The stork trip to Vista Alegre back in 1956.

If there is one thing that my dad did well was to tell stories. He would resort to vivid details, so specific that I still can see (in my mind) how the story came to life when I heard them as a little boy. He was very good in telling the story almost verbatim every time, and he never sounded bored, on the contrary, he seemed to enjoy as much as I did.

The first story I can recall I heard for the first time when I was very, very, small. The versions I recall come from when I was about 5 maybe 6 years old. Every birthday, or when a neighbor or family member had a baby, I would ask him to tell me this story. Besides telling the story he would walk around our yard and show me where the fictitious story would have happened, as if he wanted to prove it true. As I said, the details were precise, down to specific facts that made the story so believable. I will try to re-count as close to what I heard, in his words, and in brackets I’ll add my comments to clarify items that may not make sense for someone outside of the family.

I guess this story came as a result of me (or my brother, who was six years older than me) asking about our birth. The question must have been something like: Why was I born into this family, and not any other? How did I get here?

This gave origin to the story of the “Visit from Ms. Stork”, and it went like this [the times I recall he was alone in the yard with me. Maybe my brother was getting too old for these stories]:

*“When babies are ready to be born, a Stork is called to take that baby to their future parents. Your mommy and I were waiting for a visit from Ms. Stork for more than five years (so your brother could have a brother or sister to play with). Because of the large avocado tree by the side of the house, and a coconut tree on the front, our home was not very visible from above and every time the stork came by with a baby she would (by mistake) deliver it to the neighbors instead.* [That explained why they had nine children, at least to me].

*I had enough of it* [again, these are my dad’s word], *so almost daily I went to the upstairs room* [we had an extra bedroom above on the second floor with a window to the front of the house, with better visibility because it was a little above the avocado tree]. *I decided to look for the stork as often as I could, to make it sure she wouldn’t miss our house again. Every day I would go up there, go to the window and watch the skies. It took a long time, but one day I saw it coming in our direction with a baby in its beak. That was you. I started waiving my hands, screaming, trying to get the storks attention. At first she ignored me and flew past our home, towards the neighbors house [the lady with nine kids]. I didn’t give up. I ran downstairs, grabbed a dish cloth in the kitchen and started waiving it towards the stork that was now going in circles, round and round, preparing to land.*

[At this point my dad would take me outside, if we were not there already, and show me exactly where all that “happened”].

*I waived the dish cloth, I screamed, I waived my hands. Your mom and your grandma came out to see what was happening. I started climbing the avocado tree and jumped from there into the neighbor’s roof. The stork was very close to landing when she saw me. I told her that I was expecting that baby for so long; it wasn’t fair to give you to the neighbors, who already had their hands full. The stork finally ended the slow descending and landed on the neighbor’s roof, gave me a curious look (they don’t talk, but she understood what I was saying) and I guess she decided I was right and slowly walked my way with you in her beak. I was so happy! I got you in my arms, and I could hear your mom and grandma screaming in excitement down below us.*

*I couldn’t get down through the avocado tree, because I could slip and drop you, so I walk carefully towards the window of the bedroom on our house upper level and by then your grandma was already there, arms open to get you.*

*Can you see that bent rain gutter and the cracked ceramic tile?* [I would acknowledge that I could spot them].  *I bent the gutter and cracked the tile when I was walking on the roof, because I’m so heavy for those fragile tiles. I never fixed them because they remind me of that wonderful day, March 12, 1956.* [I still remember vividly that every time I saw the bent rain-gutter and the cracked tile I would think about the story and how I was “born”]

*After grandma got you, your mom came in also and you were going from one to the other. I just climbed in through the window, and you were now part of the family. That was a close call. If I had missed the stork’s visit, Abel and Wilma* [Our next door neighbors - I don’t recall her last name, we never used it!] *would have had 10 kids instead.*

*That was an adventure for all of us, but it was well worth.”*