

AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY YOU'LL RECOGNIZE, AN EXTRAORDINARY CHANCE TO HEAR IT FIRST HAND.



His is a story that many will recognize, but few have an opportunity to hear first hand. Nando Parrado recounts the extraordinary tale of how he and 15 teammates survived for 72 brutal days after their plane crashed into the frozen Andes Mountains. It remains one of the greatest paramount survival stories of all time.

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PRESENTATION OF D.J.'s HERO AWARDS & ORAL AUCTION

Social Scene

Story by COREY ROSS
Photos courtesy of GAIL DAVIS AND ASSOCIATES

ULTIMATE Survivor

In May, survivor of a plane crash in the Andes in 1972, will share his incredible story of survival and success at the D.J.'s Heroes luncheon

On May 7th, Nando Parrado, survivor of a plane crash in the Andes in 1972, will share of the great survival stories of all time at the Salvation Army's D.J.'s Heroes Luncheon held at the Qwest Center. Parrado will talk about his will to survive and his belief in God after his South America rugby team crashed in the frozen Andes Mountains. Actor Ethan Hawke portrays Parrado in the movie, "Alive," based on the team's true story of hope and survival.

Now a successful businessman, Parrado is author of the New York Times bestseller, "Miracle in the Andes: 72 Days on the Mountain and My Long Trek Home."

Proceeds from the luncheon, named in honor of David and Peggy Sokol's son, who succumbed to cancer at age 18, benefit the Army's programs for children and families.

Parrado took time recently to share his story with *One Magazine*.

Q. You waited 34 to tell your story publicly? Why did you wait so long to do so? What prompted you to do it?

A: I waited almost 25 years to give my first conference...and I waited almost 34 to publish the book, so evidently there was no-rush. I let things come to me, in my life and all things seemed to fall in place at this time.

I could not have written this book many years ago, first because I did not have the perspective on the Andes ordeal and secondly I did not have a life. This is a book about my life and the Andes period is just a page of my life, not the most important one, but probably the most unforgettable one.

Q. Does your story have a greater impact now in a way because the story is unfamiliar to a couple generations of people?

A: I guess that it is such a strong story that appeals to new generations, too. A lot of young people seemed to identify with the story because they are very young. They were not alive at the time of the accident, but have probably heard about it through their families.

Q. Why do you think your talk has such an impact?

A: One attendee once told me: "There are two people I would have liked to hear on a conference...one is Shackleton (survivor of the Antarctic) and he is dead, the other one is you..!"

Maybe this expression sums up everything. Also, everybody has some problems, tragedies or illnesses in their lives and they see through my conference that there is like after a tragedy...the world goes on and on.

Q. When did you realize it had business and leadership applications?

A: When without paying attention, at the beginning, I started to apply things that I learned in the Andes, on my own businesses....and they worked very well.



Above: D.J.'s Heroes luncheon speaker Nando Parrado.

Q. Do you have a couple favorite examples of people whose lives you feel were changed by hearing your story?

A: Once a CEO of a global UK company, after hearing my conference in Buenos Aires, came to me...embraced me and said: "Nando, I am going straight to the travel agent to buy a plane ticket for tomorrow...I have not seen my parents in two years...!!! What am I doing...?"

Q. What do you credit for you surviving the experi-

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Q. What was the hardest part about the experience to overcome or recover from? Even though you've used the experience to inspire others, are you still haunted by parts of the experience?

A: The hardest part was the loss of my mother, my sisters and my best friends. Going back home and having empty seats at the dinner table. I am not at all haunted. Have not had a nightmare or bad thoughts about the ordeal, since the first day that I came out. Maybe my brain has constructed a stainless steel wall to that area, but I do not feel haunted by it.

Q. What's your life like now? How many speaking engagements do you do in a year? What's the largest audience or most

interesting audience you've given your talk to?

A: I am a business man in very sense, keeping my TV production company, my cable tv station, our family hardware stores and real estate investments running.

That is about business, but my family keeps always the first place, my friends, my sports and my dogs are also important. So, I have a normal busy life.

Last year I got some 85 requests for conferences, from all over the world and I only did 16. The largest audience was 22,000 at the Moscone Center in San Francisco. One of the most interesting was to Ross Perot, his son and his managers. Also sharing conference stages with Colin Powell, Jack Welch, Aznar, etc...is very interesting.

Q. You've returned to the crash site several times and once with your family? Why did you return? How did you get there?

A: I have been back 11 times, my father 17. We just go to put flowers in the grave of my family and friends, nothing more, nothing less. It is just that their cemetery is far away. We go from the Argentinian side, on a horse-back expedition that takes three to four days.

Q. What's it like to be there? What does it make you think about? Does it renew your appreciation for your life and the hardship you overcame?

A: I do not have any feeling of revenge or something like it. I enjoy the incredibly beautiful landscapes, that we hated when we were dying. It makes me think about how small we are compared to those huge mountains and that they will be there for millions and millions of years...we are so fragile compared to them.

I really appreciate life every day...I live the present with intensity. I do not have to go back up there to understand and enjoy what is important.

Q. What happened to the fellow who joined you on your trek in 1972? Is he still alive? If so, do you remain in touch?

A: Roberto is very much alive. He is a fantastic pediatric cardiologist in Uruguay. Very well respected hand with lots of energy. I see him quite often as we are close friends and we live in the same neighborhood. He is also the godfather to one of my daughters and I am the godfather to one of his sons.

ence? What did you learn about yourself?

A: The team spirit, the education, physical strength...for surviving. I learned that I am very tenacious!

