



# NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

**Date of Interview:** Friday, April 19, 2024, 01:00 pm

**Name of Narrator:** Pantaleon Tono Tono

**Name of Interviewer:** Faustino Morente Garcia

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Narrator's **TONO, TONO, PANTALEON**. Interview by Interviewer's **FAUSTINO MORENTE GARCIA**. *Casting a Wider Net*. New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center.

Date of interview: Friday, April 19, 2024, 01:00 pm

This oral history was produced in 2024 as part of the *Casting a Wider Net Oral History Project* conducted by New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center.

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**Background Information:**

- **Name of person interviewed:** Pantaleón Tono Tono
- **Age:**
- **Gender:** Male
- **Occupation:** Welding
- **Ethnicity:**

**Interviewer:**

**Translator:** Faustino Morente

**Observer(s):** Madeleine Hall-Arber

**Transcriber:** Faustino Morente

**Interview location:** 4 Water St. Fairhaven, MA 02719, USA

**Date of interview:** Friday, April 19, 2024, 1:00pm

**Language(s) the interview was conducted in:** Spanish

**Keywords:**

- **Pantaleon Tono Tono:** The interviewee and a skilled welder.
- **New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center (NBFHC):** The organization that conducts the interview for an oral history project.
- **Casting a Wider Net:** The name of the oral history project.
- **Aguilix, Chujuyub, Santa Cruz del Quiché, Guatemala:** Birthplace and hometown of Pantaleón.
- **Poverty and difficulties:** Pantaleón's early life and his struggles.
- **Education:** Pantaleón's limited schooling and self-taught skills.
- **Coffee and sugar cane plantations:** Pantaleón's work as a child worker.
- **Debt:** The financial burdens that Pantaleón faced.
- **Guatemala City:** Pantaleón's work in the capital, including dangerous jobs.
- **Extortion and violence:** Pantaleón's experiences with gangs and threats.
- **Trip to the United States:** The difficult and dangerous migration of Pantaleón.
- **Detention and release:** Pantaleón's time in immigration custody.
- **Connecticut:** Pantaleón's initial job at a restaurant.
- **New Bedford, Massachusetts:** Pantaleón's current residence and workplace.
- **Welding:** Pantaleón's main skill and profession.
- **Boat repair:** Pantaleón's approach to welding work.
- **COVID-19 pandemic:** The impact of the pandemic on Pantaleón's work and health.
- **Traditional medicine:** Pantaleón's use of natural remedies.
- **Dreams and aspirations:** Pantaleón's hopes for the future, including more education and starting his own business.
- **Pride and gratitude:** Pantaleón's feelings about his achievements and opportunities.
- **Cultural exchange:** Pantaleón's limited ability to share his culture in the United States.
- **Tips for young people:** Pantaleón's encouragement to learn and work hard.

## **Abstract**

Pantaleón Tono Tono, an experienced welder, originally from Guatemala, as part of the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center (NBFHC) oral history project "Casting a Wider Net." Pantaleón was born in Aguilix from a village of Chujuyub, municipality of Santa Cruz del Quiché, Quiché department, Guatemala. Pantaleón recounts his difficult life path, from a childhood marked by poverty and limited education. He describes working on coffee and sugar cane plantations to pay off debts, facing extortion and violence in Guatemala City, and undertaking a dangerous migration to the United States. Pantaleón expresses his gratitude for the opportunities he found in New Bedford, where he learned to weld and found stability. He shares his dreams for the future, such as continuing to study and creating his own company. Pantaleón also talks about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on his work and his use of traditional medicine to overcome the disease. Throughout the interview, Pantaleón emphasizes the importance of hard work, perseverance and continuous learning.

## **Index**

### **Introduction**

- Pantaleón Tono Tono, a qualified welder from Guatemala, shares his life story in an interview with the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center.
- He talks about his difficult upbringing, his trip to the United States, and his experiences working in New Bedford.

### **Early years in Guatemala (11:12 - 15:15)**

- Pantaleón was born into poverty in Santa Cruz del Quiché, Guatemala, and was raised by his uncle after his mother died shortly after his birth.
- He faced financial difficulties and limited education, completing only six years of primary school while working on coffee and sugar cane plantations to pay off debts.

### **Life in Guatemala City (15:15 - 24:33)**

- Pantaleón traveled to Guatemala City in search of better job opportunities.
- He held a variety of jobs, including carrying packages, selling slushies, and teaching sanitation practices for CARE International.
- Despite finding some stability, he faced extortion and violence, especially while working in a dangerous area of the city.

### **Trip to the United States (24:33 - 31:00)**

- The threats and danger in Guatemala City led Pantaleón to make the decision to emigrate to the United States in 2015.
- His trip was fraught with danger, such as being abandoned by a guide in Mexico and kidnapped by drug traffickers.
- He was eventually captured by US immigration and spent two and a half months in detention.

### **Life in the United States (31:00 - 40:19)**

- After being released, Pantaleón worked at a restaurant in Connecticut for six months.
- He then moved to New Bedford in 2016 to work at a boat repair company, where he learned welding and other skills on the job.

### **Learning to weld (40:19 - 1:00:40)**

- Pantaleón describes his experience learning to weld, including the challenges he faced and the techniques he acquired.
- It highlights the importance of practice, learning from mistakes, and understanding different types of metals and welding equipment.

### **The COVID-19 pandemic (1:00:40 - 1:02:04)**

- Pantaleón talks about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on his work and his use of traditional medicine to treat himself when he contracted the virus.
- He also shares his reflections on the importance of safety measures and adapting to new challenges in the workplace.

### **Dreams and aspirations (1:02:04 - 1:07:30)**

- Pantaleón expresses his desire to continue learning and improving his welding skills, with the goal of one day owning his own welding company.
- He shares his pride in his achievements and his gratitude for the opportunities he has found in the United States.

### **Advice for young people (1:07:30 - 1:12:10)**

- Pantaleón encourages young people to work hard, persevere and be open to learning new things, regardless of the challenges they may face.
- He highlights the importance of education and taking advantage of opportunities to learn and grow.

### **Conclusion (1:12:10 - end)**

- The interview concludes with Pantaleón expressing his hope that his story inspires young people to pursue their dreams and work hard to achieve their goals.

I, Pantaleon Tono Tono hereby grant permission to the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center (hereinafter, NBFHC) to record my interview and take photographs and/or videos of me as part of the Casting A Wider Net oral history project.

The audio recording, written transcript and photographs/video will become part of the public archive of NBFHC and from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's VOICES online archive.

It will also be used to create and promote a public exhibit that will open at the Fishing Heritage Center on October 10, 2024 and will then travel to community sites.

It can also be used to produce other public or educational programs or materials.

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## **STARTED**

[11:12]

PTT: Well, I repeat, my name is Pantaleón. Tono Tono, I am originally from a community called. Aguilix from the village of Chujuyub, municipality of Santa Cruz del Quiché, Quiché department.

I was born, well it's a very big story, right? Well, I was born in a family very. I grew up in a poor family, because. Thank God I am alive, but my story is very. Somewhat, painful, but that's how it is, right, that.

(12:02) I was born at 4 in the afternoon and my mother died at 4:30, but. Thank God I had an uncle who took me in, they don't [didn't] have a family, and thank God I grew up there, I studied, but unfortunately see that in '93 my uncle also passed away and I stayed in third grade, primary school.

(12:58) After three years of school, well, my dear mother, I call her, because I grew up with them and I call her mom, because they raised me, everything. She struggled with me, I continued studying until I completed my sixth grade, sorry. After sixth grade, and

like my late uncle or father, I call him, as I said, I emphasize again that I grew up with them, they raised me, and then he got sick for a long time, we borrowed money to cure him, but we couldn't anymore, so I had to travel to the coast, which I don't know if you knew, right, that before one had to emigrate to the coast, to cut coffee, to cut cane. One doesn't earn much, you see.

In those times, a quintal of coffee cost 10 Quetzales. Imagine, a child cuts 20 pounds, 25 pounds, 50 pounds a day.

No one guides you, alone, it's just that as I would say, one begins to see what am I going to do, you motivate yourself, but anyway, like that.

I had debts, I paid debts, all that. There I arrived at 6 years of school, nothing more, but I thank the fact [thankful] that I completed my sixth grade, 6 years of school. If were to have one more point [grade], or if he were alive, my dad I would [have] probably be at another point [grade], see, because. Well.

(15:15) FMG: At that moment, since when you went to the coffee farm, how did you live all that time? You. Is there a past returned [memory]? Or if, at that moment, you forgot the thoughts of the parents, it was very hard, it is then, or how you felt.

(15:43) PTT: Oh yes, no, it is [was] very difficult, because imagine, in those 3 years that I still finished the fourth, fifth and sixth, all that debt that I have [had], for my mother, there was no job opportunity for her, everything, so, I studied, she struggled with me, she made me study, the school year ended more or less in mid-October, everything, is November, December. Part of January I have to go to the coast, I don't [didn't] get home, there eating raw beans like this, because on the coasts it's, there is no food like that in good conditions, because everything the food is given, but it is beans, all raw.

So, it was a lot for me, very hard for me that time, right? Because there is no one anymore, me and my mother have to fight to sustain ourselves in life, to find what to eat, alimentation, all of that was hard, and then I finished the 6 years of studies and then I continued working, I plant my corn, but I don't [didn't] have money to buy fertilizers, so successively one always pays a debt, makes other loans, pays and so on, then I traveled to the capital city of Guatemala.

I went there to work, like I would say, pulling packages in zone 4 of the terminal, I bring some ties and a head strap, pulling the load, I went through life a little, then I started selling too the famous slushies there in Guatemala, right? Scraping the ice and adding the sweet seasonings and sell, so one can win a little money, and then I continued working and then I found a job more or less, during that time they earned 1,000 Quetzales a month.

(18:57) FMG: What job was that?

(18:59) PTT: Eh, I lied [mistake], sorry, that I worked, I would earn about 1,500, if I'm not wrong, it's in an institution. I returned from my home and that time I was working with an institution, part of CARE, it has to be from here in the United States if I am not

wrong, CARE, that is an international institution and I worked with them on the issue of ecological sanitation, everything that is the excrement of the human being, it is given a certain treatment and one can reuse it, and like that as fertilizer in the crops in the field, I gave all that training at that time and then CARE was finished and I worked as more or less 3 years or 4 years with them. That institution, well, ended the program but CARE is still there in Guatemala now.

(20:38) FMG: How did it help you do everything you were going through and the hard work in your life?

(20:46) PTT: It helped me a lot when they gave me the training topics, and I put them into practice in my life, right, so as I learn[ed] and practice[ed], and then I arrived in a community and I say look this works like this and this like this, I have already done it, I did here like this, because sometimes when one talks theoretically it is different, when one goes into practice it is a very different topic, so as I say I already have the experience of all of that. I was working for a long time; I say because it was more or less like 4 years in that program.

Thank God that institution made projects that were called ecological compost latrines. So at that time all of that for the community to take advantage and that's how I learned so that thanks to that institution I went to visit some countries, for example El Salvador, we also went to teach some topics also in Honduras, and then we went for a trip. Ultimately we went to Costa Rica, then and so on, but then when the program ended, because it is for a little bit of time.

I was left without a job again, but I had my ideas, and I went, I know other friends and I only did work there. (22:48) I went to the capital again, to work, that's what they call attending public bathrooms, and there I stayed working and I left the terminal in zone 4 and went to the red area, which is in zone 18, because it's the red area [zone] in Guatemala, right. And there I was working and working there tending to a synthetic field, those who come to play soccer start to play, they start at one in the afternoon, sometimes I finish at one in the morning and alone, but the famous extortion that exists. Right? When one arrives one has to pay, and pay, and pay. One day came that the boss of those tax collectors was taken [arrested], it was more or less in let's talk around 2015, then they caught him, he is the boss of them, they caught him, and then they started to charge by the day and then that no longer works, then one day we confronted them. Thanks to the fact that I am alive, that is miracle of God.

(24:33) FMG: Back then, how did you experience that red zone? The time you were there because it is a dangerous street there. And you don't know what's going to happen to you or if you'll come back. How did you experience that?

(24:49) PTT: Yes, between the sorrows and anguished because one does not know, like you say [said], one doesn't know if at any moment they kill you or if you were a little late paying the extortion, they kill you there, they walk, they pass and they arrive this is that one has to be aligned but sometimes there are moments that happen, I don't know if they get upset nerves, I think, and he [extortionist] came to get the money, I handed over almost everything I earned for the day, there was not much profit left for the owner



of the business, and one day they arrived to collect early and in the afternoon the person came again to ask for more money, I told him no and that I already paid (25:53) He pulled out a gun on me, right? I'll kill you, well honestly, well no I didn't think many things, nothing, nothing. What I thought I already grabbed, and we faced each other with bare fist, and from that moment I left, right? I think I have a scar here still [shows] here it is, so we fought hard and from that moment on I left in 2015 from there, I don't remember if it was in May, around that, I went to the house, from the house I took the road to come here in the United States, and I came, it was going well, well, calmly arriving here in Mexico what it is in Ascensión Chihuahua.

(27:04) Then I took, I mean, we were crossing but the guide left us abandoned in the desert of that area, we no longer had anywhere to go, we were thirteen people, we don't [didn't] know where because we walked at night time, it is not the same as when one walks during the day because more or less one can identify the place, right? At night and in the dark you don't know where to go or what, but they left us lying around.

Here what we did, we continue. That night we continued and climbed a hill we found, we looked everywhere, we saw the lights but more or less we made a decision to continue forward, and he [guide] told us that we were already in the United States but it was not true, we were in Mexico. We continued, we continued at dawn, we continued walking, then it was already daylight we walked during the day, at two in the afternoon we arrive at a man who was working.

So we talked to him and all that, and he said. We asked if we are already in the United States and he said no, you are in Mexico, you are here in Puerto Paloma in Mexico, so we were already tired, we were left there, we didn't have anything to eat, we didn't have water, well, we have [had] some pesos there from Mexico, right? We told him that we needed to eat. He went to get us food, tortillas because we are more used to tortillas.

So he went to look for us and gave us food and there we stayed on his land, and he said tomorrow I'll be back, and I'll bring you tortillas. Ok, that's fine. Stay and don't come out ok. He closed the gate, at like 10 at night and then the drug traffickers came to pick us up, (29:22) they kidnapped us. That's something for me, that story is hard because they grabbed us, they took us, they locked us up, we had no way out, there we were, and if we don't pay the quota that they ask[ed] for, they kill us, so we had to pay \$7,000 dollars to avoid them from causing us harm and then cross over here to the United States, then from there it was very, very, very hard, we saw people, well, no, it's not one from our group, I don't know, from where, from them, among drug traffickers, maybe. They tie[ed] him up, beat him, all that, and so, when they tried to cross us, immigration from the United States grabbed us, and then, I was locked up there, two and a half months at the hand of immigration. I didn't know what to do, if. Where I was going, what path I took, knowing I had to use my own ideas, who knows. Thanks God I managed to get here, and so on.

(31:00) FMG: The decision to before coming here, what was that like and between you and the family you had, there in Guatemala, did it affect you so hard to come here?

(31:12) PTT: Oh no, coming here affected me a lot because, for example, with my wife

and my mother, thank God, she is still alive, she is 88 years old, her. So I am very satisfied because she is still here, and it was also a coordination with my wife and my mother, I said to them I'm leaving, I have to borrow a little money, and we are talking about 60,000 quetzales, like 60,000 and I borrowed from the one who lent me, I have to pay him 10% interest, like I say [said], when I fell into the hands of the Zetas, that is, the drug traffickers, it took me some time, after that, we crossed, I fell into the hands of immigration, it took me another while, the period from the time that I left my house and got here, now free, are six months late, and all that money, the interest went up, I was almost going to lose a little thing that I left pawned.

But thank God, when I arrived at the end of October in Connecticut, there I was working in Connecticut in 2015. Then, that's where I stayed, I worked in a restaurant, there they almost, they paid very little, at that time, we are[were] more or less like five dollars an hour. I didn't sleep, I go[get] out of the restaurant, I go to another job, I get out of the other, then I go to the other so I at least sleep in a day, maybe an hour and a half, more or less, in a day I sleep, like this, like this, like this, I worked for like six months there. And I had a brother-in-law here, he was working in this company, and I had asked him, I told him by chance, with. You find job over there, suddenly you let me know, well, that's fine.

In 2016, then, it was in April, I don't remember the exact date, it was in April, when he called me, we are playing soccer, because I like to play soccer and I was there, playing when he called me, brother-in-law, do you want work? Yes. Do you need the job? Yes. You can come, I'm going to introduce you tomorrow, imagine from Connecticut to here, and well, no one can arrive, well. Okay, I told him, but I'm going to notify the bosses where I work, tomorrow and then I'll go there. All right, I told him that's how it was, and in the afternoon he called me again, he told me, I just want to confirm, he tells me, are you going to come or are you not going to come? Yes, I'm going. Because the truth is, he told me, the job is where I work, and I'm going to go to Guatemala, he told me.

So I leave you my job, my position. Oh okay, I said, when are you going? After tomorrow, he told me. It was Sunday, so it would be Tuesday, his departure, and I told him, well, there is no other option, I told my friends that I was there, do me a favor, give me a ride to New Bedford. What, are you going to live there? Yes, I'm going to live there. Ok we come [came]. We got here around 7, 8 at night here in New Bedford they came to drop me off. On Monday, in the morning, he [brother-in-law] got up, at 8 or 9 or so, we, we came here to present and fill out the application I stayed in this company.

To this date, I'm still here.

(36:14) FMG: Ok, going back a bit. How did you adapt to a new country when you arrived here knowing the language spoken here? Because you came from there [Guatemala], and it wasn't English, it's not that here you correct yourself to speak that and have to learn a new culture. How has it affected you?

(36:37) PTT: Here, look, honestly, being in this country is the most difficult because one does not know how to speak English, I arrived here, I can't speak English, well, anyway, there is the man who was there, Francisco, and he more or less can speak Spanish, he

speaks more Creole, which is from Cape Verde, it still has a lot of difference as well, but since there are Portuguese too, another language that is different. So, but little by little I adapted. At English, to this day I don't master English, some more than others that I master right now is Portuguese, and Cape Verde Creole, all that. If they talk to me, tell me this and this, I understand perfectly and I can respond, perhaps, 50, 60%. Now English, some I understand and maybe I can answer, maybe, 5%, 6%, but well.

(38:05) FMG: The culture, how did you adapt here when you came from Guatemala and arrived here, a total difference?

(38:16) PTT: Here the culture is also difficult to adapt to because it is very different.

(38:28) FMG: How did you live that experience, of a new place when you got here?

(38:35) PTT: Well, it is somewhat difficult, but nothing more, everything. That is one gets used to it little by little. So, it was difficult, but here we are so far, I'm here and keep moving forward.

(39:03) FMG: And when you worked in another restaurant, how did you experience your jobs before coming here? Did you not know, or did you already know? You told me a little bit that you worked in a restaurant.

(39:19) PTT: Yes, well, since I was little, when my father died, I stayed, you see, with my mother. My mother struggled to find daily food, I, well, I know some as you say, but getting here is a different thing. There I know, for example, I make my tortillas because where I live there is no mill, that is, we call it a motor, there is none, with pure stone I know how to grind, I make my tortilla, I make everything, my food, everything, on that subject not so difficult, not so difficult, when I got here I also bought my things, I do my things, I make my food, I do everything, everything more or less there.

(40:19) FMG: And when they called you to come to your first day here, how did you live that day?

(40:31) PTT: Coming here on the first day of work is, I don't know, one doesn't know what to do, how I'm going to do it, how I do it and how to ask it, one can't speak it [English], but anyway, as I said, the man [Francisco] could kind of speak Spanish, so I asked him and I will see how this is done, little by little I learned. Well, when I got here I started working, painting the boats, removing the rust, and then sanding it, painting it, all that.

(41:14) FMG: And in boat painting, how did you learn it and did you already have a little experience?

(41:20) PTT: No, I learned everything here. Yes, I learned it here.

(41:25) FMG: And what kind of paint did you use there?

(41:31) PTT: Ah, well look, step number one, well the tools use a gun to remove the rust.

And then, if the sheet is very thin, then they use another one called Nilgant, they are little wires, little strength. And then, you sand it with a polisher, that is, we call it a grinder, you sand it. After sanding it, you clean it very well, and then you go to go bring clear, it's a material like plastic, it stays first to protect the metal, and then comes the zinc, it is the green, we call it green, and then comes the primer. And then comes the finish, there are four layers of product that goes on the boat. Clear, zinc, primer, finish. They are four.

(42:44) FMG: How long did you do that?

(42:47) PTT: Oh, that was almost only, I was there for more or less a year.

(42:55) FMG: Did they make them here only or did they travel too?

(43:00) PTT: No, just here. Only here, we don't travel in anywhere. Only here. After the year, the boss told me that he wanted [me] to help a welder, as an assistant. Ok, that's fine, then, if you want to learn it, go ahead, thank God that the first day they taught me a little, and the next day I started to weld, the irons, like that successively I learned to weld. And until this moment, I only have the teacher there who takes the measurements, that's how it's done, ok then, it's done, I weld thanks to him, I weld normal iron, weld aluminum, and weld stainless iron.

(44:06) FMG: And at that time, did something inspire you, or did you just jump in?

(44:14) PTT: Yes, just like that, I did not receive training, which is the same as the teacher I have there, he is the one who taught me, he told me that, this is how it is done, this is how it is done, this is how the force of the machine is calculated. Well, the first few days it's hard because you don't know exactly what thickness of the sheet that you are going to weld, then, what electrode, because there are several types of electrodes, what electrode are you going to use, if it was finer or, the thinnest is 3.32. And then 1.8 follows and then 5.32 follows. And then 3.16. So, the thicker the electrode is, the machine has, one has to increase more force, so if the sheet is already very thin, and if it increases more force, you can no longer weld it, you are breaking it. The same work, thanks to when I already learned, my own work teaches me, what is the type of material that I have to use, what is the strength of the machine that I have what to give to get the right job.

(45:41) FMG And when you stayed, alone in the place, because at first it was as accompaniment, when you did the first job alone, how was that day?

(45:57) PTT: When I did the paint?

(46:00) FMG: When you started you were accompanied, welding, let's say, there is a moment when they tell you, today it's your turn to do the work alone without.

(46:14) PTT: Yes, no problem, thank God, as I say [said] right now.

When, well. My partner never left me alone, there he is, there he is, well, let's say, this is

what we are going to do, this is what we are going to do today, this is what we are going to do today, this is what we are going to do today. So everything is coordinated, thank God here we coordinate the jobs. And sometimes I opened, sometimes when he doesn't come, then I'm left alone, but I already know what my job is, they tell me, you have to do this job on such and such boat, I already know, they only tell me what I have to go do, I already know what I have to bring, I bring my torch, cutting mask, I bring my welding mask, my gloves, my scythe, hammer, everything.

(47:02) FMG: And the responsibility of each one of you in the group, each one does something, or one always knows a little about everything there?

(47:15) PTT: Well look, here thanks to here, almost all of us know a little about each thing, now, if there is no other, if they send you to do, for example, paint, one can do it, one already knows everything, what are the processes.

(47:34) FMG: And what is your tough point [job], yours here?

(47:38) PTT: My tough one, that's the only thing when it's a little difficult is when you weld the roof, because you have to be under the fire, for example, a sheet comes, you see, a sheet and the other one comes there, it joins here in the middle, then you have to weld where it joins, it is the most difficult, because if you can't weld it, you are cutting the sheet metal or the sheet, it doesn't grab, it doesn't stick, because you can't, so one has to go, and you have to go underneath, all the fire falls on you, you have to be well protected, that's why I bring these [clothing], I work, then when the fire falls on you, it doesn't burn you, but in the first days, if sometimes when you don't know, you suffer a little because the fire falls on you, the weld falls off, then you can't, but like that, once you learn it, it's like a toy (laugh).

(48:49) FMG: And what difference does that have among others? And what is welding up, what is welding down?

(48:58) PTT: When it comes to welding below, if there is space, it is easier, or welding high, welding horizontally, and all that.

(49:11) FMG: And are the equipment they use different or the same?

(49:16) PTT: They are the same, yes, they are the same, the only thing is, as I told you, you have to first see how the sheet is, if it is thick, you can use a larger material and that's how you can be faster, but if not, you have to use a thinner one, you're going a little slow.

(49:42) FMG: And is there a challenge that you have encountered, or suffered at work?

(49:50) PTT: Well, thank God that I haven't suffered anything at work, no, there isn't, we always work. Here the objective is to do the work of the company, what the boss says, tells me, do this, do this, there it is.

(50:09) FMG: And in the year of COVID, how did you live here, how did you handle it?

(50:17) PTT: Well, in this crisis that happened, well, COVID was something hard. Well, for us here not so much, we had the opportunity to work. But, there are people who also suffered in that, they suffered more when the person gets that disease and you go to the clinic, so that affected a lot, because you can't go to work anymore, you have to be in quarantine. Not anymore, I mean, and there are no Western medicines like that for that disease, but well, in my case, it was my turn, but I only stayed at home for about two weeks, I recovered quickly because I have, well, a little knowledge, what it is about natural plants, and I treated myself more with like, natural plants.

(51:39) FMG: And what plants, isn't it then, did you recommend people?

(51:44) PTT: Yes, we recommended, yes, very, very much, sometimes I uploaded it on Facebook, look, gentlemen, if you seem like this, you take this, this is how it is taken, this is how it is done, well there are some who did it and others, well they say, it doesn't help or it helps. It helped me a lot because when it hit me it did feel like I couldn't breathe anymore, and the high fever, but thank God I took my medication, so it helped me a lot, I didn't consume any pills, it was purely natural.

(52:27) FMG: Can you share that recipe?

(52:31) PTT: Well look, the recipe is easy for COVID, it is, you are going to have a red onion, lemon, chamomile and garlic. So you cook all of that in a little pot and then you take it, that's how it was removed. Garlic is a very strong antibiotic, and onion is. As I said, I don't know. I don't remember what it's called, but I mean, it removes phlegm. Chamomile is also anti-inflammatory, all of that is good for, for what COVID is, many people suffered, they could no longer drink water, they go to the clinic or the hospital, what they do is they put oxygen, and there where they die, for what reason, because they can no longer drink water, and in that illness that happened, what makes you the most is thirst, so you have to drink water and water and water. So what I did, instead drinking water, is my. That medicine that I prepared, I drank a little, little, little, like that, and it's even good, the coworkers saw that I still, when I came back through, after that I brought, they saw a liter (laugh) of, of that traditional medicines, and now, it helped a lot.

(54:38) FMG: When returning to work, did it continue to the same world as before, or was there something different?

(54:46) PTT: Yes, well, there was a lot of change, because there are many, because it is. It entered that fear, that you can no longer approach a person, because it is contagious, you can catch it, and you can die, and all that. So already a lot, but, thanks to that, we had. Well, with me. The teacher who taught me how to do the work, taught me, he wasn't very delicate to say, we arrived, and we worked, that's it.

(55:30) FMG: How difficult was it to work before than now, due to COVID?

(55:41) PTT: Yes, it's very, very, very difficult, already, because one can't get close to the person.

(55:48) FMG: And how did you work? Were you two or three [groups]?

55:53 PTT: No, we are only two of us, yes, we are two. He [teacher], well, as he told me, he was not very delicate, you know, so, everything was normal.

FMG: Ok, when it came back to normal, and started.

PTT: Yes, again, like that. Yes, there, we continued working.

(56:15) FMG: Are there techniques that you have learned along the way, or do you use the same ones?

(56:23) PTT: Well right now, there are many things that we are learning by ourselves, we invent things, make things, like that.

(56:39) FMG: And the technology, like, that is advancing a lot right now, how have, you, integrated into welding, or is it still old school?

(56:52) PTT: No, we use the, old technique, because the, new one does not. Well, my vision is, I wanted to go and learn, but, I have not found the school. For that, I wanted to go a little further, but so far I haven't found where, no, I haven't had the idea where, I wanted to improve a little further, but maybe later.

(57:23) FMG: And do you have a special memory of welding, the beautiful experience, which reminds you, what special things have happened in the group? And a project that has been done like wow, or has it stayed?

(57:41) PTT: Yes, we have already done several, here for example, sometimes there are ships, for example, they come to break the tall poles they have. So, we have to do it, manufacture it again. It is a, a new work, right, because all the boats come from the factory, which is we call, Shippear, where they make the whole ship. The whole ship arrives here, fine, but when something happens to the ship, then one has to start doing it and leave it as new. Then you squeeze it.

(58:27) FMG: A ship that you, have never forgotten that you have welded?

(58:30) PTT: To a. Yes, it's the. We changed many pieces on the boat, it's a. Yes, I never forget it.

(58:48) FMG: When they made that a project, that, how did it feel at the end? When a ship arrived and was destroyed, or that they had problems, and when they finished, what was the trajectory?

(59:03) PTT: Oh yes, when everything came, already destroyed, and ruined, we started to fix it, when we finished it. One feel happy that it is like new.

(59:21) FMG: The [protective] measures and protocols for each weld, what are the measures you take when welding something, the measures so that nothing happens to you?

(59:35) PTT: Yes, the measurements, one has to be far away, well, not so far away, well, have a space, because sometimes the irons can sometimes fall. And then, and always we also have to always wear boots with steel, because if it falls on your foot, nothing happens, it always helps. And you always also check your machines when you start welding, whether it is working well or not, or some failure, or something. You have to see all of this and be in a safe place, right, where you stay. If you're up there, well, then you have to make sure where you're going to stay. If it is once. Well, one can suffer an accident.

(1:00:40) FMG: Is there collaboration with other welding companies or not?

PTT: How?

FMG: Let's say in other companies welding a project in conjunction with another weld.

(1:00:48) PTT: No, no, no, only here.

(1:00:56) FMG: And how do you teach your skill here when a new one arrives or not, there is nothing here.

(1:01:09) PTT: No, there is no one new.

(1:01:13) FMG: If a new one arrived, how would you teach them the same way he taught you?

(1:01:17) PTT: I would teach it as one learned. It's how one did to learn, well, because we all have a desire to learn, now. If one doesn't teach it, well, it is also, for me, it's a really bad aspect, it is better to teach, because then we all want to learn, we all have needs and we are human beings.

(1:01:59) FMG: Looking ahead? How do you see yourself?

(1:02:04) PTT: Well, for the future, for me, well, that's what I was saying. I wanted to look for a school to learn the modern, because nowadays, as you said, you will see that with technology, they are more modern, so one has to learn the newest, now, because sometimes you need, now. In a job it may be, later on, it may be necessary, and one does not know, so, one stays back, then, instead, well, one has to learn.

(1:02:48) FMG: What are the dreams that you have now in the future?

(1:02:53) PTT: My dream is, for me, to one day have my own machines and maybe have a welding company. Here in the United States or, or I don't know, in Guatemala or in another country, see. I've also heard in Canada too, see. Sometimes that happens to me, sometimes I say, well, what would the place be like there? I like to go and see it, but you never know if you can achieve it or not, well, thank goodness to dream about it.

(1:03:45) FMG: The long story, how his life has gone all that time, what has happened, reaching that point where we are, how proud are you of yourself?



(1:04:02) PTT: Well, look, for me, it is with this job that I have, this opportunity that the boss here gave me, well, I feel proud to learn, paint, learn to weld, work in everything, well, just as I worked in a restaurant. Well, it's a blessing, one more opportunity, see. Because one, when you are there in your country, well, you only dedicate yourself, that is, to growing, see, either corn, beans or, or some vegetables, well, right? Coming here is also another opportunity to learn other things, yes?

(1:04:57) FMG: And how do you share your culture here, in the community?

(1:05:01) PTT: Well here, I see the culture, one can hardly share it, because there are some who accept, see, and others who don't, see. There, one first has to know the person, so accept it, for example, if one says something, look at this, this is the way over there, well, or others. It's okay, if they say no, well, that's okay. One can't, can't, because sometimes there are people who, if you keep telling them or saying to them, they get angry, well, there one has to have more or less, an average, right?

(1:05:53) FMG: And what difference does this company have from someone else who has not seen it or not?

(1:06:00) PTT: Well, I, I haven't seen it in other companies, no, but I have heard yes, because in other companies they are strict, for example, they tell you, if sometimes an emergency arises, you can't leave for example, what? TRUE? You can't go out, you have to request permission, some, a day or two days before, and you know that sometimes emergencies arise, for example, in my case, sometimes, since I have my son, I have my nephews, I I'm here, they're at school, sometimes, for example, they feel a little bad, so they call me, look, this is, it's an emergency, you have to go out, look for it, know that, then, not somewhere else, No, there is no chance of that, a change here, well, thank you, if, for example, if an emergency arises, I tell you there, I have to leave at such and such a time, for such and such a reason. But as long as one has to let people know, now when one doesn't let one know, that's also where it gets a little annoying, right? But it is logical, because one cannot leave like that, one only has to warn.

(1:07:30) FMG: In terms of youth, the future of young people, what advice do you give them? What about those who want to be a part of welding or want to continue in this career? What inspiration do you give them?

(1:07:49) PTT: Well, look, for me, and for young people, nowadays, well, you have to learn. You have to say, well, I have to learn it and I have to do it, no matter how difficult it is, but one has to do it, right? So that one learns, because if one, I say, it is difficult to do it, it is better not to do it, then one never learns, but whether one finds it easy or difficult, one must try it, with everything, without fear, without anything, without that we have to take steps forward.

(1:08:34) FMG: And in a special matter for young people, let's say, who one day start, start welding?

(1:08:46) PTT: Well, the advice for them is, I say that when they are starting, well, you have to put in the effort, right? And the teacher who teaches them, well, you have to

listen to him, because when the teacher teaches, once he stays doing something else and leaves the work aside, then one never learns, what I tell them is, you have to encourage yourself and continue, and if all the objectives that one, sometimes, brings, one achieves them, if they achieve them, there are no difficult things, but that's all, it is learning.

(1:09:42) FMG: And those who don't have a teacher, but dream of being a welder and all that, how would they start?

(1:09:53) PTT: If they don't have a teacher, then they would have to look for someone, look for someone, ask them, let them teach it. Because I once had a friend, well, he also said that he wanted to learn, I taught him more or less. He doesn't work here, no, he only came about two or three times, more or less I taught him how to do it, how to do it, the welding, well I don't know if he learned, well it went more or less, but then he left, I don't know in what state he left, I don't know how it turned out, if it continues or not, but always look for someone that teaches you, and always ask the person, and so on.

(1:10:55) FMG: Well, that's all today, I thank you for your time, for sharing a little with us.

(1:10:58) PTT: Well, thank you very much and I hope that those ideas are useful to young people today, right? Because there are many young people, sometimes they just stay there, they hang out with other friends, as long as one has to learn the job, because if we don't learn there comes a day when we no longer have anyone to work. So, it is better to learn, to know everything, it doesn't matter what type of work, that right now as in my case well I wanted to learn carpentry, but well, I don't know. However far one gets.

(1:11:50) FMG: CLOSE Ready, today is Friday, April 19, we are with Pantaleón, Tono Tono and we close the interview at two o' two, PM and a pleasure to have you... 1:12:10 end.