

And the streets are paved with gold

I'd like to tell you a story, and in as much as it may sound like a fairy tale it happens to be real. I was raised on certain basic principles, believe in God, don't steal, work hard and you'll succeed but don't ever let your grasp exceed your reach, and do unto others as you would have them do unto you. So coming from the somewhat strict Italian background I came from, I have carried these ideals into my adult life and am raising my children with them although my velvet glove does not conceal as steely a fist as my father's did, as his fathers did. But everything my father taught me must have been a condensed version of what his father, my grandfather, taught him.

My Grandfather, Lorenzo Mongiello, came to America via Ellis Island from Italy. I can only imagine the feelings he, and the hundreds of thousands of other immigrants from all over the world, must have felt, back then, when he and they first set their eyes upon that Lady in the Harbor, what she stood for, what promises she held, what dreams would now be attainable here in America, that simply were not in their homeland's. What promise could this symbol, this "Statue of Liberty" make that would cause a man to uproot his family, his wife and children and move them to a place where he knew no one. Where the only possible bond that he could have with any one would be their common language. It was a gift promised in the and by the constitution of the government of the United States of America, and their own determination to prove to themselves and every one back home that in America the dreams that you sweat and strive and sacrifice for are yours. Yours to keep and where the dream of a better life for your children can become a reality. So my Grandfather moved his family into a tenement on Mott and Broom streets and opened up a small tin can manufacturing company aptly named Lorenzo Mongiello Can Corporation. As his sons got older they worked with him in the can company. there were seven children, 2 girls and 5 boys. My father, who was named Angelo Lorenzo Anthony Mongiello was the youngest of all the children. Angelo, my father, was nineteen years old when my grandfather became ill to ill to run the company and as young as he was my grandfather asked him to take over, which he did. Oh by the way one of my grandfather's customers was Pollio Dairy Products, as in Polly' O mozzarella and ricotta. A company now owned by Kraft Foods. As much as my father loved his father the can company was not his life's ambition but I guess as Mr. Joseph Pollio went to my Grandfathers to order

cans for his ricotta, my father developed an interest in the making of mozzarella . Back then they used to make it by hand , heating the curd in hot water and then stretching it out with large wooden paddles . One of the things that used to bother my father was that these men used to actually burn their hands by dipping them into the scorching hot water to pull off the mozzarella to shape into saleable sized pieces . This actually bothered my father enough for him to start thinking about ways to automate the processing of mozzarella cheese. Being now first generation American my father carried with him that inalienable right, that through hard work , sweat and sacrifice his dreams for a better life than his fathers would become a reality, so my father set out to automate the Italian Cheese Industry . Being as proud as he was of being an American he opened up a small machine shop in Brooklyn and called it American Pioneer Corporation. American for what he was proud to be and Pioneer as in the first to explore the realms of automating the Italian Cheese Industry. Which he did . My father invented the machinery that automated that gigantic piece of Italian American culture. As life would have it , my father got married and had five children of his own , Angelo Jr. , Lawrence , named after his father but Americanized , John , named after his wives father Jo- Ann, named after both his wives mother (Josephine) and his own mother (Anna). and Anthony , named after my father's oldest brother who passed away shortly before Anthony was born. As we got older we also went to work with our father as he did with his father. I remember while growing up though too young to work with him , the many nights I would hear him come in sometimes after midnight but mom always had dinner on the table for him along with a kiss . He would fly all over the U.S. and Canada to different factories telling the people who made mozzarella that his equipment would make them make more money with the same amount of cheese while giving the people who bought their mozzarella a better product , and it did. My dad used to patent all of his ideas but that did not stop some people from copying some of his ideas but my father was never a vengeful person and always put his faith in God. As we his children grew up some of us began to realize that as much as we loved him , this machine shop and producing the machines that make mozzarella was not for all of us. The one thing we could never understand was , why did he continue to make these machines for other people . Why didn't he just open up a mozzarella plant of his own . We , his children would run it and in no small way would surely have become contenders in the industry. I have however come to realize that my father was never really in it for the money , he was genuinely in it to help other people. Also he loved to invent things , come up with new ideas or better ways to do

things that already existed. As I said before there are five of us and as my father would say " the apple doesn't fall far from the tree ", By that I mean , and I say this modestly, we do dabble in inventions as well. My older brother Angelo Jr. has a United States patent on an "Anti Shark Gun " he designed, and it works Which brings me to my youngest brother Anthony , my father , myself , America and the dreams , ideals and hopes for a better life that is the God given right of every American who has the ability to make their lives and this country a better place. And that this country is still the best place in the world to live.

In 1984 I sat down in my brother Anthony's kitchen looking for something to eat . He said let's make a pizza , we wanted to make a large pie but we only had dough from a pizzeria to make two small pies , so we decided that instead of making two small pies we'll smush the two dough's together and make one large pie. So that's just what we did , the only thing is is that when we cooked the pie the outer section or the crust of the pie expanded more than it normally should have and we laughed at it when we took it out of the oven . We ate it and because the center with all the sauce and cheese on it was so small we looked at the crust and thought look at all the waste there is, cause nobody hardly ever eats the crust and when they do it's almost an unpleasant thing to do , so I said what a waste that crust is and we looked at each other and Anthony said Yeah! but it wouldn't be a waste if there was something in it! So we started messing around with the whole idea and when we started making more of them and I mean a lot more . We stuffed that crust with everything from mozzarella cheese to apple pie filling and every thing in between . Half of our family members thought we were crazy the other half didn't know what to think . But my father knew what to do , as he helped us develop the pies he said let's patent the idea. So we called our Uncle Angelo on our mother's side , because he was a lawyer and he recommended Penny and Edmund's . We went to them ,although , I think the lawyer that helped us , sort of thought that maybe we were a bit crazy . The one thing he did say was " hey , look at the guy who invented Velcro". In 1987 we got the patent , we thought it was a good idea . The United States Patent Office thought it was a good enough and original enough an idea to grant us the patent . So , Feeling as proud as a couple of new father's , Anthony and me went to a few neighborhood pizzerias but no one wanted to be bothered with a licensing agreement for something so off the wall . Still undaunted and because this is America , we sent it to Pizza Hut . We had that

much faith in it , but they weren't interested in it at all . I wonder if they laughed at it like everybody else did . We waited awhile did some marketing research and figured out that Pizza Hut might increase their sales between 20% and 30% and in 1991 we again offered it along with our research to Pizza Hut . Guess what ? They turned us down again . Well , some more time has passed it's now 1995 . My father passed away last year on October 17 . The day before my brother Anthony's 30th birthday . It was very sudden , very unexpected and very painful for all of us . We loved him dearly and he loved us dearly too! ~~Want~~ know how I know . Well before my dad headed up to those Pearly Gates , he headed over to some marketing big shot over at Pizza Hut and whispered in his ear " Hey buddy , that " Stiffen' the Crust" idea is a real money maker . GO FOR IT . and you know what , they did!!! You want to know something else , it did increase their sales . Just like we told them it would back in 1991 . It increased their sales by 28% and when your talking a Pizza Hut 28% , your talking a lot of dough . The only problem there is , is that they forgot this is America . And in America you can not steal . You can not steal the sweat , the dreams and the hopes that my grandfather gave to my father who in turn gave them to me , for me , to stand up and proudly and hand them down to my children so their dreams can also be realized . No . You can't steal . Not in America .