gave him a knighthood.

The farewell party was at the Cuban Ambassador’s house. Among the guests was the Ambassador of the United States, who was talking to the Cuba and Nicaragua Ambassadors when Rafael arrived and Mr Ricart introduced him to them. When the party was over, Mr. Ricart and Rafael left together. Walking towards Mr. Ricart’s car, Rafael commented: “I was quite surprised to see the Ambassador of the United States and Cuba talking like friends”. “But they are friends”, replied Mr. Ricart. “Even with the embargo?” Rafael asked, and Mr Ricart replied: “I am not quite convinced that the Cuban situation is due to the economic embargo by the Americans”. “But everybody says that it is because of the embargo”, Rafael commented. Ambassador Ricart asked Rafael: “For whom did Castro make the revolution?” “For the poor”, replied Rafael. “Exactly”, Mr. Ricart responded and continued: “Castro promised the Cubans three things: Shelter, education and food and he did it, but with one condition: they had to remain poor. And Castro was so lucky that the Americans gave him the excuse for that with the economic embargo. And I believe that Castro will stay in power as long as the embargo exists”, Mr. Ricart concluded.

Rafael said: “I have not been to Cuba but I have been told that the Cubans love Castro, don’t they?” Mr. Ricart replied, “Yes, and there is a reason for that. When Castro took power, he distributed most of the properties of the rich people to the poor. Now, what would happen if Castro were overthrown and democracy re-established.? Well, most Cubans believe that the owners of the properties would be able to recover them and they would be homeless again. Castro guarantees that this will never happen.

Cubans know that they are not going to be rich and that they are not going to





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have social classes. They also know the embargo is only for them and not for the foreigners. In Cuba, a foreigner can get whatever he wants, from a Coca-Cola to champagne and caviar. Do you know why you are here in London? I'll tell you why. You want to jump from middle class to high class. And the easy way for you as a Medical Doctor, is to become a chest physician. Then, you will go back to Santo Domingo and there you will get a well paid job with your own car, like this one, a Mercedes Benz, a house in Santo Domingo and another one in the beach with a boat. Your children will have a good education and you will enjoy your retirement travelling with your wife around the world. No person in Cuba can have this kind of life. It doesn't matter how much they work or study. They are condemned to eat rationed food and it is not because they are poor due to the American embargo, it is because Castro's political rule to stay in power. Cuba has one of the most advanced technologies in Latin America to produce enough sugar, rice, beans, milk, and meat for its people. They are producing a lot of vaccines, most of which are not produced even by the British. Maybe I am wrong but these are the facts."

Mr. Ricart got in to his car and started it up, wound down the window and said to Rafael: "And it is wrong to believe that the economic embargo on Cuba is in the hands of the American President. It is in the hands of the Florida voters. That is why they are friends! Good night Rafael, thank you for coming." And he left.

8th, May, 1985. It was Dr. Socías' birthday and time for Dr. James' ward round. This week only four patients were there, one of them Mr. Martin, 65 years old, suffering from anaemia, fatigue and dizziness. A week had already gone by and his lab results were back to normal. Dr. James greeted him with his usual smile: "Hello, Mr. Martin, how are you today?" "Oh, fine, thank you. I am leaving to-day." "Are you?" inquired Dr. James. "Yes, Dr. Socías told me so". Dr. James read the record carefully, taking his time. Then he asked, "Dr. Socías, why is he losing weight after having already gained a couple of pounds?"

That was a terrible slip on Rafael's part. To check the weight of the patient was supposed to be part of the daily routine in preparation for the ward rounds. "I am afraid I don't know", he admitted embarrassed. "Did you ask the dietician





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why he is losing weight?” Dr. James continued. Another timid: “no”. Then he turned to the dietician, who was also oblivious of the problem. She informed Dr. James, “He has not been eating well in the last couple of days.” “And why is that?” “I don’t know.” “Mr. Martin is not eating well in the last 3 days and nobody knows why”, Dr. James droned on relentlessly. “Don’t send him home until you find out why he is not eating well.” Dr. James demanded.

At half past seven that same day Dr. Socías stopped by Mr. Martin’s corridor and asked the nurse if he had had his dinner already. Her answer worried him even more. He had not eaten well that day and had refused dinner. Something was definitely wrong and another rebuke by Dr. James, who would surely follow up on Mr. Martin’s weight loss problem, was insufferable. So he decided to pay him a visit that same night. “Hello Mr. Martin, how have you spent the day?”, “Not too bad.” “Oh, you received another get-well-card from Anne. Who is she?” and took the coloured postcard at his bedside “She is my only sister.” “Oh, just like me. My sister’s name is Ana. She called me today to wish me a happy birthday.”

“Happy birthday, Dr. Socías! Where are you going to have your party tonight?” “I am not going anywhere. I bought myself a cake and put the pictures of my family along the wall, then I’m going to prepare myself a Dominican supper.” “Alone?” “Yes, unless you want to join me.” “Can I?” and his eyes sparkled all of a sudden, smilingly. “Yes, if you wish you are allowed to attend my birthday party tonight” smiled Rafael ceremoniously. And dropping the playful formalities: “Come on, let’s party!” Never did Mr. Martin take off his slippers and his pyjamas so quickly, get dressed and, already a new man, shouted cheerfully, “Let’s go!”

Rafael had a little room just one flight above the ward. The window gave view to the street and the pub in front. Otherwise, it was just the usual view from a British flat window. Rafael offered him a chair: “Just make yourself at home.”, and taking off his white coat motioned to him, “would you like to listen to music? What kind of music do you like?” “Do you have some operas?” “No, I am sorry, I don’t understand opera. Don’t look at me like that. Not even Pavarotti does when he is singing.” “What about jazz?” asked Mr. Martin, hoping that this time Rafael would agree with him. “Oh, no! Jazz is an indecisive music. You



never know what is coming or going. The piano starts and then the music turns to the saxophone and you start shaking, wondering what is coming next, and by the time it gets to the flute it jumps into your ears and breaks your nerves. Do not listen to that music; it is not good for your health. May I suggest the best music on earth? Merengue”. “What’s that?” “Don’t tell me that you don’t know merengue!” “I am British, not Dominican!” “Well, let’s listen to Juan Luis Guerra: Guavaberry.”

After listening with increasing pleasure to the tropical rhythm of merengue, Mr. Martin took a closer look at all the photographs. “This is my mother. Fifty years old, seven pregnancies, seven births, zero caesarean. Nowadays it is the other way around.” “Why is it the other way around today?” “Well, the few women that get into labour are attended by the staff of nurses, anaesthetists, paediatricians and a gynaecologist who tells them “Don’t worry my dear. If you don’t give birth today, we’ll do a caesarean tomorrow”. Instead of that, my mother was attended by a midwife who used to tell her “Well Georgina, if you don’t give birth today, you will die tomorrow”. “What?” asked my mother. “Let’s do it now, give me the towel”. And putting it between her teeth she started to push down. Ten minutes later she gave birth. Then she breast fed us until we walked and bit her nipple, with due respect, of course”



Dr. Socías with his family, his brothers Bienvenido, Arturo and Ana with their father, Rafael Ignacio Socías Cordero, Santo Domingo, 1976

“Well, certainly, things have changed”, admitted Mr. Martin. “Who is that?” “That is my father, I was named after him. You would not believe the kind of man he is. A Gentleman as you British are, strict as any feudal lord and more consequent than the Pope. And these are my four brothers, Bienvenido, Arturo,



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Moisés and Fernando and my sisters Ana, Mercedes, Isaura and Yesenia. Bienvenido is a dental technician. Then comes Arturo who is a dentist and Ana, a dental technician too..." "You are all professionals." Mr. Martin said admiringly. "Well, we didn't have any other choice with my father," Rafael responded.

"I will tell you about my brother Moisés' experience. He usually got very good grades at school. But one day he came home with 59% in maths. This was very bad for his average, and his overall records would be affected. Of course, he was aware of it and did not dare to tell anyone at home. But he had no choice, since my father had to sign the report card and he gave him the card shaking more than Emperor Claudio. But my father just looked at it, then looked at my brother sternly, and signed it without uttering a word. All of us expected an angry outburst, we were sure my brother would get a good whipping, be locked up for the whole weekend, or something worse. Therefore, we were totally confused and shocked when he did not appear to react in any way. Days went by, and still nothing happened. We had already started to forget about it.

The week before that incident, my brother had received permission to go on a field trip to the central mountain region. His classmates would stay there for the whole weekend and, of course, everybody was very excited to go. Not even this field trip was cancelled. When the day for departure came, beaming with anticipation and pride, my brother packed his luggage. My father even drove him to the bus station and helped him find a seat and store his bag on one of the overhead racks. Then, as he was leaving the bus station, he was waving his hand and saying: "Have a nice weekend!" Dad got into his car, started it and drove off alongside the bus. From his window seat my brother peeked out and greeted him happily.

Only then did my father ask the terrible question: "By the way, what was your grade in your last maths test?" My brother turned white and whispered his own condemnation: "59". "What? How dare you go on a field trip?" shouted my father, as if not believing that that was possible. "Get out of that bus at once. You'll go home and study maths!" And never again did my brother get a bad grade in all his life."

"I don't believe you" said Mr. Martin, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.





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Truly such a story was hilarious. “But that is not all” Rafael continued. “I’ll tell you what he did to me. I used to suffer from enuresis, even when I was eleven years old. Bienvenido, Arturo and I shared the same bed and the nightly flood did rather upset my brothers. My father and my brothers had already run out of threats. Nothing worked. So one day my father decided to buy me my own bed. I was very happy when I heard the news. He took me to the back garden and asked me, “What is that?” “Oh, that’s Toddy’s house.” The dog house. “And what is next to the house?” “A bed.” “You mean your bed?” “Yes.” “Very good”, said my father. “Now listen carefully, from now on you are going to sleep with me, and if you wet my bed you are going to sleep there, to accompany Toddy who does the same thing at night as you do. And when you behave like a human being, you will be invited to stay inside.”

My mouth dropped open. I was so stunned I couldn’t even protest. And yet I knew he was not joking. I spent tree cold nights in my father’s bed, grabbing my gun, not daring to close an eye, fearing that in my sleep I would miss the moment again. But after those nights I was cured forever.” Mr. Martin was by now so torn between disbelief, shock, and laughter, that he only uttered “I can’t believe it! You are making fun of me, this is absolutely cruel.” “Maybe it is, but it worked and after those nights I never wet my bed”, confessed Rafael.

After those stories both were ready for dinner. Rice, beans, meat, salad and fried green and yellow plantains, a Dominican dinner was on the birthday menu. Mr. Martin loved it and indulged himself to his heart’s content. At some point he stood up and approached the window. It was a warm summer night and people were enjoying the mild evening at the “Half Moon” pub, right in front of the hospital. “I wish I could be there!” he sighed. “Really? Would you like to go to the pub?” asked Rafael. “Yes, I would!” “Let’s go to the pub.” Mr. Martin couldn’t believe himself what was happening. One hour ago he was lying in bed in a hospital and now he was going to the pub with his doctor. A rock band was playing live music; they both had a pint of Guinness and some peanuts, enjoying themselves, the music, the pub and the mild summer evening. One hour later they left.

On the way back from the pub, Mr. Martin pointed to a poster of Mrs. Thatcher.





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“Hello, Maggie. Rafael didn’t invite you to his birthday party. It’s a pity, because you would have enjoyed it.” And Rafael responded: “I might not have invited her.” “Why, don’t you like her?” “Oh, no, I love her. I am a fan of hers.” “If that is so, why would you not have invited her?” Rafael stopped walking, looked around and whispered into Martin’s ear: “because she is responsible for the Second World War.”

“What!?” shouted Martin, and everybody looked at them. “Are you out of your mind? Why do you say such a silly thing?” “Because she shouldn’t have been Prime Minister in 1979.” “Then, when?” “Well, in 1939.” “You are mad!” retorted Mr. Martin and left Rafael behind. While following his footsteps, Rafael kept explaining: “If she had been Prime Minister back then, Hitler would not have invaded Poland and he would have had to withdraw from Austria. Do you know why? Because he would have respected and feared her. But as things happen, she was Prime Minister forty years late. Don’t you agree?”

Mr. Martin stopped walking and took a deep breath, knowing that Rafael had a point “Well, if you put it that way you are right, I agree with you.”, he finally conceded. Then they entered the hospital and walked right up to the second floor. Before reaching the ward, Rafael suggested going to the day room to have a cup of tea. They sat down and the doctor asked his patient seriously: “Martin, Why did you put up on the mirror the get-well card from your sister Anna today, if she posted it already six days ago?” Again Rafael surprised Martin, who never thought that somebody would have noticed this seemingly insignificant detail. He remained silent and pensive. At that point Rafael stood up and laid his arm around Martin’s shoulder. “Look, I am your friend and I just want to help you.”

Those words touched him and he had to confess that they had argued badly because he was drinking a lot, and she had said some ugly things. “What did she say?” “She told me that she hated me and that she didn’t want to see me again. She came this morning to apologize. And took the card out of the drawer and put it up on the mirror of my night table.” “Did you forgive her?” “No, she was very rude to me.” A long silence settled in. Finally, Rafael broke the spell and said in a husky voice: “I understand you. The same happened to me once before. And I did the same thing to my best friend. Although he apologised





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I never spoke to him again. Even though our friends tried to reconcile us, I remained adamant.

A whole year passed. One night I was watching television alone at home. A television series called Kung Fu was on. The protagonist of this film was called Caine. Educated at a Buddhist monastery, where he learned a specific philosophy of life, he had come to America searching for his brother, I believe. Crossing the desert on foot he became dizzy and fainted. One man miraculously found him and took him back to his little hut, where he regained consciousness in a minute room.

After a week he was fully recovered and started again his routine of daily exercise and meditation. One day, the man told him that four men were on the way to kill him. And since he had watched Caine exercise, he asked him to kill those four men instead. "After all, I have saved your life. It is time now for you to save mine", the old man said. Caine refused. "I can't help you. I have been educated to preserve life, not to take it". "So, that is what you are telling me after I have saved your life?" The desert man became angry and kicked Caine out, shouting after him "You are a man without gratitude, don't ever return; I don't want to see you again, never. I hate you."

When Caine was on his way he came across the four supposed assassins. Then he returned to the desert man's house, realising that the four were serious about their purpose of killing the old man. In a fair fight he defeated all four of them. Surprised that he had returned after having been so viciously cursed, the old man asked him: "Caine, why did you return after all I said to you?" And Caine answered in a low, slow voice, "When anger reaches the tongue, a brother only listens to the heart." The next morning I went to my friend's house and gave him a big hug. And we have been best friends ever since." Rafael stood up. "Now go to sleep." Mr. Martin, deeply moved by Rafael's story, said: "Rafael, you are my friend and my brother too. Thank you! Good night." A few days later, Martin was discharged. His sister came to pick him up and both were reconciled.

December, 1985. Rafael took notes of every word Dr. James said. He showed a vivid interest in medical history and Dr. James took notice. For Christmas he received a book from his revered teacher "The man behind the syndrome"





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by Peter and Greta Beighton, about famous doctors. Dr. James's dedication read: "As far as you look back as much as you can look forward. Sir Winston Churchill." This book led Rafael to write a paper about twenty eponymous in chest diseases. Eponym disease is a disease that bears the name of the person who discovered it and this work will include not just the biography of each of the persons but also the original paper. Rafael presented this project to Dr. James who took a lively interest in it. Soon Rafael became familiar with all the libraries in London. Only Dr. Wegener, the discoverer of Wegener's granulomatosis, was nowhere to be located nor his original work. After looking everywhere, he was almost giving up.

Dr. James asked him one day: "Did you find Dr. Wegener's biography and his original paper?" "No", Rafael confessed. "What have you been doing then? Watching TV or taking pictures of the pigeons in Trafalgar Square?" "No, I have tried very hard to find something, but there are no traces of him anywhere. I really cannot find him." "Of course you can", shouted Dr. James. "If you could cross the Atlantic Ocean and find me, without any knowledge of the English language or even medicine, why can't you find him now? I have been teaching you to be a winner, and now you are telling me that you are a loser. It means that I have wasted my time on you. You lazy Latinos never learn. What have you learned from me so far, nothing? But you will. So wake up and don't ever tell me again that you cannot find him. I want you to find Wegener, dead or alive. But find him!" And with this last sign of exasperation he left briskly, leaving a dishevelled, confused and hurt Rafael behind.

Sheila, the librarian, had overheard the conversation and knew about his efforts to locate some information. "We have tried very hard" Sheila comforted him, "but many books and documents have been lost during the war. The only European country that stayed out of war and remained intact is Switzerland. You should write to the University of Geneva". "Geneva.... Sofia!" "Who?" asked Sheila. "Nobody", responded Rafael and left.



It is January 1986. Dr. James and his wife Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock had been invited to give some lectures in the United States.

On a freezing morning Rafael arrived at the Hospital. In Dr. James's office, Sheila and Sue, his secretary, were crying. "What happened?" Dr. Socías asked them. "Oh Dr. Socías something terrible happened". "Is Dr. James all right?" Dr. Socías demanded. "Yes, but Dr. Kevin Flint has been killed. He was hit by a car". "Oh, no!" exclaimed Rafael in disbelief and shocked by this terrible news. "When was that? We were together three days ago at the Middlesex Hospital". "It was two days ago, when he was on his way to his house. His motorcycle broke down on the motorway and he was hit by a car". "When are they going to bury him?" "On the 28th in Leicester", replied Sheila. "Who is going to attend the funeral?" "I asked Dr. James' registrar and other doctors but they cannot attend it". "Well, somebody has to represent Dr. James and the Royal Northern Hospital, so I will go. Sheila did you send flowers to the funeral?" "No", she replied. "Please send one in the name of Dr. James and another in the name of the medical staff of the Royal Northern Hospital, I will pay for them."

The day of the funeral arrived and Rafael went to Waterloo Station and took the train to Leicester. At the church the coffin was in the middle of the Altar, between the curtains. Among of the attendees were his family, a number of colleagues from the Middlesex Hospital and some friends. Dr. Norman Mcl. Johnson, consultant physician from Middlesex Hospital, read the last words as follows:

"KEVIN CHARLES FLINT, BA, MB. BChir, MRCP (20 Sept. 1952 -20 Jan. 1986)

Kevin Charles Flint, Sir. Jules Thorn Research Fellow to the Medical Unit of the Middlesex Hospital was killed in tragic circumstances in a "hit and run" motor accident on 20th January.

He was educated at the City of Leicester at Boys' School and St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, where he initially took a BA in Physiology before reading Medicine. He completed his clinical training at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, qualifying in 1978. After pre-registration posts in St. Albans, he



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spent a year as Senior House Officer in Medicine at the Lister Hospital, Stevenage, followed by a year as Registrar in St. Albans, during which time he gained his MRCP. For the last four years he worked at the Middlesex Hospital, first as Registrar to the Professorial Medical Unit and finally as Sir Jules Thorn Research Fellow.

He was a young man of outstanding ability and promise. Throughout his medical training he had shown himself to be an extremely enthusiastic and competent physician who was very highly regarded and liked by his medical colleagues and patients. He was totally committed to The Middlesex and there was never anything he could possibly consider too much effort, such thoughts were foreign to a person with his drive and vitality. His chosen speciality was Respiratory Medicine and during his Research Fellowship he performed fundamental studies into the pathophysiology of asthma. He was one of the first people to recognise the possible role of the bronchoalveolar mast cell in this condition. Not only did he enumerate these cells and discover the differences found in asthma, he also developed a model for functional studies on these cells which may prove highly relevant for the *in vitro* assessment of new asthma therapies. His research work yielded thirty two publications in the last two years, on thirty one of which he was the first author. In 1984 he was awarded the Medical Research Society Essay Prize and his MD Thesis was submitted to Cambridge University a fortnight before his death. He was in the process of completing a monograph on the mast cell and had contributed chapters to books on asthma and Sarcoidosis.

He presented his research frequently at both the Medical Research and British Thoracic Societies. In addition, in the last year he had given invited lectures both in the USA and Europe. He was an enthusiastic teacher both of undergraduates and postgraduates and was in great demand, both for his lecturing and bedside teachings.

He had been “head hunted” for a full-time career in research on more than one occasion. However, his commitment to the National Health Service as a concept and his love of clinical medicine made him decline these offers. He preferred to seek promotion within the conventional channels and was to be promoted to Lecturer within a few days of his death. His ultimate ambition





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was to become a teaching hospital Consultant Physician -none of those who knew him doubted that this was likely within a few years.

He was a kind, considerate and unassuming physician who will be missed by all his colleagues and patients, by all of whom he was regarded as a friend above all else. He had a lively sense of humour and total commitment to life, both at work and at home with his young family to whom he was absolutely devoted. He is survived by his wife Marian, his daughter Lucy, his son Sam, and Elizabeth, their three month old baby. Thank you.”

Then the curtain started to close and left the coffin behind it. His widow and family stood up and went out to see the wreaths of flowers and took the ribbons from each of the wreaths. Rafael was very impressed by the ceremony which is very different from those of his country, where the custom is to be present at the burial, which Rafael finds very painful.

Back in London it was snowing and windy, and he got to his house almost frozen. He prepared a cup of tea to get warm and turned on the television to watch the News at Ten on Thames channel. The programme was showing the launching of the Challenger which was about to start. 2-1-0 and the Challenger lifted up. Suddenly Rafael stood up saying in a loud voice “It’s on fire! It’s going to blow up!” The Challenger disappeared in a huge explosion, like big fireworks killing the seven astronauts on board. Rafael lay down devastated by another big tragedy.

A week later, Dr. James arrived from abroad and went straight to his office. The medical staffs were waiting at the Lecture theatre in complete silence. Suddenly, he appeared and did not greet anyone at all. This was something unusual for him and then he said: “Dr. Flint was killed during my absence and none of you were able to attend his funeral so I don’t expect you to attend mine and don’t expect me to attend yours, because you are the most ungrateful and unfriendly people I have ever had near me. You make me sick. And these words are not meant for Dr. Socias, who has been shown to have feelings, sympathy and friendship towards his colleagues even if they are dead. Thank you Rafael, I will never forget what you did”. And he went back to his office.





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Rafael kept working on his projects and Sheila, on several occasions, reminded him to write to the University in Geneva but Rafael always had an excuse for not writing. One day Sheila met him in the corridor and asked “Rafael, may I talk to you for a minute?” “Sure”. “Not here, in my office.” Once in the office Sheila said: “Please do sit down”. And so he did. “Now, you have been so strange since the day I mentioned Geneva and you mentioned Sofía intuitively. Tell me, who she is and don’t you dare to lie to me.”

Rafael was quite taken off guard, took a deep breath and started to confess the whole truth to Sheila. “She was my best friend since I came to this country. She helped me survive with language classes and gave me support in every way. She even helped me to get appointed at the Dominican Embassy. We were close friends. So when I was appointed at the Embassy I decided to bring my family over.

When the Embassy was closed down the Ambassador was transferred to Geneva and she went with him. And since then I have not seen her. But things didn’t work out with my wife and we got divorced”. “And you are still in love with Sofía, I can see that.” “Yes”. “And you must find out if she is still in love with you. I am sure she is. Write a letter to her right now.” Following Sheila advice Rafael wrote the letter and sent it out immediately and the waiting for her reply was as short as the letter itself.

Only four days later Rafael received her reply. “Dear Rafael, I am glad to hear from you again. I will always be ready to help and assist you in any way you need me. Love, Sofía”. Happiness, sadness and pain all swelled up in Rafael’s heart at the same time. Short but intense, the letter contained coded messages for Rafael’s heart only. As a result of it, a ticket to Geneva was booked.

The day of departure arrived. For the first time, Rafael got to the airport early. He was the first to pass the security check and to be seated. The plane started on time as British Airways always does. Although the route was London-Geneva, it felt to him as if it were London-Sydney. He counted each minute, each second. But it wasn’t too long. About an hour later the plane touched ground. Welcome to Geneva. Like a bullet he crossed the gate “nothing to declare”. His declaration had to be of a different kind and to another addressee. And there



she was. The one he thought he will never see again, and a big hug made their hearts meet anew.

The city displayed all its charm. Strolling through the well-lit streets. They walked around Geneva Lake; where once a group of religious fanatics had set out to create an utopian society. All that was long gone, cafes and shops surrounded it with an invitation for leisure and relaxation with the impressive view of its jet of water - "*Jet d'eau de Genève*". After lunch, they went to the University of Geneva Library in search of Wegener. The University building and the huge amount of books, made an impression on Rafael. After two hours of searching, Rafael had already found a great amount of information and among it the original articles of Robert Koch, René Laënnec, Thomas Addison, and many others. After three hours of searching in that treasure vault, the great moment arrived - "I got it", Rafael exclaimed holding the original article of Wegener: "On a peculiar rhinogenic granuloma with particular involvement of the arterial system and the kidney", Friedrich Wegener, Breslau, Germany, 1939." It was a great moment of joy and excitement.

It was already late when they left and Rafael felt, naturally, like celebrating and invited Sofía to dinner. "Let's go to my apartment," suggested Sofía. "I will cook for you tonight". She dropped him off at the hotel and continued to her house. Back at the hotel Rafael leafed through all his material. He felt elevated. He knew now that Dr. Wegener's first name was Friedrich and lived in Breslau. The librarian had told Rafael that Breslau is now the Polish city of Wrocław.

At eight the taxi came to take him to Sofia's apartment. The menu was her classic standard menu, chicken and cauliflower, but this time she included champagne. Everything was prepared for a candlelight dinner, the fireplace warming up the room. She invited Rafael to take a seat and served him. When she was about to set his plate on the table, he took her hand, looked straight into her eyes and declared: "I love your chicken, I love your cauliflower, and I love you!" This time she let him finish and raising her glass said "for your dream"! There was not much time left for dinner. The food grew cold under the passionate kisses. Right at that time the sky over the city was lit up with a thousand fireworks, celebrating "*La Fête de Genève*".



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Filled with happiness and satisfaction Rafael returned to London, after having spent some time with Sofía who always seemed to be in the right spot whenever he needed her.

Back in the Hospital Rafael presented his findings to his teacher, and told him that he did not find Dr. Friedrich Wegener's biography and the only place where he could find it was in Breslau, where the article was published. "But, the problem is that before the Second World War, Breslau was part of Germany. After the war it formed part of Poland, which belonged to the communist block". After listening carefully, Dr. James said: "Actually, I don't see any problem. What you have to do is drop a letter to Mr. Gorbachev, and tell him that you want to go to Breslau to find Friedrich Wegener. I am sure he will allow you to go there. Do you know why?" "No". "Because the KGB will tell him that you are a nice and clean chap, aren't you?" And he gave him a sheet of paper and a pen and left. In the middle of the corridor he stopped suddenly and turned around "By the way, don't forget to send our love to Mrs. Gorbachev, and a copy to the military intelligence agency MI5, just in case they follow you". Shouted Mr. Never-give-up David Geraint James. That night Rafael had a nightmare and saw himself entangled in a spider's web of secret agents, spies, hidden-men and playing cards with agent 007. My name is Bond, James Bond!

The letter had to wait, nevertheless, for another week because of the Fifth European Conference on Sarcoidosis in Vienna, at which Dr. James, Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock, Norman Johnson, Anton Pozniak, Sofía and Rafael would attend.

Already in Vienna Rafael and Sofía checked into the hotel and planned to do the most of the little free time the tight schedule allowed. They together with Anton Pozniak, and other participants of the congress went sightseeing in Vienna by night. Nobody, not even doctors could escape the city's charm and music, that it seemed to glitter from inside. As the evening drew closer they discovered the wonders of Austria's hospitality and thoroughly enjoyed Austrian beer and the night-life.

Long was the night, full of laughs and light-hearted, youthful jokes. Young was the next day when they finally returned to the hotel. And deep the slumber that





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struck them down, until almost lunch time. Groggy but cheerful, Rafael appeared for the last morning session. It did not escape Dr. James' keen eye that his disciple had been missing during the first session. "Where have you been? You should have attended the lecture on Wegener's granulomatosis given by Dr. Wolfgang Gross from Kiel, West Germany. He just mentioned that Dr. Wegener is still alive, is 79 years old and lives in Lübeck, a town in the North of West Germany, not far from the Danish border. But that is only of interest to doctors, not tourists like you. Let's go, I'll present you to him." With those words Dr. James led him to greet Dr. Gross and explained that Rafael was doing research and needed to find Dr. Wegener's address. Unfortunately Dr. Gross had left Dr. Wegener's address back in Kiel, but he promised to forward it to London.

This was exciting news for Rafael. It seemed to brush with one stroke the remains of a sleepless night, spent at the mercy of Vienna's glitter. Actually it was more than Rafael had ever dared to expect. Locating Dr. Wegener, perhaps even getting in touch with him personally seemed to recede on an ever elusive horizon. Never out of mind, but forever out of reach. Dr. James noticed Rafael's excitement and said: "Dr. Jacob Churg, from New York, is going to give a lecture on the disease that bears his name "The Churg-Straus vasculitis: Pathological aspects". Let's go attend it and I will introduce you to him after the conference."

The lecture theatre was crowded; there were Professors from all over the world, among them was Professor Dame Sheila Sherlock. When Dr. Churg finished his lecture he sat down next to her and Rafael took a picture of them. After that, Dr. James introduced Rafael to him.

At the closing ceremony Dr. James looked very happy and excited; he danced with his wife and also with other ladies. Professor Jones Williams danced a waltz with Dame Sherlock. Then The King and The Queen danced as if they were dancing in Buckingham Palace surrounded by their guests. What a wonderful night, dancing all together and enjoying delicious food and drink. It was a really royal banquet.

Back in London, Dr. James invited Rafael to the party at his beach house in Kent. He used to give one every year to his medical staff of the Royal Northern Hospital with their families, and also some doctors from the Royal Free, the Middlesex, and the London Hospital. Once there, Rafael gave Dame Sherlock the photograph





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that he took of hers with Dr. Jacob Churg. While she was looking at it, Rafael told her: “Dr. Jacob Churg is a worldwide authority on granulomatous disorders, isn’t it?” “Oh, yes indeed”, Dame Sherlock replied and she looked at Dr. James, who was pouring the tea for his guests. She added: “But, don’t forget that I have been married for more than thirty years to The King of granulomatous disorders and I am the Queen...his Queen, aren’t I?” “Oh, yes indeed!” Rafael replied, and they both smiled. “Thank you for the photograph; you are a good boy and photographer too” and she handed the photograph over to Dr. James.

Rafael suddenly realized he was being a witness to the enchanting personal side of Dr. James and his wife Prof. Dame Sherlock, hosting their friends and associates. Together with their two daughters, Amanda Melys and Auriole Zara, they were truly taking pleasure in taking their guests for stroll around the town and the beach, tending to the needs and wants of everyone around: serving tea and wine, passing around appetizers, taking photographs, playing with the children and even baby-sitting! The genuine display of plainness and humility at home, coupled with the strict and demanding professional stance at work, confirmed their greatness.





Merry Christmas
Sheila
and
Geraint
James
Mandy
Anniola
Michael



Merry Christmas
Sheila
Geraint
Alice
and now a
little Emily



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THE DINOSAUR





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Prof. Wolfgang Gross, in typical German fashion, kept his promise and mailed Dr. Wegener's home address: Nibelungenstrasse 141, D-2400 Lübeck, Federal Republic of Germany. Obviously, Rafael had to write to Dr. Wegener immediately. Then he sat down, waiting for the reply. Nothing happened for about three weeks. No answer from Germany. Rafael began to worry and, again, doubts flooded his mind. Was he sick? Did he receive the letter? Did he not care to answer? Perhaps he was not interested in breaking his retirement. His anxiety increased until one day, working at the hospital, a letter arrived. The stamp showed Lübeck.

My dear colleague Socías:

I thank you very much for your lovely letter I have received only today, 24.9.1986 after my return from fall vacations. Of course you are invited to visit me any time and I look forward to welcome you in Lübeck. Please write when you plan to come.

With best wishes...Dr. Friedrich Wegener

Rafael, content beyond comparison, felt he had not just received a letter. It felt rather like a reward after a long and arduous search, a diploma after hardship and relentless work. Now he was convinced that whoever perseveres will eventually win, that it is necessary to have goals and be committed to them. Shortly after, he agreed on a date for the visit with Dr. Wegener and prepared his trip to Germany.

He went with Sofia to Lübeck. The plane took off at Heathrow and landed in Hamburg, Germany with Rafael and Sofia on board, armed with a letter written by Dr. James:

Dear Professor Wegener

This splendid young Physician is studying with us here as a Postgraduate Physician. Eventually, he will return to his own country, the Dominican Republic,





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where he will have an illustrious career as a Consultant Physician.

He tells me that he is planning a pilgrimage to meet you and to salute you in view of your splendid contributions to the world of medicine.

In this letter, he carries with him greetings and salutations from the Royal Northern Hospital. I speak and write on behalf of all my colleagues here in wishing you well. Yours sincerely, D. Geraint James. Dean.

Slowly the train rolled into the Lübeck train station. Rafael and Sofía could hardly contain their excitement. The curtains of their compartment were wide open. Both looked intently out of the window, even though it was impossible yet to discern anybody on the platform. With a screeching halt the train came to a full stop, the loudspeakers announced in German the arrival of the inter-city train from Frankfurt, at 15:32 hours, according to schedule. Once at the station, Rafael remembered the description Dr. Wegener had enclosed in that letter: Dear Dr. Socías, we have reserved a double bedroom for 28/29.11.86 at Forsthaus St. Hubertus Hotel (Prospectus sent along with). The Nibelungenstrasse, where I live, is not far away.

Please, write to me the time of your arrival by flight at Hamburg and to Lübeck by train. My wife and I will see you in the railway station. We will be standing near the Exit way near the stairs and under the light. My little wife (156 cm, blonde hair) and I (186 cm) in dark blue winter coats with dark blue sailor's caps and glasses are conspicuous. Me and my wife will leave you at the Hotel in small car. My daughter, Mrs. Dr. Maren Thiel will be here on 28/29-11-86 and will stay with us. She was in California at La Jolla for a year and will speak English better. We wish you will have a good stay over here and we send best regards to you. Yours, Dr. Friedrich Wegener".

And there he was!!! Rafael went straight up to him, as an imposing figure approached the lost couple from overseas. Behind him, trying to keep pace with her husband's immense strides was a dignified lovely lady with a beaming smile. "*Sind Sie Dr. Socías von London?*" his voice roared. A man of seemingly indestructible energies, in spite of his nearly eighty years. Strong in every sense, physically, intellectually, spiritually, tireless. Rafael felt full of relief, joy, almost





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ecstasy at finally meeting the long searched for legend. He wore, as announced in the letter, a blue winter-coat, a woollen scarf and a sailor cap. “Yes I am, and this is Sofia. It is a great honour for me to meet you”. “The honour is mine, this is *meine Frau Ulla*”

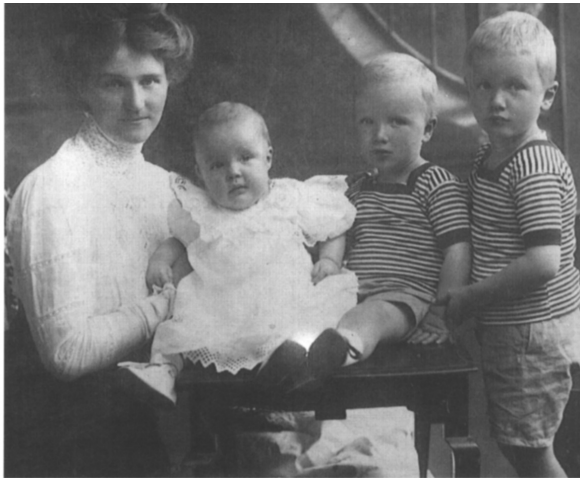
Dr. Wegener explained then that his daughter, Dr. Maren Thiel, would be waiting at home and that her English was nearly perfect because she had lived for a year with her family in the United States. Dr. Wegener and his wife took Rafael and Sofia to the Forsthaus Hotel, just around the block from their own house. There they would pick them up in about two hours, and so they did.

A typical German coffee table awaited them at Dr. Wegener’s rather inconspicuous house. But it was cosy and inviting and soon Rafael and Sofia felt totally at ease. Somehow Dr. Wegener took an immediate liking to them. The Latin warmth and openness caused quite an impression on that cold German November afternoon. Rafael still felt exhilarated. He just couldn’t step down from cloud nine. After such a long search he had finally located a living legend, an immortal of medicine and he would not let him go until he knew everything about him.

They sat down around the table and Friedrich’s powerful personality moved to the centre of interest. Rafael was captivated. It was a culminating experience. There he had reached the summit, the pulpit of expectation and admiration. Nothing could impress him more, no famous personality, no president nor star, could measure up with that moment. Rafael gave him Dr. James’s letter and the six issues of Sarcoidosis journals as a present from Dr. James. He read the letter and gave thanks to Rafael and to Dr. James too.

Dr. Wegener took out his family photo-album. He chuckled at some infant pictures saying “*Lasst uns über die Geschichte meines Lebens sprechen*”, and played himself Dr. Socías’ tape-recorder. “Let’s talk about the history of my life. This is me as a boy. I was born on 7th of April, 1907 in Varel, Oldenburg. This is my father, I was named after him. He was a physician, obstetrician and surgeon at Sankt Josefsstift Hospital in Varel”. He stopped talking, staring at a picture of a beautiful lady, saying: “that was my mom!” and he smiled: “Thyra Cécilia Thydén, from Sweden. She was a physiotherapist. We are two brothers and one sis-





Thyra Wegener with his children Brita, Paul and Friedrich; Varel, Germany 1910.

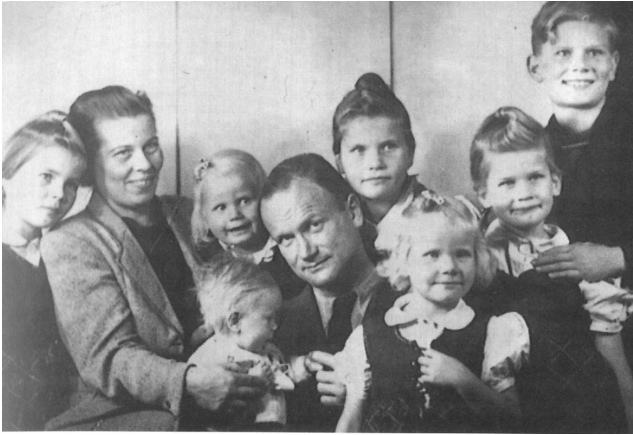
ter all still alive. I am the oldest one. My brother Paul and my sister Brita live in cities in southern Germany". For a moment, he remained silent. While memories crept up in Wegener's mind, he took a picture saying "look, I suppose this school looks a bit different from school in your country". "Oh yes" replied Rafael.

Dr. Wegener continued. "I went to primary school in Varel and to high-

school or gymnasium in Wilhelmshaven. When students finished high-school in Germany, they had to take an exam called "Abitur" and one had to pass it, otherwise you could not go to the university. I failed the first try, like Albert Einstein in mathematics, but a year later I passed it. That was in the city of Jever. I had a flair for languages, I studied Greek, Latin and English and I speak Swedish fluently. Since I was a boy, I was very keen on bee behaviour, so after high-school I studied zoology and botany, but my father felt that I should be studying something more productive and convinced me to study medicine, so I became a medical student in Munich in 1927. Sports were always important to me. It kept my body and soul together in times of difficulty.

In 1931 I won the national championship in "Schleuderball", a German sport, this is like hammer throwing but using a heavy leather ball with a strap attached, swung round the head and thrown in turning around the body. I completed my studies in Kiel in 1932. Then, I was attracted to the idea that pathology formed the basis of medicine. After my practical course I was a Medical assistant at the Pathological Institute in Kiel in 1933, under Prof. Leonhard Jores, Prof. Arthur Schultz and Prof. Kurt Wolff. My first three extraordinary teachers were thor-

oughbred morphologist. They taught me to look and understand, and also trained me how to expand the visual memory required for a morphologist. The Kiel Institute scope of its fundamental work in those days was the blood vessels, renal pathology and spleen diseases. 1934 was my great year. I quali-



*Behind: Brita, Mrs. Sophie Wegener, Thyra, Anke, Gesche, Friedrich
Front: Sigrid, Dr. Wegener and Maren. Germany, 1948.*

fied as MD, my thesis being entitled "Testicular tumour". Then I married Sophie Madsen, a primary school sports teacher and we had one son and six daughters. They are Friedrich, Brita, Thyra, Anke, Gesche, Sigrid and Maren.

In June 1934 I had performed a minute autopsy on a lorry driver, who developed a saddle nose deformity ulceration of the mouth and stomach and deafness and died from renal failure. All this happened within six months. Histological examination revealed a generalized angitis and multiple necrotic granulomata involving the nose, trachea, lung, kidney and spleen. I was very confused because the arterial renal changes looked like periarteritis nodosa, but I was not sure about it. My curiosity in that case continued and I studied periarteritis closely and I published a paper on it in 1935. By that time I was sure this case was clinically and pathologically distinct from periarteritis nodosa, but I did not know that it was a new disease.

In 1934 Prof. Jores retired and Prof. Martin Staemmler, from Chemnitz, became Director of the pathological institute. Schulz and Wolff left Kiel and Prof. Staemmler brought Prof. Rudolf Hüchel, from Göttingen, as his assistant. In 1935, Prof. Martin Staemmler left Kiel. He became director of the Pathological Institute at Breslau University and I joined him later that year as his assistant



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and tutor in dissection, histology and pathology to medical and dental students.”

In June 1936 I did the autopsy of my second case of sepsis, necrotizing granuloma and angitis. I presented the case to Prof. Staemmler who was at that time preparing the 29th Conference of the German pathological Society in Breslau, and he asked me to present both cases at the conference. I refused because I did not know the cause of the disease, and I was uncertain as to whether there would be any other similar cases.

My third case was given to me by Prof. Staemmler. Finally, Staemmler and Feyrter persuaded me to present them. While I was preparing my talk, I found that one of my best friends and ex-classmate in Wilhelmshaven, Heinz Klinger, who was assistant at the Pathological Institute of the Charité Hospital in Berlin under professor Paul Schürmann, had published in 1931, a case of destructive sinusitis, lung abscesses and renal failure, characterised by angitis and granulomata. I also found two more similar cases; one was published by Klaus Hoffmann in 1932 and the other one by Prof. Robert Rössle in 1933. Then I confirmed that I was dealing with a new disease.

On 27th September, 1936 I gave a ten minute account of my three cases with the title “On generalised septic vessel disease”. All the papers presented in the conference were published in the proceedings of the German Pathology Association in 1937”. “So next year is going to be the fiftieth anniversary of that publication, isn’t it?” Rafael commented. “Yes, and my eightieth birthday too.” “We must do something to commemorate both!” Rafael concluded.

“In June 23, 1938 I submitted a more detailed clinical and morphological study of my three cases entitled “On a peculiar rhinogenic granuloma with particular involvement of the arterial system and the kidney”, and it was published in 1939”. “That was the article we found in Geneva, isn’t it?” Sofia commented. “Yes, it was that one” Rafael said.

Another cup of coffee, another cognac, another chapter. “Then came the war, wartime are hard times for everybody and nobody could escape Hitler’s war machine. On 26th August, 1939 until the end of the war, I was appointed as army



pathologist. I was sent with the sanitary corps to the eastern frontier, stationed in Poland, where I did medical service at several wards in military hospitals. During the last few months of the war, I worked also as a troop doctor. When the war was over I was captured in April 1945 by the American troops, and released from British prison camp on 20th August 1945.



*Dr. Friedrich Wegener
Lübeck, Germany 1948*

After the war I worked as a farmer for two years. and, on april 1948, I became Assistant at the Institute of Pathology in Lübeck Hospital. In 1956 my interest in those pre-war cases was rekindled by several international reports of this disorder. Although N. Ringertz, a Norwegian pathologist, described in 1947 a special forms of periarteritis nodosa which he called “Wegener’s granulomatosis”, it was Sven Johnson, a Swedish pathologist who, in 1948, first recognised Wegener’s granulomatosis as a distinct entity separate from periarteritis nodosa. But the most interesting report was in 1954 by Gabriel Goodman and Jacob Churg, from The Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. They reviewed 22 cases of Wegener’s granulomatosis from the literature, adding 7

new cases and putting forward the diagnostic triad of:

1. Necrotizing granuloma in the upper and lower respiratory tract.
2. Generalized necrotizing vasculitis involving arteries and veins.
3. Focal glomerulonephritis with necrosis and granulomata”.

Then took his glass of cognac and said “You know, it was after this American paper that I realised that I was more important than I have ever imagined” and he laughed and added: “It was after twenty years that I started to appreciate the significance of my findings”, and he took a shot of cognac.

After the foundation of the Lübeck Medical Academy, I became lecturer of dissection and teacher of anatomy and histology, from 1966 to 1969. On March



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1st, 1970 I withdrew from the medical Academy and I was honoured with a torch light procession led by the medical students and physicians of Lübeck, where I settled as a specialist in pathology and opened my own pathological laboratory at number 12 Pferdemarkt Street.

In 1974, I lost Sophie, she died from breast cancer. But life has been too good to me and rewarded me again, giving me another great woman. Ursula Margot Zacharias- Ulla, and we married in 1975. She used to be my secretary. I was made “Doctor honoris causae” in Medicine by the medical University of Lübeck, that was on August 8th 1976. Because of the problem with my eyes, I retired completely from medicine on April 1st 1979, and now I am here in Lübeck, enjoying my retirement, spoiled by my devoted wife Ulla and in regular contact with my brother, a sister, seven children and seventeen grandchildren”. Then Dr. Wegener stood up and said: “and today is a special day, because new friends have just joined us. *Herzlich Willkommen in meiner Familie*, Welcome to my family. Let’s take a picture” said Dr. Wegener. “Yes, with this photograph I can get a job anywhere”. Replied Rafael and everybody laughed.

That evening Dr. Wegener and his wife invited Rafael and Sofia for dinner to a restaurant located in the 15th century house where the seamen of the Hanseatic League used meet in medieval times; it is one of the oldest and most famous houses in Lübeck. There, Rafael and Sofia discovered another liking of Dr. Wegener: beer. Well, German beer is infamously famous in its full right. At one point, Rafael asked him “Dr. Wegener, how many cases of Wegener’s Granulomatosis you saw as a pathologist in your whole career?” “Twelve cases, but I never used that eponym”. “Why? Don’t you like to be known as the discoverer of Wegener’s Granulomatosis?” He smiled and said: “When I die I would like that in the front page of the newspaper appears in bold letters “Dr. Friedrich Wegener- the dinosaur of morphology- has died”. And he laughed, morphology is the science that studies the form and structure of a particular organism, organ, tissue or cell. Then Dr. Socías commented: “Dr. Wegener, next year is going to be the XIh world Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan, and I wonder if you could attend it. I will arrange everything for you and Mrs. Ulla to go there”. “That would be interesting, if I am still alive maybe I will go”, said Dr. Wegener. “Of course you will be alive”, Rafael said, and Dr. Wegener replied: “When you



are young it is always summer, but when you are old the wind from the east is always cold.”

Rafael asked: “Dr. Wegener, do you have a copy of your original paper, the one from 1936?” “Yes, I do.” “Has it been translated into English?” “No”, he said. “Why?” asked Rafael. “Nobody has been interested in doing so, would you be interested in translating it?” “Of course, I think it would be very interesting if doctors around the world could have the opportunity to read it in English”, said Rafael. “My English is not very good to do the translation, but I will give you a copy of it”, said Dr. Wegener.

That night all of them indulged themselves. The cold night, the cozy restaurant, the hearty food and the Lübeck beer made whatever was left of strangeness fall away. They talked and felt as well with each other as if they had been friends for a whole life. No language barrier, racial or cultural barrier stood between them. For a flashing moment Rafael felt transported by time travel. Life can be good, people can be good and barriers are all in the mind. Nothing is real but friendship, openness and the heartiest fraternity that erase distances of culture, language, religion or whatever. It was near bliss.

The following day was spent sightseeing around Lübeck landmarks, studded with history and legends. Dr. Wegener showed himself to be an excellent tourist guide. As a Lübecker, he took them to see the oldest hospital in town from early Middle Age times, his pathological laboratory, where he worked for so many years, also to see the churches and many other places.

That night Rafael and Sofia invited Dr. Wegener and his wife Ulla for dinner at their hotel. At dinner, Rafael asked “Dr. Wegener, what do you do nowadays?” “My wife and I like to travel and we have been to many places, including South Africa. Six months ago, in May 7-9, we attended the International Colloquy on Wegener’s Granulomatosis and other Vasculitides of the Respiratory Tract at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, invited by Prof. Richard DeRemee, where we also met several other scientists on Wegener’s Granulomatosis like doctors Thomas McDonald, Louis Weiland, Wolfgang Gross, Niels Rasmussen, Nancy Bates Allen, Fouke Van der Woude and many others, including Dr. Ulrich Specks, a resident and pupil of Dr. DeRemee, who kindly performed



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as my translator”. “Dr. Wegener, what is it produced first in patients with Wegener’s granulomatosis: the vasculitis or the granuloma?” “The disease starts with the granuloma, which is developed in millions in the connected tissue, independently of the vessels; the vasculitis appeared after the granuloma. The granuloma often shows a central necrosis, rich in leucocytes and because of that Rössle described them as micro-abscesses when they were in fact necrotizing granuloma”. Dr. Wegener continued talking about the disease until the time came to ask for the bill, which he wanted to pay but Rafael did not allow him to do so.

Next day, Dr. Wegener and Mrs. Ulla, who was a good driver and also a good hostess with her lovely and constant smiles, took them to the train station for their journey back to London. At the station they gave each other a hug and a kiss; then Dr. Wegener took out of his rain coat pocket a paper and gave it to Dr. Socías saying. “This is the copy of my original paper from 1936. Take it with you, do the translation and publish it! Have a nice trip and do not forget to send us the pictures, *auf Wiedersehen meine freunde!*” (I will see you my friends.)

Back from Lübeck, Rafael presented to the medical staff of the Royal Northern Hospital “The discovery of Wegener’s granulomatosis: When, how and by whom? and Modern Developments.” Dr. Socías began his speech saying: “These are the main protagonists of the discovery of Wegener’s granulomatosis: Von Prof. Robert Rössle, Dr. Heinz Karl Ernest Klinger and Dr. Friedrich Wegener.

Friedrich Wegener, also called “Putte Wegener” by his friends, was born on the 7th of April 1907 in Varel, Oldenburg, Germany. His father, Von Dr. Friedrich Ludwig August Wegener, born in 1876, was a physician and surgeon at St. Josefsstift Hospital in Varel. He died on the 11th of July, 1937, at the age of 61. His mother, Thyra Cecilia Thydén, from Sweden, born in 1883, was a Physiotherapist. She died on the 10th of June, 1962 at the age of 79. From 1913 to 1916 Friedrich Wegener went to primary school in Varel and from 1916 to 1925 he went to *Káiser Wilhelm Gymnasium* (high-school) in Wilhelmshaven where he met Heinz Klinger, who was born on the 10th of February in 1907, son of a German navy officer stationed in the former German colony of Tsingtau, a



province in the east coast of China.

In 1909 Klinger and his mother went to Germany and his father remained in China for another three years. In 1913 he went to primary school in Essen, and in 1916 to *Kaiser Wilhelm Gymnasium* where he passed the *Abitur* in 1925 and went to Munich to study Medicine. Wegener passed the *Abitur* at the *Marien-Gymnasium* in the city of Jever in 1926. Then he went to Munich to join Klinger at Munich University to study first Biology and a year later Medicine. They lived together in a large room at *Goethe Strasse*.



Dr. Heinz Klinger, Berlin, 1931

In 1927 Klinger changed university to study the clinical terms at the Hamburg University and later he moved to Berlin. In 1929, Klinger returned to Hamburg to prepare himself for the *Staatsexamen* (State Exam), which it is the final exam to become MB or medical board. There, Klinger repeated a histopathological course where he met Prof. Paul Schürmann. This was to be the last semester for Schürmann in Hamburg, because he had been appointed Consultant at the Pathological Institute of the Charité Hospital in Berlin, led by Prof. Robert Rössle, and he offered Klinger to go to Berlin as his assistant.

Although Klinger wanted to become a medical surgeon he thought that this was a good opportunity for him to learn pathological anatomy and may be to get his MD in medicine and, in January 1931, Klinger returned to Berlin and joined Prof. Schürmann as his pupil. One day Prof. Rössle instructed Klinger to write a paper on two cases of sepsis with necrotizing granulomata in the nose, lungs, kidneys and generalizing angitis entitled: "*Grenzformen der Periarteriitis nodosa*" or limited forms of periarteritis nodosa.

The first case was a seventy year old doctor, from Berlin, who one year before his death developed joint pain, high fever and sinusitis, from which he was op-



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erated six months later. Two months after the operation he developed nephritis and was admitted in the hospital with a picture of chronic sepsis, with a continuous septic fever, sub-acute polyarthritis and generalized edema. There were protein and erythrocytes in the urine, along with leucocytes in the sediment. The blood pressure was normal as well as the blood urea, and the Wassermann test for syphilis was negative. The upper teeth fell down due to an infection in the upper maxillary. At this point, doctors thought the septic source was located in his upper maxillary. Therefore, the rest of the teeth and molars were removed. The infection disappeared; the patient got better, gained some weight and was transferred to a sanatorium. Fourteen days before his death, the patient developed again a nasal purulent secretion; he was almost blind due to myopia and protrusion of his eyes. Six days before his death he was admitted again in the Charité Hospital in Berlin, this time with cough, bleeding nose with formation of foul smelling scabs as well as pharyngitis, laryngitis, proteinuria and haematuria. The patient died from sepsis.

The second case was a 51 year old carpenter who six months before his death had had a cold with high fever, joint pains and haemoptisis. The patient got better. Three months later he presented general weakness and a severe constant pain in the left renal area. This was followed by joint pain in the knees, elbows and hips. At this point, doctors thought he had rheumatic polyarthritis and gave him high doses of salicylate.

On 20th of February, 1931 he developed a septic disease picture and was admitted in the hospital with high fever, polyarthritis and his chest X-ray showed round shadows in the lower lobe of the left lung and right pleural effusion. He also had ulcers in the palate and under the tongue, and a large and painful ulcer in the scrotum.

Laboratory tests revealed a renal failure with haematuria, proteinuria, and high index of blood urea, at 140 milligrams percent. A few days before his death he developed a skin eruption in the elbows. The patient died on the 16th of March, 1931 from renal failure. Histology showed necrotizing granuloma in lungs and kidneys, as well as multiple area of necrosis and hemorrhage.

This patient did not have nasal involvement at all. When Wegener's granuloma-



toxis starts from the lower respiratory tract (trachea, bronchus and lungs) a few French doctors called it “*Le Wegener décapité*”.

In April 1931, while he was preparing his paper, he attended the Congress of the German Surgeons, in Berlin. There he talked to Prof. Brütt, Director of the Harbour Hospital in Hamburg. They had met before during a minor surgery course in Hamburg in 1930, where at that time Prof. Brütt was assistant surgeon in that Hospital. Klinger asked him for a position as surgeon in Harbour Hospital. Prof. Brütt advised him to apply for the job as assistant in surgery in 1932, but before that he had to work as a surgeon in a small clinic. Following his advice, Klinger applied for a position as surgeon in the Town Hospital in Memmingen.

In June 1931 Klinger finished his paper which was accepted as thesis and he became Doctor in Medicine. In July 1931 Klinger left Berlin and went to Memmingen to work as junior assistant surgeon under Dr. Mulzer. In January 1932 Klinger return to Hamburg and started his surgical specialist training at The Harbour Hospital under prof. Brütt. In 1936 he opened his own surgery practice in St. Pauli, Hamburg. Klinger never was a pathologist as everybody does believe. In 1937 he married Eva Fischer, a widow with two children, Hartmut Fischer (13 years old) and Wolfgang Fischer (11 years old), who Klinger recognized as his own.

During the war he worked as a surgeon in several navy military hospital. In 1944 until the end of the war, he was transferred to a military hospital in the island of Borkum in the north sea, lower Saxony, northwestern Germany.

In 1976 Klinger wrote his memoirs “*Wege und Nebenwege. Erinnerungen eines Hamburger Arztes*” or “*Ways and Parallel Ways. Memories of a Hamburger Doctor*”; where he tells the story of his life. About the time he spent in Berlin from January to June 1931, he wrote: “One day Prof. Rössle called me to come to his office and instructed me to write a paper on “Limited forms of periarthritis nodosa”, giving me slides and protocols of post-mortem examinations, collected at the institute, as bases for the work. My report on the topic was accepted as dissertation (thesis) to become Doctor in Medicine. It appeared in the 1931 “*Frankfurter Zeitschridft für Pathologie.*” My dissertation paper



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was like a tiny stone thrown into quiet waters that generated waves without me realizing at that moment.”



Dr. Heinz Klinger and Dr. Friedrich Wegener in Lübeck, Germany, april 1982

In 1982 Heinz Klinger went to Lübeck, to visit his life-long friend Friedrich Wegener. Klinger spent his final years with his wife Eva in a home for the elderly in Bad Schachen, near the lake of Constanza (Bavaria), where he died in 1983 at the age of 77.” According to Dr. Wegener, Klinger was “musical, a great lover of arts and an accomplished traveler”.

In 1933, Prof. Robert Rössle published an article on five cases, all related in some way to rheumatic disease, under the title “On various forms of rheumatic tissue changes with particular consideration to rheumatic vasculitis.” The fourth case was about a forty four years old businessman, who had suffered from gonorrhea and anuria during the First World War. In September, 1931 he had a cold with arthralgia, which went on and became worse. Then he developed a septic disease picture with high fever,

jaundice and multiple skin abscesses, one of them in the left eyelid discharging pus into the eye and damaging the cornea. In October the left eye was removed, the patient got better and the fever, arthralgia and jaundice disappeared.

Four weeks later another abscess appeared near the left orbit and grew up, reaching the left ear. In April, 1932 the patient started suffering severe headaches, and the nose and right ear started to discharge pus. At this point, doctors thought the patient might have a brain abscess, but the X ray of nasal sinuses showed a sinusitis. On June 3rd a surgery of the nasal sinuses was performed.



The maxillary, frontal and sphenoid sinuses were filled up with pus. The culture of this pus was negative. Two days after the surgery, the arthralgia, fever and jaundices reappeared, but this time he had stomatitis and also bleedings from gums, palate and skin. His gums were gangrenous. He also presented diarrhea, difficulty to swallow and general weakness. The patient died. The clinical diagnostic was chronic sepsis. The autopsy samples revealed necrotizing granulomatous inflammation in the nose, lungs and kidneys. The pathological diagnostic made by Rössle was "A mixed forms of septic periarteritis with rheumatic vascular-connective tissue disease."

Rössle knew this case was the same, clinically and pathologically, as the case given to Klinger by him in 1931, because both cases had sepsis as well as nasal, pulmonary and renal involvement, and a period of remission and exacerbation.

In 1933 Wegener passed the *Staatsexamen* in Kiel and became voluntary assistant at the Pathological Institute of the University of Kiel, under Professor Leonhard Jores. In June, 1934 Dr. Wegener did the autopsy on a 38 year old man, a lorry driver from Kiel, who in January, 1934 had developed a pain in the upper jaw but did not go to the hospital, and instead he went to see a dentist.

Time passed by and in March the patient had a cold and nasal congestion, profuse discharge from the nose with formation of scabs, and the bridge of the nose slowly began to sink. By the end of May he began to lose hearing and developed a saddleback nose deformity with temperatures of 39.5 degrees. He went to see an otorhinolaryngologist who thought the patient had Lues disease or syphilis, but the Wassermann test for syphilis in blood and cerebrospinal fluid turned out negative, several times. The erythro sedimentation rate, performed twice, was raised at 124 and 150 mm per hour, and blood pressure was 95 over 55 mm Hg.

By mid-June he was admitted in hospital with a septic disease picture, high fever and arthralgia, ulcerous stomatitis, as well as painful and whitish ulcers in the mouth and cheek. His chest X-ray showed right lower lobe bronchopneumonia, erythro sedimentation rate was performed three times and the results were raised to 133, 154 and 170 millimeters per hour. The laboratory test re-



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vealed anemia and blood urea was very high at 196 mg. %, with protein in the urine and erythrocyte in the sediment. Agglutinins test for typhus, dysentery; yersinia, leptospirosis and brucellosis were all negative. Shortly before his death, a peculiar herpetiform skin eruption occurred, with multiple pustules on his face, abdomen, both extremities and in the back. He died at the end of June after several days of somnolence.

The clinical diagnostic was un-explaining septic disease, bronchopneumonia of the right lower lobe, ureic arthritis and exanthema. The histological examination revealed a generalized angiitis and multiple necrotic granulomata involving the nose, trachea, lungs, kidneys and spleen. The acute and lethal clinical course of this disease called Dr. Wegener's attention and he presented the case to Prof. Jores, who said to him: "I have never seen a case like this before. This case looks rather special, keep working on it."

In 1934 Prof. Jores retired and Prof Martin Staemmler, from Chemnitz, took his place as Director of the Pathological Institute, bringing with him Prof. Rudolf Hückel, from Göttingen, as his assistant. In early 1935 Prof. Staemmler left Kiel. He was appointed Director of the Pathology Institute at Breslau University and Prof. Hückel became the Head of the Institute. One day, Dr. Wegener showed to Prof. Hückel his special case of sepsis with necrotizing granuloma, generalized angiitis and nephritis, and also told him that he had shown the case to Prof. Jores, Schultz and Staemmler, and they all had concluded that they had never seen a case like this before. Prof. Hückel told Wegener: "Wegener, I have never seen a case like this either. This is something new. You must publish it!" "No way!" Dr. Wegener said to himself, because at that time he was working on two articles that he later published that same year. The first one was "Periarteritis nodosa and its significance report in a case of chronic dysentery", and the second one was "Anatomical results on Bang disease" or Brucellosis.

In June, 1935 Prof. Staemmler wrote to Wegener, offering him a position as his assistant and tutor in dissection, histology, and pathology to medical and dental students at the Pathology Institute of Breslau University. In autumn of that year, Dr. Wegener went to Breslau. Prof. Friedrich Feyrter was Consultant Pathologist at the institute.



In June, 1936 Dr. Wegener did his second autopsy on a case of sepsis and necrotizing granuloma. She was a 36 year old housewife from Breslau; who had had scarlet fever when she was a kid. In 1926 she developed rheumatoid arthritis. In early December, 1935 she had a cold with purulent nasal secretions. The nasal secretions went on and got worse, with the formation of foul smelling scabs. In March, 1936 she went to see an otorhinolaryngologist. By that time, she had already developed perforation of the nasal septum and a saddleback nose deformity. Nasal mucosa was inflamed and the biopsy sample revealed a non specific granulomatosis. In mid April she was admitted in the otorhinolaryngology clinic with fever, shivers and malaise. Two days later she developed a septic disease picture and was transferred to General Hospital. She had a purulent productive cough and the back of the throat and nose were filled with pus with an unbearable smell. Her chest X-ray showed left lower lobe pneumonia and she was admitted in the hospital. The laboratory test revealed anemia and leukopenia; and the erythrocyte sedimentation rate was raised 90 mm per hour. All agglutinins tests were negative. She had protein in the urine and erythrocytes in the sediment, along with leucocytes and hyaline granular cast.

Since the beginning of June she was treated with radiotherapy in her left hemithorax. Then the productive cough and nasal secretion became worse, as well as its smell. A week before her death she developed a peculiar herpetiform skin eruption all over her body, with pustules. She died in mid-June of that year. The clinical diagnosis was: sepsis; left lower lobe pneumonia and perforation of the nasal septum.

Dr. Wegener was very excited and happy to have another case of sepsis and granuloma. He presented the case to Prof. Staemmler, who was by that time organizing the 29th Conference of the German Pathological Society in Breslau, and he asked Wegener to present the two cases at the conference. Dr. Wegener refused because he did not know the cause of the disease, and he was uncertain about whether there would be any similar cases.

Then, Prof. Staemmler gave Wegener the internal organs of a lady who died from renal failure in Chemnitz, 1934. She was a 33 year old housewife from Chemnitz, who in early October, 1933 had had a cold with headache, high fever and



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a bleeding nose. On 20th of October she went to see the otorhinolaryngologist because she developed a large bleeding mass in the right side the nose and he found granuloma inside her nose with purulent nasal secretions. She had blue papules in her left cheek and in her back.

In November she started bleeding from her gum and a surgery was performed. The biopsy of the mucosa revealed a non necrotizing granuloma with giant cells. In December she developed a septic disease picture with a 40 degrees fever, and granulations in the nasopharynx, larynx and trachea appeared. The laboratory test revealed anemia, leukopenia and eosinophilia from 12 to 20%. The erythrocyte sedimentation rate was raised 102 mm per hour. There were proteins in the urine and erythrocytes in the sediment, along with leucocytes, hyaline and granular cast. By the end of December she was completely anuric. Six blood cultures were negative. She died on 6th of January, 1934 due to circulatory failure.

All this happened within a period of four months. Her skull cavity was not opened at necropsy, neither the nose. But this case, like the other two, had ulcerous necrotizing laryngitis and tracheitis with kidney enlargement, as well as necrotizing granuloma and angiitis in lungs and kidneys. This was the third case of sepsis and granuloma, and Dr. Wegener showed it to Prof. Feyrter who said to him, referring to the granuloma: “Wegener, this is always the same seducer, like a ball of yarn, full of secrets.”

Finally, Prof. Staemmler and Feyrter persuaded him to present his three cases at the 29th Conference of the German Pathological Society. While preparing his talk, Dr. Wegener found that his best friend, Heinz Klinger, had published in 1931 a report on a case of destructive sinusitis, lung abscesses and uraemia, characterized by granuloma and angiitis. He also found two more articles on that disease; one by Dr. Klaus Hoffmann, from Hamburg published in 1932 under the title “A case of Granuloma with Arterial changes”. The other article was the one published by Prof. Robert Rössle in 1933; so, Wegener felt more confident that he was dealing with a new disease.

On the 27th of September, 1936 he presented his three cases under the title “On Generalised Septic vessels disease”. While Dr. Wegener was presenting his three cases in Breslau, Prof. Rössle was presenting two cases at the Interna-



tional Congress of Otolaryngology in Berlin, under the title “On Changes of the Mucous Membranes of the Nasal Sinuses by Rheumatic Vasculitis”. The first case was the first one of the two cases that he had given to Klinger in 1931. The second one was the case of sepsis that he published in 1933, and Rössle concluded his speech saying that these two cases of sepsis were “*Grenzformen der Rheumatoiden Arteriitis*” or “Limited forms of Rheumatic Arteritis”.

In 1939 Dr. Wegener published a more detailed study of his three cases entitled “On a Peculiar Rhinogenic Granuloma with Particular Involvement of the Arterial System and the Kidney”. This work ceased, however, with the outbreak of the Second World War. When the war was over, Wegener’s interest in his prewar work was rekindled and, in 1956, he found similar reports of cases that had been mistakenly related to periarteritis nodosa. Two cases were published in 1941 by Postel and Laas, from Hamburg, under the title “Periarteritis Nodosa: a Report of two cases with Lung Disease”, and a further case by Stuart Lindsay, from San Francisco, California, in 1944 entitled “Chronic Granuloma associated with Periarteritis Nodosa. Report of a case with Renal Failure”. Ringertz, a Norwegian pathologist who read those two articles and also Dr. Wegener’s article from 1939, published in 1947, in Norwegian language, a page and a half report of two cases under the title “On a special form of Periarteritis Nodosa”, and in bracket (*Wegeners Granulomatos*)”.

In 1948 Sven Johnson, a Swedish pathologist, read Ringertz’ article and cut the name of Wegener from periarteritis nodosa with his article, in English, “A case of Wegener’s Granulomatosis”. Since then, Wegener’s granulomatosis was no longer connected to periarteritis nodosa or rheumatic arteritis, as Rössle thought. This new born disease, like a little boy, started to walk around the word until one day, in 1954, reached the hands of Jacob Church and Gabriel Goodman who confirmed that this was a new disease and also gave to the disease its own identity, to be recognized with the diagnostic triad, when the disease was 18 years old.

They published two articles in 1954. The first one was in August, under the title: “Wegener’s Granulomatosis”. In this article they published seven new cases of Wegener’s Granulomatosis. This article begins with the name of Wegener. The second one was in December, entitled: “Wegener’s Granulomatosis. Pathologi-



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cal Review of the Literature”. In this article they reviewed 29 cases of Wegener’s Granulomatosis including, for the first time, the Klinger and Rössle cases. This article begins with the name of Klinger in capital letters. In summary:

- 1) Rössle was the first one to observe the disease.
- 2) Klinger, the first one to publish it.
- 3) and Wegener was the first one to point out that this was a new disease.

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS:

“Wegener’s granulomatosis is a chronic multisystem granulomatous disease of unknown aetiology, characterized by a necrotizing granuloma in the upper and lower respiratory tract, Glomerulonephritis and generalized angiitis involving both arteries and veins.

The clinical aspects of Wegener’s granulomatosis have been well documented over the last fifty years. Multiorgan involvement with an insidious onset and rapid end, appear to be its hallmark. This insidious onset often starts with low-grade fever, malaise, weakness, unexplained weight loss and anaemia, then ending with a rapid deterioration to death in, on average, five months, sometimes as little as two to four weeks, almost due to pulmonary infection, renal failure, massive haemoptysis and cerebral vasculitis. However, limited forms can occur when there is no evidence of renal involvement with a good prognosis, and it is important to treat this early, both as the prognosis for patients who develop renal failure becomes so poor and also because of the difficulties to obtain adequate histology. In a substantial proportion of cases, the demonstration of systemic involvement is an autopsy finding.

The aetiology of Wegener’s granulomatosis remains an enigma and various theories have been proposed: infective, environmental or immunological, according to flavour of the times. The bulk of research has been in investigating immunological changes because granulomatous vasculitis is so suggestive of a hypersensitivity state. Much of the work has been conflicting. Initially, raised immunoglobulin A and complement 3 were found, as well as partial immune deficiency. Circulating immune complex concentrations, which increase with



activity, were also discovered and these were found deposited in renal tissue in some studies but not in others, leading to the view that there was either rapid clearance of the complexes by phagocytic cells, or the renal disease was not caused by circulating complexes at all. Alveolar walls were shown to have fine granular deposits of immunoglobulin G and immunoglobulin M on immunofluorescence, but no electron dense deposits were found.

Another study has not identified immunoglobulins or complement by immunofluorescence, but has demonstrated that the vasculitis lymphocytic infiltrate is by T cells and monocytes. However, the story of the circulating complexes has had more support with the finding of a reversible abnormality of splenic clearance of red cells in patients with renal Wegener's, suggesting that immune complex handling by the spleen is, in fact, defective. Recently, Van der Wonde and Wolfgang Gross have demonstrated immunoglobulin G auto-antibodies against extra nuclear components of polymorphonucleocytes -anticytoplasmic antibody-in active disease, titres of which are related to the result of an in vitro granulocyte phagocytosis test. This lends support the fact that Wegener's Granulomatosis is a distinct disease, as these autoantibodies have not been found as yet in any other forms of vasculitis.

The prognosis of untreated Wegener's granulomatosis, especially with renal disease, is poor. The mean survival is five months; ten per cent survive two years. Steroid therapy was initially reported to extend life over one year, but the response was temporary, remissions partial and relapses usually severe. Cyclophosphamide has been used successfully and Fauci claims a remission induction rate in ninety three per cent, and seventy five out of eighty five patients were alive after an average follow-up time of four years.

Because of the dangers of long term cyclophosphamide toxicity, it is thought that it may be possible to withdraw the drug after six to nine weeks and maintain remission on steroid alone for up to eighteen months, although Prof. Anthony Fauci has treated some patients with cyclophosphamide from one to several years.

Patients can have late relapses and should be followed up for life and treatment should be started early, as the patients who have developed renal failure



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on presentation have a much worse prognosis. Thank you very much for your attention”.

The questions seemed unending. Admiration rose among all of them for that brown doctor from the Dominican Republic, a place many had not even heard of before. Rafael felt good, warming up in the light of public recognition. All enjoyed Rafael's achievement thoroughly. Even Dr. James seemed to grow a bit softer that day, and could not find anything challenging to say. His smile from ear to ear said it all. He then commented: “You have brought a great man from obscurity. Now let the world know what he has done. Prepare a paper and send it to Thorax”. The official journal of the British Thoracic society. Rafael never thought that he would get so far. Nothing was further from his mind when he started his research on Wegener. It had taken him into un-chartered waters almost by chance.

While Rafael worked on the article, Dr. James was preparing his retirement. Budget problems had forced the British Government to close down the Royal Northern Hospital. Dr. James was the heart of the hospital and the Government was just waiting for his retirement, since the Whittington hospital was only a few blocks away.

Every year Dr. James and his wife invited the medical staff to a party at his beach house in Kent. Another, much more exclusive invitation went out once a year to a selected group of doctors, called the ‘big twelve’. National and international speakers who were the *crème de la crème* of the medical world would attend, and the registrar from his hospital, nobody else. That party took place at the Athenaeum, an aristocratic all-men's club in central London. In the centuries of its existence, no woman had ever been president of the club, the most exclusive and selected club in London where only the elite met. During the three years of his study, Rafael had known about that party.

One ordinary morning when the secretary handed out the mail, Rafael received a Sarcoidosis journal and an anonymous envelope which only read Dr. Rafael Socías. Nothing else. Rafael went to his room, laid down on his bed and started to open the anonymous envelope to find what he seemed to have awaited so patiently for. Inside was an elegant, yellowish card with black cursive letters and





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a heading which read: "Athenaeum". It was an invitation to the exclusive party Dr. James organised every year.

A weaker heart would have collapsed at such an indulgence of happiness. Not Rafael, though. Now he could hardly contain his excitement. He had to shout. Just once, then he threw the card in the air, pride and joy kept the card floating between the ceiling and his chest. Still astonished about the invitation, Rafael took the Sarcoidosis journal and his surprise was even greater when he saw that the issue of this journal was not a usual one, it was a special festschrift issue in Dr. James' honour, written by sixteen medical authorities who were Dr. James' friends from all over the world: London, New York, Los Angeles, Australia, Tokyo, Cardiff and Johannesburg, and it was dedicated to Rafael saying: To Rafael Socías, who kept us so happy at the Royal Northern Hospital. He never lost his smile on his face or his good humour even when he was under pressure. This makes him a worthy colleague. Geraint James." Rafael opened it and started to read it:

AN APPRECIATION OF A GREAT MAN

By Prof. Dame Margaret Turner-Warwick (London).

Justice cannot be done with a few short pages. This essay on Gerry James is intended merely to highlight, albeit incompletely, the way in which his personality has fired so many and so much over so long.

Gerry: the leader of men- Gerry inherited the whole wealth of the Welsh speaking people and has used the art and craft of this inheritance in every aspect of his tremendous career. Only by combining his unique talent with such energy, commitment and feeling could any one person achieve so much. His range of contribution is such that it is difficult to know where to begin. But whichever starting point is chosen, it is the stamp of the inimitable man that identifies Gerry's special contribution to medicine, to patients, to students and to science.

Gerry: the teacher- Gerry has always taken a particular personal interest in his students and junior staff; teaching them his craft while they served with his team, encouraging them in research projects, guiding their careers and always





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remembering their later achievements and successes. His inextinguishable letter writing ability ensures that no event, however small, goes un-noticed and we have all been cheered on our way by a kindly and unexpected note. His contribution to post-graduate teaching has also been notable and single-handedly he has probably masterminded more international symposia than any other individual physician in London. His international authority not only enables him to attract world class specialists as they pass through the UK, but his efforts to seek them out and know their movements during their travels in uncanny. As an extension of this, he with Sheila created the Horseshoe Club. (now the International Medical Club) to entertain twice a year as many as possible of the overseas senior medical visitors and their husbands/wives while in London. In this way recognizing on behalf of us all the tremendous hospitality we all receive when travelling overseas. Gerry himself is, of course, recognized and welcomed all over the world. Not content with organizing major public functions for all comers, his parties given at his home with Sheila are notorious and prove that it is not the second mile but the third that counts when repaying hospitality.

Gerry: the clinician- Not many individuals of international standing can today truly be called both general physician and specialist. His range of information and experience as a diagnostician is enormous. This is reflected in the scope of his published books. His special interest is of course, his love of that ubiquitous disorder, Sarcoidosis, but only in the context of granulomatous disorders in the widest sense. The characteristics of the disease itself are in tune with Gerry's personality. The features are often dramatic and characteristic; they extend into every system and organ of the body; they range from the dangerously acute to the extremely chronic. There is no branch of medicine that does not meet Sarcoidosis in some shape or form. Gerry's interest does not remain at the clinical level, but Gerry the scientist uses his might and main to understand more about this most curious condition.

Gerry: the scientist- The pathogenesis of sarcoidosis has fascinated Gerry for years. As each new exciting immunological advance is made with new tools and techniques to understand disease mechanisms, so Gerry applies them with great success to the sarcoidosis and granulomatous processes in general.





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His greater understanding, often basis of collaborative work with others, has led him to create tantalising hypothesis fundamental to the understanding of granulomatous conditions of the body. As the field moves, so Gerry moves with it- always up to date and usually a jump ahead.

Gerry: The King of Sarcoidosis- Others will write on Gerry's contribution to sarcoidosis, but in the context of the man it must be recognised there is no aspect of this subject which he has neglected. The clinical and research aspects have already been commented upon, but his commitment goes much further than this. He has masterminded international conferences, he has had a major influence on the European Society of Sarcoidosis, he has been primarily involved in the creation of the Journal Sarcoidosis. He has brought together international multi-centre studies to compare the experiences of different countries, and he has insured that as much as possible of all information collected is reported and recorded so that others can read and learn.

Gerry: the writer- All his knowledge and skills are not left merely at the level of personalised teaching and contributions to international meetings, which on their own account have been massive enough. His writings have been extensive and for all types of medical audiences. His notable illustrated Atlas of Chest Diseases jointly with Peter Studdy, and his recent book on Clinical and Pathological Aspects of Sarcoidosis, written jointly with Willie Jones Williams, are two outstanding examples of eloquence and practical value, and both combined with a most elegant presentation.

Gerry: the man- That one man can do so much to help his patients, his students and junior staff, the international community of specialists, as well as contributing as author, critic, scientist and innovator of all things sarcoid, is the stamp of the man. All this is carried before him in a whirlwind of good humour, understanding and friendship in the style of a man who is talented, knowledgeable, sociable and unique. That man is Gerry.





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The next day Dr. Socías went to Dr. James's office to thank him for the invitation at the Athenaeum and for the special Journal of Sarcoidosis in his honour.

“Good morning Dr. James”. “Oh, good morning Dr. Socías, come in and sit down”. “Thank you for the invitation at the Athenaeum”. “Oh, that is nothing. I have another one for you better than that one. Here you are. Prof. Michael Anthony Epstein is going to give a lecture on the virus that bears his name “The Epstein-Barr’s Virus”-State of the art. That will be held at the Royal Imperial Medical Association”. “And also thank you for this special issue of Sarcoidosis in your honour, I didn’t know about it”. “Did you read it?” asked Dr. James. “Yes I did, and I really enjoyed it. But you know, I should’ve written an article in this Festschrift, because I know more about you than all of them, and I can write myself a book about you.” “Of course you can”, Dr. James replied, “But I don’t think that you would. You have been with me for more than three years and yet you have not written a single page about me. Instead of that, you have spent a whole weekend with Dr. Wegener and you have written two articles about him and, moreover, you invited him to visit Milan and you haven’t invited me to visit Santo Domingo, have you?”

Dr. Socías smiled and responded “You can be sure that I am not only going to write your biography and invite you to Santo Domingo, but I will also get you the title of Professor and Sir David Geraint James”. Dr. James burst out laughing, saying “Very funny, very funny. By the way, have you already written to Dr. Wegener telling him about the invitation to the Sarcoidosis congress in Milan?” “No, I will do that tomorrow”. “Tomorrow” Dr. James repeated in a low voice and said: “You know, I don’t speak Spanish, but I know that for the Spanish tomorrow is *mañana*, and for me *mañana* is today. Do you have with you Dr. Wegener’s home address?” “Yes”, Dr. Socías responded. “Please, give it to me”. And so Dr. Socías did. “I shall write the letter for him today and I will post it today, no *mañana*. Is there anything else that you want me to do for you?” Rafael smiled and said “No, thank you. I will see you at ward round.”

When he was about to open the door, Dr. James asked him: “One more thing before you go, did you finish the articles on Dr. Wegener?” “Yes, Susan is writing the letter to the journal and Sheila is typing the manuscript, I will post them





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today, for sure” Dr. Socías responded and left. As soon as he closed the door Dr. James shouted “You have to become a Muslim to have four wives to do everything for you”, rebuked Dr. James jokingly. Three days later the papers were done with the assistance of Anton Pozniak, MD from the Middlesex Hospital and a close friend of Rafael’s, and sent to Thorax under the title: Translation of a classic paper “On Generalised Septic Vessel Disease” Dr. Friedrich Wegener. Translated by R Socías and A Pozniak, and Fiftieth Anniversary “Wegener and Wegener’s Granulomatosis”. But the surprise had no end. The executive editor, Anne E. Tattersfield, not only accepted the articles but also decided to dedicate an editorial to them in the next Christmas issue, written by Dr. Elizabeth H. Sawicka from Brompton Hospital, London, with the title: “The Necrotising Vasculitides”.



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September 6th, 1987. The XI World Congress on Sarcoidosis and other granulomatous disorders is about to start in Milan. Dr. Wegener will attend it as Honorary Guest. Rafael and Sofia arrived at the main hall of the Università Statale where the Congress was going to be held. The main hall was crowded, and Doctors and Professors from all over the world were present. Once in there, Dr. Socías saw Dr. Wegener and his wife Ulla talking to a group of Doctors gathered around them. Dr. Socías and Sofia went to greet Dr. Wegener and Ulla. “*Hallo, Herr Dr. Socías und Frau Sofia*, how nice to see you both again”. Dr. Wegener said and gave them a hug and a kiss and asked Rafael: “Where is Dr. James? I want to thank him for inviting me *und meine Frau Ulla* to this congress”. “He is having a cup of tea at the cafeteria with some doctors. Let’s go there; I will introduce you both to him.”

Dr. James was talking to some doctors and Rafael interrupted him saying: “Dr. James I want you to meet Dr. Friedrich Wegener and his wife Ulla”. The King and the Dinosaur have met for the first time. They thanked each other and Dr. James invited them to have a cup of coffee, then he introduced Dr. Wegener and his wife Ulla to Prof. Willy Jones Williams from Cardiff and Prof. D. Olivieri from Parma, Italy saying “let’s have a picture, shall we?” And Dr. Wegener responded “Yes, with this photograph I can get a job anywhere” and Dr. James burst out laughing. After the photograph Dr. Wegener laid his left arm around Rafael’s shoulders and said to Dr. James: “Dr. Socías is the best biographer I have ever had”. And Dr. James replied: “and he is my man behind the syndrome”, and they all laughed.

Monday 7th Opening lecture. Let the game begin. The lecture theatre was crowded and there was not an empty chair or space left for another person. Doctors from all over the world were present. In the main table were seated Dr. James, Dr. Wegener, Mrs. Ulla Wegener and the organizing committee. The King of Sarcoidosis stood up, walked to the stand and took his throne. He thanked the Honorary Chairmen, the Organizing committee and the audience, and said:

“During this week we shall discuss 9 aspects of Sarcoidosis, for these are the nine main topics. In the course of my introductory talk, I plan to ask the most important questions relevant to each theme. By the end of the week, I hope





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that participants will answer these vexing questions:

- If interleukin-2 is present in abundance, then why is there no dramatic response to treatment with cyclosporine?
- How may we best map the route from active granuloma to Fibrosis; is it best achieved by electron microscopy, humoral mediators or magnetic resonance?
- Why is Sarcoidosis so frequent in the West Indies and so rare in the Chinese and Greeks?
- Fibrosis commonly leads to functional impairment of lungs, but why so rarely in the eyes and liver?
- New techniques add new clinical dimensions. How can we best illuminate such dark high mortality areas as cardiac-and neurosarcoidosis?
- What are the causes of Sarcoidosis?
- What are the links between Sarcoidosis and neoplasia and with other overlap syndromes?

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I want you to give a very warm welcome to a great man who discovered for us a disease that bears his name, please welcome our guest of honour, Doctor in Medicine and Doctor honoris causae Friedrich Wegener.”

Everybody stood up and gave him a huge applause. And the dinosaur of morphology stood up and walked to the stand with his impressive figure, like a dinosaur walking in his Jurassic Park and said:

“Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great honour and pleasure for me to take part in this international congress. I warmly thank the past president, Prof. James from London, for having invited me and I look back to Horace to express my feelings. In his poem to Maecenas, Horace says: *“Quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres, sublime feriam sidera vertice”* (If you include me in the group of lyric poets, with my head high up I will hit the stars). As one of the oldest representatives of granulomatous disease scientists, I would like to slightly





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modify these verses, “*Praesident, quodsi me Sarcoidotibus inseres.*” President, If you consider me as one of Sarcoidosis experts, I will be overjoyed.

My thanks to the organizing committee and, in particular, to Prof. Grassi, Prof. Pozzi and Prof. Rizzato for the continuous attention devoted to my wife and myself and the warm Hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Even if I have already said the most important thing, let me look back to Wegener’s Granulomatosis. In 1936, in Breslau, on the occasion of a seminar of the German Society of Pathology, as it was then called, I had a speech on three cases with a unique clinical aspect not so really well taken into consideration at that time. Anatomically, it was characterized by the onset of granulomatous-necrotizing and ulcerous processes in the respiratory tract and in some internal organs by a general necrotizing-granulomatous vasculitis and a focus-shape glomerulonephritis, the so-called Triad, as it was defined by other authors.

I was young, self-confident and carefree and I spoke of a new disease. Some highly-experienced pathologists who were present shared my opinion: Aschoff, Fahr and Schürmann. My short report was published in 1937, that is, 50 years ago. Two years later I extensively revised the three observations referring to a particular rhinogenic granulomatosis. At present, this definition is considered as the classical one.

I have never claimed “*ius primae observationis and publicationis*” (I was the first to observe it and publish it). It is up to my schoolmate and old friend Heinz Klinger to do it who, in 1931 described a case of classical Wegener’s Granulomatosis as a limited case of periarteritis. Neither Klinger nor Rössle realized to be just in front of a new disease.

In 1947, 40 years ago Ringertz, a Norwegian, spoke for the first time of Wegener’s Granulomatosis as well as the Swedish Johnsson in 1948 and the Americans Goodman and Churg in 1954. Since then, this disease has been called Wegener’s Granulomatosis all over the world.

In 1967 -30 years after the first definition- I published a monograph on the dis-



ease. Parallely, in the USA, a number of reports on the successful treatment of Wegener's Granulomatosis, incurable up to that time especially Anthony Fauci and Richard DeRemee were published.

There is a good reason for celebrating the 50/40/30/20 year anniversary in the life of a Pathologist. Thanks to the grace of God, I discovered a disease that for 30 years was considered incurable and then, through an efficient therapy, remission and recovery were made possible. Can a physician wish more during his life?

I would like to speak about the present status of research and knowledge on Wegener's Granulomatosis, but do not want to anticipate anything that will be said by the other speakers. Thank you very much for your attention."

All the audience stood up and started to applaud him; Dr. Wegener went to the main table and sat down next to his wife Ulla, while the audience kept applauding him so that they both stood up to thank the audience again.

Tuesday 8th Dr. Wegener arrived at the town hall to receive the golden key from the city of Milan, a distinction that he appreciated so much. He thanked the Mayor of that lovely city for such a distinction, and also the organizing committee. He was also honoured with the Order of "Ambrogino" for the Excellence, for his particular contribution to the science. Among the presents were Dr. Geraint James and his wife Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock, London; Prof. Dame Margaret Turner-Warwick, London; Prof. Richard DeRemee, Rochester, Minnesota and Dr. Carol Johns, Baltimore, Maryland. After the ceremony Dr. Wegener introduced Rafael to Prof. Richard DeRemee, a great friend of his and one of the leading experts on Wegener's Granulomatosis.

Wednesday 9th. Rafael and Sofia went to see The Domo of Milan and the chapel *Santa Maria delle Gracie* where Leonardo Da Vinci painted "The Last Supper", and at night they went to the opera at the *Scala Da Milano*.

Thursday 10th. The festive nights took place in *Da Castello Sforzesco*, an old castle from medieval times in Milan. Dr. Wegener and Mrs. Wegener sat together with Rafael and Sofia in the same table. Everybody wanted to salute Dr. Wegener and to have a photograph with him. Then Rafael said to Dr. Wegener:



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“You told Dr. James that I am your best biographer but you didn’t tell him that I am your best photographer too”. And Dr. Wegener responded: “No, because I didn’t want him to be jealous of me” and he laughed.

Friday 11th. Dr. Wegener and his wife Ulla invited Dr. Socías and Sofía for dinner at “*Da Bruno Ristorante*” near their hotel, and they sat down at the terrace. Dr. Wegener ordered, in Italian, orange juice for the ladies, two pints of beer and two small glasses of Italian liquor, one for each other.

When the waiter brought the order Dr. Wegener took the small glass and said: “For the Italians this is a digestive, and for me it is an aperitif”, and he took it in one shot. Dr. Socías followed him and it happened again, his eyes grew wide and popped out. Fire consumed mouth and stomach. Fire screamed for water. He could not run and it was too late for him to spit it out. Sofía noticed that and gave him her glass of orange juice, and he took it in one shot to calm down the burning pain of the Italian grappa. Then Rafael asked: “Dr. Wegener, why did you go to Kiel to finish your medical studies and not finished them in Munich? Dr. Wegener took his glass of beer and almost finished it, and said: “because my father did not want me to become a Bavarian”, and he laughed.

“You also told me that you had seen 12 cases of Wegener’s Granulomatosis but you have never called it that, what did you call it?” “I used to call it Rhinogenic or pulmogenic Granulomatosis and the reason for that was that my old and good friend, Heinz Klinger, had the disease in his hands before me. But Rössle made one mistake: to link the disease with rheumatism. I didn’t make that mistake in the report of my three cases; and I started to present them saying “In Investigations on Cases of Sepsis with Generalised Vessel Changes, a particularly striking disease picture could be distinguished”. And I concluded my speech saying: “This disease picture does not seem to have been recognised previously. In the publications available to me there is a report by Klinger of a case described as a borderline forms of periarteritis nodosa, in which very similar nasal changes were also found.”

I was right. Therefore, all the credit for the discovery of the new disease was given to me. But for me that credit has to be shared not only with Klinger but also with Prof. Ludwig Aschoff from Freiburg, because before I concluded my



speech, I said: “This presentation of three cases with striking agreement between their clinical course and anatomical changes is intended to emphasise the existence of a particularly well differentiated disease picture characterised by:

1. A septic course,
2. Extremely severe necrotising-granulomatous inflammation of the inner nose with involvement of the pharynx and larynx,
3. Renal changes in the form of toxic localised Glomerulonephritis, and
4. Generalised arteritis with the picture of Periarteritis nodosa”. And it was Prof. Aschoff who stood up at the end of my speech and told the audience: “I believe this is a disease picture of an independent nature. I am not convinced that a periarteritis nodosa is present”. At that moment Wegener’s granulomatosis was born, and he personally told me so with these words: “Herr Dr. Wegener you have just presented to us three interesting cases, I believe that this is a new and very special disease”. And so it was. Prof. Aschoff was one of the greatest German pathologists of all time and an expert in vascular diseases. He discovered in 1904 the “Aschoff’s nodules” in rheumatic myocarditis.

Another one who stood up was Paul Schürmann from Berlin and said “According to my observations, the disease picture described by Herr Wegener is an idiosyncratic one. Apart from the case of my student Klinger, a case was published by Hoffmann as Inaugural dissertation from the Fahr Institute and, as far as I remember, another one by Rössle. In the case of Hoffmann there were granulomatous changes in the middle ear, which, apart from syphilis, which they were interpreted as, made one think of rheumatism.”

Then Professor Karl Theodor Fahr from Hamburg stood up and said: “In reply to Mr. Aschoff I would like to emphasise that I too, naturally, consider the cases described to be an independent disease picture. In the case from my Institute referred to by Mr. Schürmann we thought at the time of syphilis, whether correctly or not remains uncertain.” Prof. Fahr was another great German pathologist. In 1923 he claimed that tobacco smoking can produce lung cancer but he is best known by Fahr’s disease which is a degenerative neurological disorder



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due to calcification within the basal ganglia. “Finally, Herr Dr. Siegmund from Kiel said: “these cases are undoubtedly rather special”.

My paper was published with eleven illustrations and nine medical discussions. And that was very important for the recognition of Wegener’s Granulomatosis as a new entity because Ringertz and Sven Johnson, who were the first to mention my name with this disease, read my paper and they saw the macro and micro vascular changes, as well as the opinions of the leading experts on pathology that were present during my speech.”

Rafael, now understanding who were the first to observe the disease, asked Dr. Wegener: “Let’s put it all together, according to what you said, Rössle and Fahr were the first to observe the disease, and Rössle though that the disease was produced by rheumatism and Fahr by syphilis, am I right?” “Yes” Dr. Wegener responded and Rafael continues asking. “And they instructed their pupils, Klinger and Hoffmann, to do their doctorate thesis on that disease, which were later published.” Another simple “Yes.” A brief silence settled in. Rafael was concentrating in his next question while Dr. Wegener kept looking at him, smiling and waiting for the question. Then Rafael with a big smile said to Dr. Wegener. “And you, a young and unknown pathologist, dared to challenge Prof. Rössle and Prof. Fahr by saying that this was a new disease, didn’t you?” Dr. Wegener smiled and rising his glass of beer said: “Bravo! Let’s have a toast, cheer!” Then Rafael commented: “If Dr. James were here with us I am sure he would say: “With one observation Wegener wrote a paper and became a Consultant. That is what medicine is all about: Observation”. They all laughed.

Sitting next to them was Dr. Heinrich Klech, the former organizing chairman of the 5th European Congress of Sarcoidosis that was held in Vienna, Austria in 1986. He overheard the conversation and asked to Dr. Wegener: “Dr. Wegener, when you presented the three cases in 1936, did you believe that those cases belonged to a new disease? And Dr. Wegener asked him: “Do you want me to be honest?” “Yes”, he said. “At one point I thought that those cases were no more than a bluff”. And he laughed.

Dr. Wegener finished his glass of beer as did Dr. Socías, ordered another round of beer and continued talking. “Before I presented my three cases, Periarteritis



Nodosa was for me like Sarcoidosis is for Dr. James. I was very keen on vessel disease and I published an article on it in 1935, that's why I knew that in Periarteritis nodosa you do not see that kind of necrotizing granuloma in the nose and patients do not die within six months, as it happened in those three cases. But the truth was that I did not know, nor Klinger, that it was a new disease; I thought it was some kind of virus or bacteria that produced the disease. Therefore, I presented them with the title "On generalised septic vessel disease". Fifty years have passed and I still believe that the aetiology of this disease is due to an allergic organic reaction of the body to some kind of toxic infectious process.

Richard DeRemee, a great friend of mine and one of the leading experts on Wegener's Granulomatosis, published an article in 1985 in which he said that some reports have implicated bacterial or viral infections in relapses of Wegener's granulomatosis. It has always been thought that gastric ulcer was produced by stress, and now Dr. Barry Marshall from Australia said that gastric ulcer is due to helicobacter pylori infection in the stomach, which is a bacterium". Then Dr. Wegener called the waiter, asked for the bill and said:

"Well, Rafael and Sofia, you are a very nice couple and we really appreciated your company, and thank you for being with us during this week which we really enjoyed". In that moment the waiter brought the bill and Dr. Socías told the waiter: "Sir, please give it to me". But Dr. Wegener took the bill and said: "You do not have to pay the bill and neither do I, it is the king of Sarcoidosis that is paying the bill". He laughed and paid the bill. Then, Dr. Wegener took out of his blue suit pocket a paper and the small wooden box containing the Key of the City of Milan, and said to Rafael with a big smile: "Thanks to you I have this!" Rafael, with an even bigger smile reposted, pointing to Sofia: "and thanks to you, I have her!" They all laughed, stood up and gave each other a hug and a kiss. Then Dr. Wegener gave the paper to Dr. Socías, saying: "take this with you and publish it, will you?" "Yes. Is it a new article you have written?" "No, that was my speech at the congress!", and he laughed. "Have a nice trip and do not forget to send us the pictures, *auf Wiedersehen meine freunde!*" (I will see you my friends).



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez





The King and The Dinosaur

EPILOGUE



Time, implacable in the end, rolled on. The day of parting and returning to the Dominican Republic appeared on the horizon. The departure day drew closer. Some things had still to be taken care of, lots of things actually. First, Rafael sat down and pondered about his priorities and wrote a letter to Dr. James before going to the hospital. At the hospital, he went to Sue's office and gave her the letter for Dr. James and thanked her for all her support during his time at the Royal Northern Hospital. She told him that Dr. James had already arrived but he was not in his office.

Then he went to Sheila's office, also to say good bye to her. "Good morning Sheila". "Oh, good morning Dr. Socías. Awful day, isn't it?" "Yes, it is cold, raining and dark as usual; Sheila, tomorrow morning I am going back to Santo Domingo for good and I want to thank you for all your advices full of wisdom, and also for the unconditional support that you have given me during the last three years. I really appreciated all that, thank you ". "Oh, don't mention it, we all had great moments in this hospital. I am sure you will have an illustrious career but you must follow Dr. James's footsteps. Be nice to Sofia. She will rebuild your life; I believe so without any doubt whatsoever. Give me a hug and write to me to learn about you".

Dr. James got into his office and sat down. But today it looked naked, stripped of the disarray of papers and things strewn all over. It was Dr. James' final day at the Royal Northern Hospital and time to say goodbye for Rafael too. Only two items retained the essentials of the man who had taught, thought, worked and written for many years on the heavy desk which was too old for further use, crowned still by two personal items, a little bust of Hippocrates and an old-fashioned Bible. Between them lay a white simple envelope which, as if resisting it, Dr. James opened in an almost reluctant manner, so unlike his usual impetuous behaviour. The small paper in it read: "I know that I can never thank you enough for all that you have done for me during the time at the Royal Northern Hospital. I feel, however, that I must let you know how much I appreciate all your efforts to teach me not only medicine, but almost more importantly how to be a good doctor and person. You have been like a father to me and I will always remember what you have taught me and endeavour to live up to your high standards. Yours ever, Dr. Rafael Socías".

Precisely at that moment there was a knock at the door, which stood half ajar, it was Rafael. "Good morning Dr. James, I just came to say goodbye to you. My plane is leaving early tomorrow morning and I don't know how to thank



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez

you...” Dr. James hardly let him finish his sentence, interrupting him briskly. “You don’t have to thank me and I will tell you why. Please, do sit down. I have a Japanese friend who returned to Japan after the war to help rebuild his country. I lost contact with him after his departure and had not heard from him again.

Thirty years later I went to Japan for a lecture in Tokyo, when somebody approached me from behind and tipped me on the shoulder “Hello, Gerry”. And instantly I knew it was him. So we had dinner together and talked a lot about the years we had not seen each other. He had Kirn beer; I stayed with my British gin and tonic. Reflecting about Japan today, I asked him how his country, after such a humiliation and destruction of the Second World War, had been able to rise like a phoenix out of the ashes and surpass all the previous powers that had put her into the dust. “Tell me, what is the key to this miracle?” And you know what he said? “Not to work for us”. “For whom do you work, then?” I asked intrigued. “For the generations beyond our sons”.

I did not quite understand what he meant. Later on, I realised that love was the key. Love for his country and his people, love for the present and the future. And listen to our own Christ when he said “love your neighbour as yourself”. And I would add “But love them more if they are in pain”. That is your mission. Love means feeling, empathy. The lack of love leads to lack of humanity. And this lack could cause the disappearance of this profession. And we will be replaced by computers if we do not keep these values. That was my job and I did it with love.”

With those words he stood up and took the little bust of Hippocrates and handed it over to Rafael, saying: “Now it is your turn. Go to your country holding this in your heart, and pass it on. Go.” They hugged each other and tears came into their eyes. Rafael left the office and in the middle of the corridor he turned around and saw The King of the doctors looking up at his last disciple walking away from his palace; Dr. Socías raised his right hand holding the little bust of Hippocrates and showed it to him as if it was his torch, his trophy, his gold medal or his diploma and for the first time shouted over to his teacher “I LOVE YOU TOO!”.

THE END



27 September, 1987. The engines flared up. Rafael returned to his country and became a lecturer of medicine and of the history of medicine.

8 April, 1988. The dream came true. Sofia came to Santo Domingo and they got married and had two children, Carolina Sofía and Andrés. And they all live a happy life in paradise: the Dominican Republic.

8 May, 1989. It was not funny at all. Rafael invited Dr. Geraint James and his wife Professor Dame Sheila Sherlock to visit the Dominican Republic. They received a Professorial Honorary Degrees of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, the oldest university in America. They were also honoured by the Dominican Government and decorated by President Joaquín Balaguer with the Order of “Sir Christopher Columbus”, the highest honour the Dominican Government can bestow on a foreigner.

9 July, 1990. **Dr. Friedrich Wegener, The dinosaur of morphology, has died.**

His urn was installed in the family tomb in Brake (Lower Saxony) near the town of Bremen, Germany. And in tribute to his memory Dr. James wrote:

I need not be missed
if another succeeds me
to reap down those fields
which in spring I have sown.
He who ploughed and who sowed
is not missed by the reaper.
He is only remembered
by what he has done.

30 December, 2001. Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock, The Queen of the Liver, died. Her urn was installed in The Baptist church in Enfield, Middlesex, England.

“I am very lost without my beloved Sheila. We enjoyed and shared 50 Golden Years of happy marriage”, wrote the king to his disciple. The King has lost his most appreciated piece of gold: Sheila, who still glitters to him, to her daughters, her grandsons, and to all of us that knew and loved her too.

Long life to the Queen and *auf Wiedersehen meine freunde!*



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



GRATEFULNESS

Veronica Kliper, Germany.

Anton Pozniak, England.

Hjalmar Thiel and his wife Maren Wegener, Germany.

Ursulla Wegener, Germany

Richard A. DeRemee, Unite State of America

Alberto Santana, Dominican Republic.

Enriquillo Ureña, Dominican Republic.

María Laura Schefer, Uruguay

and to my wife Carmen Sofía López Guzmán, Colombia.

Thanks to them this history could be counted.

Dr. Rafael Socias Pérez

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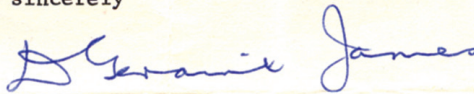
13 August 1984

Dr R Socias
Embassy of the Dominican Republic
4 Braemar Mansions
Cornwall Gardens
LONDON SW7

Dear Dr Socias

Thank you for your letter of 31 July which was awaiting my return. Yes, of course I shall be delighted if you can join me here. I hold a Sarcoidosis Clinic every Monday afternoon from 1.30 pm onwards. You can spend as much or as little of the week as you can manage. You will find it very interesting and productive.

Yours sincerely



D GERAINT JAMES MA MD FRCP
Dean

Dr. med. Friedrich Wegener
Nibelungenstrasse 141
D 2400 Lübeck 1

Lübeck, den 16.10.1986


Herrn
Dr. med. Rafael Socias
Royal Northern Hospital
Holloway Road
London N7 6LD.
England

Sehr geehrter Herr Kollege Socias!

Für Ihren liebenswürdigen Brief vom 24.9.1986 danke ich Ihnen erst heute, nach meiner Rückkehr vom Herbsturlaub, herzlich. Selbstverständlich können Sie mich jederzeit besuchen, und ich freue mich, Sie in Lübeck willkommen zu heissen. Bitte schreiben Sie mir, wann Sie hierher kommen!

Mit besten Grüßen

Ihr



(Dr. Friedrich Wegener)

Dr.med. Friedrich Wegener
Nibelungenstrasse 141
D 2400 Lübeck 1

Lübeck, den 20.11.1986

Herrn
Dr. med. Rafael Socias
Royal Northern Hospital
Holloway Road
London N7 6LD.
England

Lieber Dr. Socias!

Für die Nacht vom 28./29.11.86 habe ich ein Doppelzimmer im Hotel Forsthaus St. Hubertus (Prospekt liegt bei) bestellt. Die Nibelungenstrasse, in der ich wohne, ist ganz nahe.

Bitte, schreiben Sie mir, wann Sie mit dem Zug von Hamburg in Lübeck ankommen. Meine Frau und ich werden Sie im Bahnhof erwarten. Wir stehen oben am Treppenausgang des Bahnsteiges und sind leicht zu erkennen: Meine kleine Frau (156 cm, hellblond) und ich (186 cm) im dunkelblauen Mantel, mit dunkelblauer Mütze und Brille, werden Ihnen sofort auffallen. Meine Frau und ich werden Sie dann mit unserem kleinen Wagen zum Hotel bringen. Meine Tochter, Frau Dr. med. Maren Thiel, wird uns am 28./29. 11. als Dolmetscherin zur Verfügung stehen. Sie war ein Jahr in La Jolla, Kalifornien, und beherrscht die englische Sprache.

Wir wünschen Ihnen eine gute Reise hierher und grüssen Sie herzlich,

Ihr

(Dr. Friedrich Wegener)

Dr.med.Friedrich Wegener
Nibelungenstrasse 141
D 2400 Lübeck 1

Lübeck, den 9.3.1987

Herrn
Dr. med. Rafael Socias
Royal Northern Hospital
Holloway Road

London N7 6LD.
England

Dear Doctor Socias,

I thank you for the marvellous translation of my first
paper on the granulomatosis which I send back to you.

My regards to you and your devoted wife.

Sincerely yours



(Dr. Friedrich Wegener)

Dr. Rafael Socias Pérez

23rd September 1987

Dear Dr. James:

I know that I can never thank you enough for all that you have done for me during my time at the Royal Northern Hospital. I feel, however, that I must let you know how much I appreciate all your efforts to teach me not only medicine, but almost more important, how to be a good doctor and person. You have been like a father to me and I will always remember what you have taught me and endeavour to live up to your high standards.

Yours ever

Dr. Rafael Socias

D. Geraint James, MA., MD., FRCP
Dean,
Royal Northern Hospital,
Holloway Road,
London N7 6LD

Thorax 1987;42:918-919

Translation of a classic paper

On generalised septic vessel diseases

FRIEDRICH WEGENER

First published in 1937 in the *Verhandlungen der Deutschen Pathologischen Gesellschaft* (29:202-10)

Translated by R Socias, A Pozniak

In the investigation of cases of sepsis with generalised vessel changes a particularly striking disease picture can be distinguished.

This is a report on the findings in a 38 year old man (case 1) and a 36 year old (case 2) and a 33 year old woman (case 3) in whom the clinical symptoms and course of the disease for the most part showed agreement, with a duration of four to seven months, a septic disease picture with a temperature of 39-5°C, blood cultures always negative, and a much raised erythrocyte sedimentation rate. The Wassermann test was negative several times in blood and cerebrospinal fluid in all three cases and there was moderate anaemia. Typhoid and paratyphoid agglutination tests and Bang, Flexner, Y, and Weil tests were negative. The disease started with rhinitis and stomatitis, pharyngitis, laryngitis, and tracheitis followed. The nasal process predominated, with the formation of foul smelling scabs. In the first two cases a perforation of the septum developed, and in the 38 year old man a saddleback nose. Complications that occurred in the later course of the disease were protein in the urine and erythrocytes in the sediment, along with leucocytes and hyaline and granular casts; the Esbach test for protein gave a value of $\frac{1}{2}$ %. The blood pressure was not raised, but in the first case blood urea increased to 196 mg, with uraemic symptoms. There was complete anuria in the third case. In the first two cases pneumonic symptoms and a peculiar herpetiform skin eruption occurred shortly before death.

CASE 1 Main necropsy findings: Necrotic process of the internal nose and paranasal sinuses with extensive destruction of the septum and of the conchae. Ulcerous necrotising stomatitis, laryngitis, pharyngitis, and tracheitis with miliary nodule formation. Infarction like foci in both lungs with cavernous cavitation. Large mottled kidneys with blurred markings and haemorrhages.

Address for reprint requests: Dr R Socias, Royal Northern Hospital, London N7 6LD.

Microscopy: There were recent and older stages of periarteritis nodosa in the gall bladder, testes, epididymis, urinary bladder, diaphragm, rectum, appendix, adrenals, and abdominal skin. The kidneys similarly showed arterial changes in the form of polyarteritis nodosa, and also at numerous glomeruli circumscribed loop necroses, roughly with the appearances of a localised glomerulonephritis; in places there was also an increase in the capsule epithelial cells with a suggestion of half moon formation. The most striking changes, however, were periglomerular granulomas diffusely distributed in both kidneys, consisting of radially arranged fibroblasts, permeated or surrounded like an areola by polymorphonuclear leucocytes, predominantly lymphocytes and plasma cells. Within the granulomas the glomeruli were sometimes almost necrotic or completely destroyed, or converted into a loose connective tissue structure permeated by the cells of the granuloma, sometimes with partial or total hyalinisation. There was extensive leucocytic lymphocytic infiltration of the interstitium with atrophy of the renal tubules and numerous hyaline casts.

Inside the nose, besides extensive necrosis, there was cell rich granulation tissue with granuloma like perivascular "epithelioid cell" foci and nodular necrosis, similar to those found in the pharynx, the larynx, and trachea, within the mucous membrane and sometimes in deeper layers.

In both lungs the infarction like necrosis and the most severe vessel changes were found in the marginal cicatricial connective tissue sections, with destruction of the elastic elements and intimal proliferation. The processes are probably essentially the same as the other extensive arterial changes.

In CASE 2 a necrotic process of the nose and paranasal sinuses was also found. There was ulcerous necrotic stomatitis, tracheitis, and bronchitis, with isolated, just visible nodule formation and bronchopneumonia of both lungs with circumscribed necrosis. Multiple older infarctions of the spleen and kidneys were seen.

Microscopy: Here there were also generalised arterial changes in the form of polyarteritis nodosa of the gall

Thorax 1987;42:920–921

Fiftieth anniversary

Wegener and Wegener's granulomatosis

Wegener and his background

This year is the 50th anniversary of the publication in 1937 of Wegener's classic paper "On Generalised Septic Vessel Diseases" in the *Proceedings of the German Pathology Association*. To commemorate this anniversary and the 80th birthday of Dr Friedrich Wegener we are publishing the first English translation of the original German article in *Thorax*.

Friedrich Wegener was born on 7 April 1907 in Varel, Oldenburg.¹ His father, Dr Friedrich Wegener, was a physician and surgeon at St Josefsstift Hospital in Varel and his mother, Thyra Cecilia Thyden, a Swedish gymnastic director. Wegener, who was educated in Varel, Wilhelmshaven, and Jever, showed a flair for languages, studying Greek, Latin, and English, and he now speaks Swedish fluently. He was a natural sportsman and was German hammer throwing champion in 1931. After high school Wegener studied botany and zoology, but when in 1926 his father felt that he should be studying something more productive he became a medical student in Munich. He completed his studies in Kiel in 1932 and qualified as MD in 1934 with a thesis entitled *Testicular Tumour*.

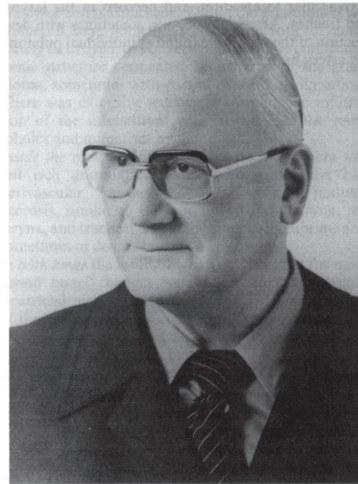
Wegener was attracted to the idea that pathology formed the basis of medicine and on 15 March 1933 he became assistant at the Pathological Institute of the University of Kiel under Professor L. Jores, R. Hueckel, and Martin Staemmler. With the foundation of the Lübeck Medical Academy, Wegener became professor of dissection and teacher of anatomy and histology, a post he held from 1966 to 1969. When he withdrew from the Academy in 1970 he was honoured by a torchlight procession led by the medical students and physicians of Lübeck. He was made "Doctor Honoris Causae" in 1976 by the medical school of Lübeck and retired completely from medicine in 1979. Wegener saw 12 cases of Wegener's granulomatosis during his working life, though he never used that eponym.

The discovery of Wegener's granulomatosis

In January 1934 Wegener saw a 38 year old lorry driver with ulceration of the mouth and stomach, who then developed a saddle nose deformity and deafness.

Address for reprint requests: Dr D Geraint James, Royal Northern Hospital, London N7 6LD.

This was followed by a pneumonic illness and renal failure and the patient died in June of that year. Histological examination showed a generalised angitis and multiple necrotic granulomas affecting the nose, trachea, lung, kidney, and spleen and a diagnosis of unexplained septic disease was made. Wegener was sure that this was a new condition, clinically and pathologically distinct from periarteritis nodosa, a condition he had studied closely and on which he had presented a paper in 1935.² In 1935 Professor Martin Staemmler became director of the Pathological Institute at Breslau University and Wegener went with him as his assistant and as tutor in dissection, histology, and pathology to medical and dental students. Wegener observed two similar cases of angitis and granulomas but could find no written reference to the



Friedrich Wegener.

920

SARCOIDOSIS

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SARCOIDOSIS AND OTHER GRANULOMATOUS DISORDERS
FOUNDED 1984 BY GIANFRANCO RIZZATO

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Silvia Nanni

To Rafael Socias,
who kept us so
happy at the
Royal Northern Hospital
He never lost his
Smile on his face
or his good humor
even when he was
under pressure. This
makes him a
worthy Colleague.
Geraint James

The picture of Geraint D. James on the front
cover is due to Maggie Sharma

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Friedrick Wegener
Lubeck

A retrospective

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to take part in this international congress.

I warmly thank the past President, Prof James from London, for having invited me and I look back to Horace to express my feeling.

In his poem to Maecenas Horace says, "Quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres, sublimi feriam sidera vertice". As one of the oldest representatives of granulomatous disease scientists, I would like to slightly modify these verses, "Praesidente, quodsi me sarcoidotibus inseres.....-President, if you consider myself as one of sarcoidosis experts, I will overjoyed".

My thanks to the organizing committee and, in particular, to Prof. Grassi, Prof. Pozzi and Prof. Rizzato for the continuous attention devoted to my wife and myself and the warm hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

even if I have already said the most important thing, let me look back to Wegener's Granulomatosis. In 1936 in Breslau, on the occasion of a seminar of the German Society of Pathology (as it was then called), I had a speech on three cases with a unique clinical aspect not so really well taken into consideration at that time.

Anatomically, it was characterized by the onset of granulomatous-necrotizing and ulcerous processes in the respiratory tract and in some internal organs by a general necrotizing-granulomatous vasculitis and a focus-shaped GNF (the so-called Triad, as it was defined by other authors).

I was young, self-confident and carefree and I spoke of a new disease. Some highly-experienced pathologists who were present shared my opinion (1).

My short report was published in 1937, that is, 50 years ago. Two years later I extensively revised the three observations referring to a particular rhinogenic granulomatosis. At present this definition is considered as the classical one. I have never claimed 'ius primae observationis and publicationis'. It is up to my schoolmate and old friend Heinz Klinger to do it who in 1931 described a case of classical Wegener's Granulomatosis as a limit case of periarteritis.

Neither Klinger nor Rossle realized to be just in front of a new disease. In 1947 - 40 years ago- Ringertz, a Norwegian, spoke for the first time of Wegener's Granulomatosis as well as the Swedish Johnsson (1948) and the American Godman and Churg (1954). Since then this disease has been called Wegener's granulomatosis all over the world.

In 1967 -30 years after the first definition- I published a monograph on the disease.

Parallely, in the USA a number of reports on the successful treatment of Wegener's granulomatosis incurable up to that time (especially Fauci and coll. and De Remee and coll.) was published.

There is a good reason for celebrating 50/40/30/20 year anniversary in the life of a pathologist. Thanks to the grace of God I discovered a disease that for 30 years was considered as incurable and then through an efficient therapy remission and recovery were made possible.

Can a physician wish more during his life?

I would like to speak about the present status of research and knowledge on Wegener's Granulomatosis but I do not want to anticipate anything that will be said by the other speakers.

1) Aschoff, Fahr and Schurmann.

Dr.med.Friedrich Wegener
Nibelungenstrasse 141
D 2400 Lübeck 1

Lübeck, den 7.12.1987

Herrn
Dr. med. Rafael Socias
Conde esq. Duarte apto. 204
Altos Ferr. Cuesta.
Santo Domingo
Rep. Dominicana

Dear Rafael!

Thank you so much for your letter of November 23, which reached us here in Lübeck at December 2nd. Especially we thank you for the three photos, which turned out well and for the copy of your and Sir James contribution to "Thorax". Your letter brought to our mind again the beautiful days with the impressive adventures at the congress in Mailand, especially the festive nights together with both of you in the park of the castle and at "da Bruno". It was a pleasure for us to have our cheerful friends with us.

I am glad that you got on well in your native place and I wish you a successful career together with your lovely wife. While you are living in tropical heat, we slowly get winter here. Sometimes at night the temperature goes down below zero, although at daytime it is still soft. There are still some flowers in our garden, but the bushes and trees are already without leaves. - For the anticipated commemorative publication of you and Dr. DeRemee I'll send you the photos you had asked for, but I have to have prints made of them. I'm looking forward with expectation this volume.

I ordered my bookshop to send you a Lübeck guide, which should remind you to the days you spent here.

Ulla and I are greeting you and your charming wife and we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours

Friedrich

Dr. Wegener

Lübeck, 8. XI. 88

Dear Rafael!

Many thanks for your letter of September 5 and the 20 reprints. I am happy to have them and I have given them to friends and family members.

We have been in Varel for some days, and if you want to go there as well, please, visit us again in Lübeck, and we hope we can travel together. Last month we had the pleasure of being visited by Lucy and Richard DeKemer, and we had three nice days in and around Lübeck.

I hope you and your wife are well up. With best regards remain faithfully
yours

Friedrich together with
Ulta

DR. D. GERAINT JAMES.

TELEPHONE:
01-935 4444.

149, HARLEY STREET,
LONDON, W1N 1HG.

Ref. DGJ/slc

16th August 1988

Dr Rafael Socias P
Calle el Conde Esq Duarte
Edif Armenteros, Apto 204
SANTO DOMINGO
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Dear Dr Socias

It was nice to hear from you once again. I never thought that I would. I certainly never thought that you would invite us to the Dominican Republic. However, you have very kindly done so. This means that you pass with flying colours.

May I suggest that we arrive to be with you and your colleagues on Monday 8th May 1989?

It will give us both great pleasure to join in lectures and ward rounds. You can work us both as hard as you like.

Yours sincerely

Splendia
D Geraint James

D Geraint James MA MD FRCP
Consultant Physician

Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez

ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL
POND STREET
LONDON NW3 2QG
TELEPHONE 071 794 0500



19 January 1994

Dr R Socias
C/o Executive Communications
PO Box 16-9002
Miami
Florida 33116
USA

Dear Rafael

Thank you for your recent letter inviting us to a return visit to Santo Domingo. My wife, Dame Sheila Sherlock, and I would be delighted to accept a lecture programme.

I am also delighted to learn that you are writing your memoirs. I feel sure that it will be a bestseller.

Yours sincerely

Happy New Year
D Geraint James

D Geraint James MA MD FRCP

Gray's Inn Road was the site of the old Royal Free Hospital which with other hospitals of the Royal Free Group was replaced in 1974 by the new Royal Free in Hampstead. Medicine, Clinical Haematology, Radiotherapy and Oncology and Services for Elderly People form Gray's Inn Division.



The King and The Dinosaur

ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL
POND STREET
LONDON NW3 2QG
TELEPHONE 0171 794 0500



9 December 1996

Dr R Socias P
ID-01-0613
PO Box 527208
Miami
Florida 33152
USA

Dear Rafael

Thank you very much for your wonderful biography. You are a splendid writer with a vivid eye of a scenario. I feel sure that Sofia has been a great help to you.

I feel ashamed of the way that I bullied you but it presumably helped to make you a professor and an illustrious international figure.

You are a wonderful couple together and you are both excellent ambassadors for the Dominican Republic.

Yours sincerely

all our love to both of you
Gerry

D Geraint James MA MD FRCP
Adjunct Professor of Medicine



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez

DR. D. GERAINT JAMES.

TELEPHONE:

~~021-035-4449~~

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August 2006

149, HARLEY STREET,
LONDON, WIN 1HG.

41 York Terrace East
London NW1 4PT

Dear, dear Sofia and Rafael,
What a wonderful book
What a wonderful author
Congratulations — Both of you.

And what a wonderful, elegant
array of photographs — They give me
happy memories of you and of Friedrich
and Ulla Wegner and Richard DeRenée
of the Mayo Clinic — and, of course, the
fondest memories of my dear wife

It was a great pleasure hearing
from you — My daughter Mandy and
Auricle, and my granddaughter Alice (14)
and Emily (12) have also very much

enjoyed your book.

You have a wonderful memory with the accurate descriptions of slides I showed at my lectures.

I still lecture to immigrant doctors from war-torn countries of the Middle East - Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, the Balkans - who need a degree so that they may continue as doctors.

I am also writing some articles. I wish I could write as well as you do, and with such a good memory.

All my love to both of you

Geraint James.



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez





Dr. Rafael Socias in front of his house at number 57 Evelyn Gardens in South Kensington, London, 1983



Dr. Rafael Socias at the South Thames College with teacher Judith and his classmates. Putney, London, 1983.



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



From the left the 1st. Secretary of the Cuban Embassy, Dr. Pedro Pablo Paredes, Dr. José Silié Ruiz, Dr. Alberto Santana and Dr. Rafael Socías after a baseball game between the staff of the Dominican and Cuban Embassies at the Hammersmith Hospital playground, London, 1983.



Dr. David Geraint James with his medical staff and secretaries at the Royal Northern Hospital, London, 1985.





*Dr. Dr. Rafael Socías, Dr. Anton Pozniak, Dr. James, and
Dr. at the Sarcoidosis clinic, London, 1986.*



*Prof. Jacob Churg and Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock at the 5th.
European Congress of Sarcoidosis in Vienna, Austria, 1986.*



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



Dr. Geraint James, Dr. Jacob Churg and Dr. Rafael Socías at the 5th. European Congress of Sarcoidosis in Vienna, Austria, 1986.



Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock and Dr. Rafael Socías at the closing ceremony of the 5th. European Congress of Sarcoidosis in Vienna, Austria, 1986.





The King and The Dinosaur



Rafael and Sofia at the closing ceremony of the 5th. European Congress of Sarcoidosis in Vienna, Austria 1986.



Dr. Jeannette Arias, Dr. José Arias a Neurosurgeon from London Hospital, Dr. James, Dr. Socias, Dr. Mario Del Donno, from Parma, Italy, and Dr. Monica Spiteri, a Senior Registrar from Royal Free Hospital, London. Kent, England, 1986.





Dr. Rafael Sociás Pérez



Dr. James taking pictures to his guesses in Kent, England 1986.



Dr. James playing with some kids at his house in Kent, 1987.





Dr. Socías, Dr. James, baby sitting, Dr. Jeannette Fernández and her husband Dr. José Arias, from Dominican Republic. Kent, England, 1986.



Dr. James, Prof. Dame Sherlock and Dr. D. Olivieri, from Parma, Italy. Kent, England, 1986.



Dr. Friedrich Wegener and Dr. Socías in Lübeck, Germany, 1986.



Dr. Wegener and his wife Ulla at their house in Lübeck, 1986.



Dr. Socias, Sofia and Dr. Wegener in Lübeck. 1986.



Dr. Maren Thiel with his father Dr. Wegener and Mrs. Ulla Wegener. Lübeck, 1986.



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



Dr. Socías, Dr. Maren Thiel, Dr. Wegener and Mrs. Wegener, having dinner at the former seamen restaurant of the Hanseatic, League, Lübeck, Germany, 1986



Mrs. Wegener, Dr. Wegener and Dr. Socías in the restaurant Forsthaus St. Hubertus Hotel in Lübeck, 1986.





Mrs. Ulla Wegener Dr. Wegener and Sofia. Lübeck, 1986.



*Dr. Rafael Socias, Dr. Wegener and Sofia at Lübeck main train station.
Lübeck, Germany, 1986.*



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



Dr. Socías, Dr. D. Olivieri Dr. Wegener, Prof. Willy Jones Williams, Dr. James and Mrs. Ulla Wegener at the 11th. World Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan, Italy, 1987.



Dr. Wegener during his speech at the 11th. World Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan, Italy, 1987.





Mrs. Ulla and Dr. Wegener stand up to thank the audience applause at the 11th. Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan, Italy, 1987.



Dr. Wegener receiving the Golden Key of the Milan city and the Ambrogino Order for his contributions in the medical field. Milan, Italy, 1987.



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



Dr. Wegener giving thanks to the organizing Committee of the 11th. World Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan for the Golden Key and the Ambrogino Order. Milan, 1987.



Dr. Socías, Dr. Wegener, Mrs. Ulla Wegener, Dr. Carol Johns from Baltimore and Prof. Richard DeRemee from Rochester, Minnesota, USA. at the 11th. World Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan, Italy, 1987.





Mrs. Ulla Wegener at the 11th. World Congress of Sarcoidosis in Milan, Italy, 1987.



Mrs. Ulla Wegener, Dr. Wegener, Rafael and Sofia at the festive night in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan, Italy, 1987.



Dr. Rafael Socías Pérez



Prof. Michael Anthony Epstein and Dr. Socías at the Royal Imperial College, London, England, 1987.





Dr. Socias, Dr. Alberto Santana, Dr. Geraint James and his wife Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock at the Foreign Office in Santo Domingo. Dr. James is giving thanks to the Dominican Government after they received the decoration of Sir Christopher Columbus.



Dr. Rafael Socias, Prof. Dame Sheila Sherlock, Mrs. Sofia Socias and Dr. James wearing his medal of Sir. Very funny, very funny!