



**THORSTEN U.
REINHARDT**

**THE
STRUGGLE
FOR A
BETTER
FUTURE**

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Thorsten U. Reinhardt

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First Edition

This book is based on the author's personal experience and memories. The names of individuals mentioned in this work may have been changed.

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Gert J. Reinhardt
1950-2014

For my father Gert J. Reinhardt, who sacrificed it all for the possibility of a better future for everyone through innovation and technology. He was a great man who never gave up and always kept on fighting. I am grateful for all the time and opportunities we have had together.

May you live on in the spirit and our vision come to bear fruit. You will always be missed.

Acknowledgments

My love and admiration belongs to my wife, Carolina, who has always supported me in my vision over the years while willingly making many sacrifices. Thank you for your unconditional love and devotion. Carolina, the woman of my dreams, and my children, Hannah, Kiara, and Gianna are giving me the strength and motivation to continue fighting for a better future on a daily basis. In good times as well as in the bad, I will always love you.

My thanks and love also goes out to my mother, who was a wonderful wife to my father. You are a great mother and an even greater grandmother. You are always there for us —thank you.

I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to Pastor Robert and Ada Onuorah, as well as the entire Church congregation of the City of Redemption, for their help and support, which has enabled me to mature spiritually and draw me closer to Jesus.

To Eloka, Eniola, Aime and all of our friends who have supported us along the way, thank you for showing us what true friendship is and for having stood by our side unconditionally.

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Foreword

I, Thorsten U. Reinhardt, the founder of Reinhardt Technology Holdings and its subsidiaries, have decided to take a risk. Instead of keeping my business success a secret, I'm adopting a more open approach; I want to share my story—the story of how I developed my company into the technological titan that it is today.

My ultimate mission is to develop technologies that will help developing countries emerge as strong and stable economies. My desire to achieve this goal has been fired and inspired by the opportunities I've had to work with the greatest visionaries in the business industry. Additionally, I have experienced first-hand the different mentalities towards innovation and the implementation of opportunities that we have in the western world as compared to the attitudes held by those in developing countries.

My journey has taken me through a variety of situations that I would not wish on anybody else, but all these experiences have shaped me to be who I am today. Now, I am devoted to the continuous fight to prevail in getting better, more efficient, and more cost-effective technologies implemented for the benefit of the people of the world, as well as the environment.

RTR has recently published a press release regarding its plan to organize and perform a roadshow, which we will take on tour across Africa, visiting universities in seventeen different countries to create opportunities and awareness of how technology can revolutionize industry, innovation, and infrastructure. RTR will speak to students, educators, and politicians in an effort to implement grass-roots changes that will significantly impact the sustenance and growth of these nations. For more information on the event, please visit the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/neplop5>.

RTR also plans to visit rural villages, where it is difficult to provide quality education for children due to the lack of infrastructure and the economic struggles faced by these communities. Fortunately, there is a chance for economic growth even in these small, isolated areas—RTR believes in a vision for the future where all children have access to essential needs, particularly education.

The past twelve years of my life have been extremely difficult, and my family has had to make many sacrifices in order to survive. By telling my story through this book, I hope to reach out to those who might find themselves in a situation where people are continuously telling them NO. It is my dearest wish that these people not be discouraged—that they instead continue their efforts to achieve a better life for themselves and their families, just as I have done, just as I continue to do.

Chapter 1: Small Beginnings – The Foundations My Father Built

Recently, I received an invitation via LinkedIn from someone I knew a long time ago. While I don't know whether this contact request is genuine or not, it did encourage my urge to tell the story that led us to be where we are now.

It often seems as though writing stories that demonize the actions of inventors and visionaries sells better than shining a bright light on the opportunities that lie ahead. Unfortunately, my father, a great visionary, was exposed to both sides of the press. During his prime, he was hailed as a brilliant, revolutionary thinker, yet during the downfall of his company—the business he had built by himself—he was demonized and vilified by the media.

Nevertheless, the family name “Reinhardt” has always stood for innovation and enrichment. What started out as a small company with a handful of people turned out to become a major corporation with more than 1,000 employees. As you can imagine, it was no small feat.

But, even for my father, it was a hard journey to get there. He was born in 1950, just after WWII. Nothing came easy, and the family didn't have much by way of money or resources. My grandfather worked in the mines in the Ruhr Valley, and my father and his younger brother would not get to see him very often, an experience that I would share while growing up.

Everything that my father had, he worked for. In between his studies and regular chores, he toiled long hours at the petrol station in the evenings and during the summer. My father was always eager to achieve greatness and, through a family friend, to whom I know he remained very grateful throughout the rest of his life, he was eventually accepted into Dortmund University. I remember him telling me that he signed up for the first ever Informatics/Computing class that the university offered.



Image 1 Dortmund Informatik 1977, Klaus Kreiss, Gert J. Reinhardt

After working for several prominent companies, my father and mother moved to Saudi Arabia for two years, where my father oversaw the creation of a steel manufacturing plant owned by the German company Korf Stahl Deutschland.

After their return to Germany in 1982, the year I was born, my father became a management consultant. There, he worked on a project for Union Investment in Frankfurt, Germany, which was based on a concept to migrate popular administration software from a Nixdorf based system to an IBM mainframe system. This led my father to found his first self-owned company, Reinhardt GmbH, in 1984.

Reinhardt GmbH's goal was to develop and market a comprehensive software package that would manage information for financial institutions. This Software package became extremely popular within the German speaking regions (Germany, Austria, and Luxemburg), reaching a 75% market share. The company later became known as SER, Systems Engineering Reinhardt GmbH, and, in 1997, the company went public on the German Stock exchange, Neuer Markt.

Chapter 2: My Early Childhood

While I was growing up, I never really understood what was happening around me and what my father was up to. But, despite rarely seeing my father around very much, there was nothing that I didn't have. When my father returned from a trip, I received gifts. What I didn't know was that my mother had purchased them and hidden them from me until his return.

I remember the house I grew up in until I was seven or eight years old. At the time, my father and his team worked from there before being able to expand to bigger premises. We lived in a very small village called Neustadt/Wied with roughly 500 people living in it.

I was never concerned with what my father did, and I didn't understand it. I remember sneaking into his office once and turning on the computer, and all I could see was a green blinking thing, and I left it alone, after identifying it as boring.

Living in a small village came with its problems. From the time when I was nine years old, I would go to town to the local toy store to see what I might like to be given as a present next, and the local boys would come up to me trying to bully me and make me feel horrible about myself. I guess their parents did not have the courage to attack my father personally, and their children, who would obviously pick up on all the conversations, would do the job for them by attacking me. It made me a bit of a loner and isolated, but I was fine; I was quite happy by myself putting together my Lego.

I didn't go to the local school. Instead, I was taken to a private school thirty minutes away every day, and I liked that, not being known by who you were or what you had.

It goes without saying that I liked all the things we had—nice cars, nice house etc.—but, at the same time, I felt ashamed of being classified as “the rich kid.” Private schools in Germany are not exactly comparable with private schools anywhere else in the world. They are not as expensive, and they don't give any prestige over your education.

After my first year at this secondary school, I remember a really great summer holiday with my father and mother in Canada. It was great because it was a memorable one where I was able to go rafting with my father, and we went fishing and only caught one fish in eight hours and then we had it for dinner.

It was after this summer holiday that the school I went to declared it would have to shut down, as it was not profitable. We, the students protested on the street, marching to the mayor's office. This was when the parents also got involved, believing it would be best to save the school rather than separate all the children again.

The Parents decided to buy the school, and my father led not only the negotiations with the banks but he also became the general manager for a short period of time due to his majority share capital in this project.

I realize they believed it was the right thing to do for me. I was shy and introverted, and they were trying to save me from having to adapt to a new environment but what would come would be even worse.

I became the spotlight from bigger and older students, bullying me and stomping on me as the rich kid. I wished I wouldn't have been my father's son at the time, as I just wanted to be normal and be accepted as me and not be seen as "Reinhardt's son," but that was not a possibility.

Chapter 3: Going to School In England

The relationship between my father and I was not the best after these experiences. After it came out that I had been bullied, threatened, and even Tasered in school, I asked my father not to get involved. I'm not sure whether he did or not, but it didn't really matter. I didn't react to anything and the big boys soon lost interest.

In 1995, my parents bought a house in England as a family retreat during the holidays. I really liked it there because it was an old house that didn't shout "wealthy," although that was probably my ignorance, as I didn't understand the housing market in the U.K. at the time.

I would come during the summer holidays with my only friend, Jan, and feel completely free of all the burdens upon me. While there, I was just a normal kid, granted I was German, but there was no special treatment like everywhere else.

So, I remember coming down for breakfast on Thursday, January 15th, before going to school and asking my father what he would think if I went to school in England. My mother wasn't very happy with the idea and shouted out "no way," but my father took a slightly different approach. He told me that it would not be a problem and asked which school I would like to go to. He also let me know that, if that was what I wanted, I would not be able to change my mind in a couple of weeks' time.

The school I had in mind was close to my parent's house in the U.K., and I would pass it every time I went to town, so I agreed to my father's terms. My mother must have made all the arrangements to visit the school the following Monday. My first day was Tuesday as a full-time boarder. I was petrified the first day, especially in the night, I felt a little icky, but that feeling soon went. There were no luxury accommodations. It was very simple and very English; and I didn't miss a thing.

Granted, it was a private school, and you were either on a scholarship or your parents had money, and there was no more to it than that—no story anyone would know about you.

But the school would only see me through GCSE's, which was only one-and-one-half years away, after which I would have to change school to do my A-Levels.

Chapter 4: There Was No Bullying in the U.K.

My decision to move to the U.K. and continue my studies in the U.K. was greatly respected by my father, and our relationship improved immensely. He started treating me like an adult, and he started taking me to conferences and meetings, where I would meet all the executives from the companies my father would buy around the globe. Funnily enough, I even remember most of their names.

I also remember the time when he took me to a corporate get-together in an old chateau near Paris and almost missing the flight. When it came to things like this, my father was always last-minute jumping from one meeting to the next. The reason we were running late to catch the flight was because he had a sales meeting before that and, if I can remember correctly, he closed it that day, leading us to race to the airport. It was then that I started to take an interest in my father's business and what it was that he was developing. It's called *document management*, he would tell me while we were visiting the big trade stand at the famous computer fair Cebit in Hannover, and I got to understand its applications.

However, looking back, having this understanding, and enjoying the fact that there was no bullying in the U.K., I became different. I was very proud of my father's achievements, and I wanted to become part of it in the future. As a result, I let down my guard and tried to explain to my peers what my father was up to and where I would be joining him next. I didn't care about what I spent and just bought things. I was not as excessive as some of those shows you see on MTV but, if my credit on my bank account ran out, more money was just a phone call away.

If only I had known the change that would come.

The school I was attending was so small. We had ten people in a classroom and we were only twelve or so boarders. Essentially, we had a family environment in which I felt quite comfortable. I was the only German there. The rest were from Hong Kong, Russia, and Japan.

I thought we would stay in touch after we finished our exams but none of us did, despite the fact that Michael and I would join the same school to do our A-Levels.

Chapter 5: I Headed for Australia and Ended up in the U.S.

I don't really know what it was that messed things up so much, but my parents didn't really get involved in the school I chose to go to. What I also didn't know at the time was that there were schools closer to my parent's home that would have allowed me to board, but my housemaster showed us options for all the schools, including the current one. The schools all belonged to one group and he would benefit financially if I decided to attend one of those choices, and I trusted his advice.

So, instead of staying within a familiar environment, I chose Kelly College, which was in the middle of nowhere in Dartmoor.

My first day there was not as exhilarating as I expected. A large number of new students arrived and, well, at the time, I already knew that I had made the wrong decision, but I didn't want to let anyone down by changing my mind. At the same time, though, this would be the start of my rebellious time, which led to not only wasting a lot of my parent's money in tuition and boarding but also in my and everybody else's time.

We had school six days a week—half days on Saturday—and I hated it. I had passed my driver's license and my parents purchased me a car to get to and from school on the weekend.

I was not involved in any school activities, and I took a very arrogant approach. I would even skip school on Saturday in order to go home.

For some time, the school tried to intervene, but at some point, they just gave up on me. I believe that my problem was partly that I didn't know what I wanted, and I hadn't received any guidance to find out how I could get to know what I wanted. This meant that I was easily influenced by the people I trusted, and I was happy to jump on any idea that sounded exciting.

My mother had me speak to someone who had just spent a whole year in Melbourne, Australia, as part of an exchange with his university. It seemed an exciting idea to go and study at the University of Melbourne, as it seemed full of young people, nice weather, and what seemed like the experience of a lifetime. Besides, I knew I didn't want to stay and study in the U.K. The country and its mentality seemed to become so small that I wanted to see the world, and I was ready for new excitements. For that reason, I had only applied to Universities in Australia, but, somehow, I ended up in the U.S.

Chapter 6: My Father Always Thought BIG

After my last exam in May, I didn't really know what to do. I went back to Germany, but I had to wait for my exam results in August to know whether I got into Melbourne University or not but the semester wouldn't start until January.

At my father's offices, I met Charles Merger and Mitchel Butcher and shared my dilemma with them. They suggested I come and work in the marketing department in the U.S. office. Speaking to my father about it, the only condition he had was that I was not his son, meaning that I wouldn't get any special treatment.

In July, I headed out to Dulles airport in Virginia, only twenty minutes from the capital, and started working for my father's company, something I had wanted to do for some time.

Several weeks down the line, Charles suggested that I stay in the U.S. and take my SAT exams, which would enable me to go to university there. I was taken by the idea and turned away from the idea of going to Australia.

But then everything changed on September 11th 2001 in New York and Washington, D.C. It was a scary time, especially as I was alone and had no family around me.

My father would come to the U.S. from time to time, but that would only be for a week or so. Charles and his family took me under their wings. They looked after me, made sure I was all right, and they would invite me for dinner. All in all, I almost felt like I had a second father, as we would spend lots of our free time together.

Little did I know that this relationship would change.

A series of events caused the mother company, SER AG, in Germany to get into some trouble and my father would come to the U.S. more frequently. The idea was for the German mother company to stop trading on the German stock exchange and be relisted in New York. I remember attending this meeting in New York. I was off course at the time I didn't really understand what was going on but, at the end of the day, it never got far enough for the company to be relisted.

What I realize now was that what my father was trying to save his "baby" (Brainwear), which he had worked so hard on for years. The problem was that my father always thought BIG, so the majority of the people could not follow his big vision and were probably just interested in a financial gain. My father's motivation was never financial gain; his motivation was always to enrich people through his developments, which

separated him from the rest of the people. In other words, he was a visionary, and the rest were capitalists and opportunists.

My father documented every detail of what happened and why, but my father always lacked the ability to express himself easily, so any lay man would be able to comprehend his train of thoughts. He was a genius.

Chapter 7: From One Day to the Next, He Lost Everything

I remember my father coming over to the U.S. when it was his birthday, and Charles, my father, and I went for dinner at our regular Chinese restaurant. My father was fascinated with details and knowledge and liked to share his great knowledge, so he started telling the story about Alexander the Great, who's vision was to conquer the world. Unfortunately, the story ended by Alexander the visionary being poisoned by his own people—a fate my father had to experience as well.

From one day to the next, he lost everything he had ever worked for. Charles came to discuss business with my father in the kitchen. I was in the office doing course work and, the next thing I knew, Charles ran out of the house. My father chased after him shouting, "If you leave now, that means war."

Shortly afterwards, we had the sheriff on our doorstep telling my father he was not allowed onto SER premises. I still find it interesting how a phone call to the sheriff's office was enough to intimidate someone just like that.

That was the start of a new beginning and, although we didn't know it, my father and I would work on a new technology closer than ever before.

Over Christmas, the family reunited at the house in England, and I remember my father coming down to the sitting room to talk to me. He asked me what I wanted to do. My reply was "I want to have my own company." We then talked about Bill Gates and other entrepreneurs and visionaries who decided to drop out of school to do great things, and he asked me if I wanted to achieve great things with him. At the same time, he also ensured me that I could stay in the U.S. to finish my studies if I wanted to, but, despite the fact that neither of us knew what this great thing might be, I was determined to be onboard.

I flew back to the U.S. to finish the semester, pack up the house, and return home. I was a little naïve to think that it would be a walk in the park but, apart from attending a couple of meetings, drinking nice wine, and overhearing conversations about market share, profits, and equity, I didn't really understand the deeper contexts of these conversations and what I was getting myself into. It was extremely difficult to work with a visionary, and it was increasingly harder to work with a visionary who was my father and had more than forty-five years of experience on me.

Nonetheless, full of joy and enthusiasm, I returned to Europe in May, which was a great thing as things became really heated up and uncomfortable for me when the U.S. attacked Iraq in March 2003. I did not return home alone, though.

Chapter 8: The Girl of My Dreams

I was never thought of as a great player with women, although I may have desired it, especially after making friends with a Latin guy while in school.

His name was Ole, and he and his brothers had some of the wildest parties I had ever seen. They were five brothers, and they originated from Bolivia. Despite having a long-standing American girlfriend, Ole was extremely popular with the Latin girls, and he would disappear into his bedroom with them.

At the time, I wished I had the success with girls he had and, although there were several occasions when I could have slept with several girls, it was always my conscience that got the better of me. At the end of the day, though, it was Ole who got stood up at the altar by his girlfriend. She left him while they were planning their wedding. I, on the other hand, gained the heart of the woman they all desired.

Ole invited me to his brother's birthday party, and there was no chance I was going to miss it.

We were sitting on the sofa talking and drinking when she walked into the house. I instantly noticed her, and I was unable to take my eyes off her. In that moment, I realized that she was the woman I was going to marry.

I was mesmerized and only hoped that she would come and speak to us. Ole told me that I had no chance with her. She only liked older men and she saw him as a brother, so there was no chance for him either.

She had a little baby girl just eight months old, but that didn't put me off. After she put the baby down to sleep with Ole's mother, I saw my chance to chat with her. I wasn't going to let the fact that I was younger get in the way, and I started talking and talking.

The fact that I was not a very good dancer probably presented itself as an advantage to me, as she was up to the challenge of trying to teach me. However, even today, I am hopeless, but I don't shy away despite possibly embarrassing myself and those around me.

Her name was Carolina, and it sounded like music to my ears. I was more determined than ever before in my life. I hoped that she wouldn't ask my age, but she did and, despite being in quite a tipsy state, I came up with an answer that was not going to deter her from me. The cheesiest and best response I could come up with was, "Physically, I admit to being younger but, mentally, you will have to get to know me."

I didn't think that this cheesy line would work, but it did. After Carolina had enough of my bad dancing skills, we talked and she tried to convince me that I would not want to be with her and that there were many other girls out there who would be better for me, as she had a baby and her mother was very sick.

Nothing that she told me could put me off, and I finally mustered the courage to ask for her number.

When I woke up in the morning, the first thought I had was of Carolina, but she had already left before I could see her again. So, I instantly called the number she gave me, only to find out that the number was incorrect.

I turned to Ole and asked him if he could get me Carolina's number and only with hesitation and a phone call to Carolina would his mother hand me the right one.

It would be months though before I would see her again, as she really didn't seem that interested in me, but I continued to be persistent and eventually she would allow me to see her more frequently. Not only did I fall in love with her but also with her little girl.

As my return to Europe was imminent, and I was determined to spend the rest of my life with Carolina, it wasn't long before I asked her to marry me and expressed my wish to adopt her daughter, Hannah.

I was very happy when she said yes, but I was equally scared to finally tell my parents what was happening. Although I had mentioned to my mother (who most probably passed the information on to my father) that I was dating someone with a child, I guess they didn't think that I would go that far.

I remember one morning my father called me and Hannah was making noises in the background. He asked me whether it was a baby. In a very hesitant voice, I replied, "Yes."



Image 2 My brother, Imad, holding Hannah on the day of our arrival in the U.K.

It became complicated when other family members called me and told me that I should not get too involved with Carolina. When I told my father over the phone that I would be getting married in a week, his response was “I thought so.”

Whatever reservations there may have been, I realize it wasn't easy for Carolina to move to a foreign country with me and adapt to a new life with the glaring eyes of my family members upon her. While it may have taken some time, eventually Carolina did earn their respect. Most importantly though, Hannah was embraced and loved by everyone from day one as if she was my own.

Chapter 9: Flying for One Euro

During this time, Ryanair was new and they were transporting passengers from Frankfurt Hahn, Germany, to Bournemouth, England, for less than €1. These were the connections we would use to travel between our German and English residences.

What we really couldn't understand was how it was possible for a company with an aircraft that cost one hundred million Euro to buy and maintain could make a profit selling tickets at such a low price. The next step was looking at the overall costs, because Frankfurt Hahn was 1.5 hours from our home and so was Bournemouth, which meant that the fuel to drive to and from these airports cost more than the actual flight.

At the same time, Airbus' A380 was big in the news and it became the biggest passenger aircraft with exceptional statistics.

So, having looked at several problems relating to the transportation by air, we actually found out that the amount of passengers being transported by air compared to the amount of freight being transported represented a fraction.

Obviously, one thing led to another and the question really was, how do we abolish the requirement of airports and their infrastructure? During and after WWII, several approaches had been attempted to make vertical take-off and landing aircrafts. A famous one is the Dornier DO-31. The only problem with this aircraft was that it had eight turbines used for the vertical thrust, giving it a minimal payload of just 3.5t and a total take-off weight of 22.5t. The state-of-the-art technology of its time limited the possibility to increase or even reverse this performance ratio, demonstrated by the principle of gas turbines generating far more thrust at a lower weight compared to any of their predecessors.

So, we had an idea of what needed to be achieved. We needed an aircraft that

- could carry heavy freight
- must not rely on infrastructure, i.e., a helicopter
- must transport its freight quickly to its destination, i.e., an airplane
- must be cost effective and environmentally friendly

The obvious next question would be where this would find a market. At first, the obvious answer was everywhere but, in fact, in Europe, thanks to the Romans, our road infrastructure is very well established, unlike developing countries, where the Romans did not leave behind a wealth of roads, which has kept these countries from growing at an equivalent pace.

The first name the aircraft was given was F12, which stood for Factor12. Early preliminary calculations and models have resulted in figures that would allow our aircraft to operate at the factor of 12 compared to conventional transportation methods.

Chapter 10: Charles Steals the Company

The newspapers obviously demonized my father after the collapse of the “empire” he had built, and he was accused of getting away with pots of money. In actual fact, that was not the case.

In the attempt to save his life’s work, Brainwear, he transferred the majority of our family’s savings to the U.S. where it was to be purchased by Charles. Charles was supposed to enable the continuation of the development of my father’s invention. Charles, however, did not keep his part of the bargain and left us with virtually nothing, apart from assets in the form of properties. Charles has since sold the company for U.S. \$148 million.

The most hurtful thing for my father was the fact that since his exit, Brainwear never became what he envisioned it to be. Now, it’s just another B2B software. My father’s vision was to use Brainwear to make a better, more intelligent, and more intuitive Google that would benefit everyone. He wanted to reach any and everybody who used a computer. Through extensive R&D work, Brainwear would mimic human intelligence and learn to categorize, search, and extract information useful to each individual user.

On several occasions, my father attempted to have a dialogue with Charles and other parties involved to regain the capital that would be needed to finance our F12 project.

The stress that my father was under and the continuous reminder that he was mistreated and deceived in the worst possible form by the person he trusted took its toll in October 2003, when my father got up one morning and was only able to repeatedly say “Difficulty. Difficulty.”

He had suffered a stroke. I didn’t know whether he would ever be the same again, or whether I would be able to carry on without him so soon after we had laid out the foundations.

My father needed serious brain surgery and he lost the ability to read. His speech was also affected as he would be able to identify and describe objects, but he would not be able to find the word for the object.

It was a very difficult time for all of us. The future of the project was hanging by a thread. My father became very frustrated and agitated because he could no longer find the words to clearly communicate his thoughts to us, and we found it so difficult to understand him.

At this point, I was under a lot of pressure, as there was nothing more that I wanted than for the project to work out and to be able to make my father proud. So, I was forced to learn so much more and so much faster than I ever had before.

Despite his choleric outbursts due to the frustration from his disability and the lack of my comprehension, it left me feeling demoralized at times, but I have no regrets whatsoever. I could not have learned more from anybody else in this world. Everything I know and who I am today is because of my father and I am extremely proud.

Chapter 11: You Have to Be Smarter, Faster, and More Flexible

In April 2004, about six months after my father's surgery, he and I would travel to South Africa. At the time, it was a country made to look very attractive for investments, and a lot of Europeans, including my uncle and aunt, emigrated there not long before.

South Africa had also just announced that the BMW 3-Series would be manufactured at a new manufacturing plant, so the country seemed an ideal location to set up camp, as it lacked infrastructure yet presented itself with a strong economy that was able to support its less fortunate neighboring countries.

This was really the first time that I would spend such an intense amount of time with my father. I remember one evening as I talked with him about why he was never there for us when we grew up.

He didn't have the perfect response, and I don't know whether I would agree with it even today.

He asked me if I didn't think that I would benefit more from him transferring his knowledge on to me now that I was old enough to understand rather than being able to spend lots of time with me when I was a baby, which would not have influenced my future.

Now, that may not make much sense to everybody, but my father was a very complex person. He loved us, and he spent all those hours in the office so those of us at home didn't have to worry about or lack anything. That came with some sacrifices because, if you want to succeed, you have to be smarter, faster, and more flexible than everybody else is. At least that was my father's perception.

What he was also telling me, hieroglyphically, was that he was glad that I was there, on his side of the team. My father was not a man that showed much emotion, and you really needed to know him, especially after the surgery, to understand the meaning behind his words and the emotions that those words expressed.

During our four-week stay in South Africa, we spent time in Johannesburg and drove around visiting Pretoria, Durban, and Cape Town while doing some very interesting research.

We also spent some time going to Namibia, which we had visited for Christmas in 1997. It was not how I remembered it, but it gave me a great deal of perspective of how advanced South Africa's Infrastructure is in comparison.

Namibia used to be a German colony and today many of the inhabitants still speak the language. During our travel there, we stayed at one of the lodges we had visited in our last visit to the country. The owner spoke with a Bavarian accent, which he had adopted from his father. He himself had never been to Germany before. His children had now become of age and left home to do apprenticeships in German hotels, following helping on their farm since they were very young.

While we were staying at the lodge, we were actually discussing the very technical challenge of the aircraft overcoming gravity or, in other words, generating the necessary thrust to take off vertically without adding additional power units reducing the payload.

This discussion was caused by a massive rock hitting our windshield thrown up by another vehicle driving towards us on what can only be described as a desert road.

Discussions like these fascinated me, as not only could I recognize the genius mind of my father but it triggered a thinking process in my mind as well that was highly rewarding.

Chapter 12: Our First Quadcopter Prototypes

After our return to Europe, it was decided that South Africa would be able to facilitate not only the technical workforce to develop the technology, but it would also be a place that we would be happy relocating to.

It never completely came to that though.

It was only through my father's extensive sales experience that my father was capable of sealing the sales deal with a buyer of our French property. It had been on the market for a very long time, costing money and no sign of success from the estate agents.

As usual, you might say, the sale of the house came at the last minute as money was becoming very tight.

The sale of this property allowed us to work with an engineering company that would collaborate with us to build the first scaled prototype of the aircraft as well as employ a full-time software developer who would enable the demonstration of the first flying prototypes.

My father knew him, as he was also an ex-SER employee living close by. The same goes for the engineering company, who were involved in the development of jukeboxes SER manufactured. They acted as a high capacity storage device.

My father getting in touch with the company could not have come at a better time for them, as they were also very close to insolvency, and our project would enable them to keep going.

Progress with the software was going relatively well, as we had our first quadcopter prototypes flying within several months.

The collaboration with the engineering company also came with the benefit of having access to people with the skills of graphic and 3D design as well as their manufacturing machinery.

However, the prototype they had built over a timeframe my father considered far too long, turned out to be too heavy for the motors that were available at the time.

Together, we focused on other projects that were more within their spectrum of work. The aircraft needed to be powered somehow. From the start, it was clear to us that the propulsion system would have to be electric, but where would the energy come from?

All off-the-shelf generators presented themselves to be too heavy and not powerful enough for an application like ours.

As a result, we modeled and designed many different principles that would combine the combustion engine with an electric component to generate energy, and we successfully built the first prototypes that would efficiently boil water and light up a lightbulb.

With the time spent working on and observing these projects, I was able to learn and take in new skills and understanding of different processes but, unfortunately, it came to a showdown between my father and the engineering company.

Chapter 13: Starting from Scratch ... Again

There is no way of denying that my father had an extremely dominant personality and that not everybody was able to cope with him over a long period of time. Maybe that's why I became so resilient to pressure after having worked with him for over ten years.

My father bought the engineering company, and left the previous owner in charge of the day-to-day business and the engineering work on our technology.

While the engineering company was able to survive solely through our continuous influx of capital (it had debts amounting to €700,000 with its local bank), my father saw an opportunity when the company was requested to make a proposal for a production machine for automobile parts by two different companies.

These machines happened to be for the same part hence a replication of the same machine with just different tags on them.

The company secured the two jobs and my father spoke to his long-standing bank manager of how we could secure the future of the development of our project through this and secured a loan of €100,000. For the company, that would facilitate the delivery of those two machines, and each one would bring in revenue of €380,000.

After a short period of time, after the proposals had been accepted and the building of the machines had been initiated, things started to escalate, as a loan repayment of €20,000 from the company to my parents was due. These however, never made it to the bank account.

It is my belief that Kaltenbruch, who was the general manager, could not handle the fact that my father was running the show and forgot that the above-mentioned contracts were achieved only because of my father's efforts.

I do understand that he might have felt intimidated by my father. He also might have felt that my father was trying to take control but, in actual fact, what my father was trying to do was to build a sustainable and successful company that would not only enable us to secure the development of our project but also provide security for Kaltenbruch.

Despite my father never showing his emotions, he had the greatest and most generous heart, but people always forget the good deeds they would benefit from. Not only did my father try to secure a future for Kaltenbruch and his family through this business venture, Kaltenbruch was expecting a baby and he told my father that he had no money to buy anything, so my father got out his wallet and gave him all the cash he had. All in all, it would have amounted to about €600.

So, my father had only the best intentions, but they were not seen as such by Kaltenbruch and, after the €20,000 had not been transferred and an argument escalated, we had to fear for the machines the company was supposed to complete.

I will never forget the day things got really bad. The machine that we had financed and was halfway ready was disassembled. My father broke off his holiday in Austria and arrived at the scene by taxi. I arrived with three others and a bodyguard to save what could be saved.

Kaltenbruch had called the police claiming we were intruders on the premises unlawfully. The whole time my heart was racing, and I was shocked how calm and controlled my father was.

When the police arrived, my father handed over the registrar which showed that this company actually fused with our company of which my father was the director.

In Kaltenbruch's desperation, after self-harming himself by bashing his head against the server, he accused one of our witnesses. I remember him running to the police telling them that this man had just assaulted him, while holding his bald head that was bright red at the point of impact. After realizing that this was not getting him anywhere, he admitted that there was no assault.

It all turned out very ugly and everybody lost. My father took Kaltenbruch and the company to court, which led to all the developed data on the company's server being held by the court until a decision on the case had been made. The machines were never completed or delivered to the companies.

Just like that, Kaltenbruch opened another company with the €20,000 that he owed my parents and went bankrupt shortly after. Worst of all, though, was that the entire development work that took one-and-one-half years and had cost us approximately €250,000, was sitting with a bailiff, and we had to evaluate whether there was anything for us to gain fighting a lawsuit against a bankrupt company, so we decided to let it go.

In my wildest dream, I wouldn't have been able to imagine a scenario like this and, just like that, we lost everything all over again, and we would have to start from scratch ... again.

Chapter 14: Success Should Be Your Motivation

The fact that we had lost the access to the drawings and electronic documentation was not the biggest problem, nor was the money we had invested in Kaltenbruch and his team. No one can take away the knowledge that we had gained and, as it turned out, Kaltenbruch was not capable of achieving the goal we were trying to achieve. I didn't quite understand it then but I fully appreciate today that without the right mindset, you will never be able to achieve greatness. Kaltenbruch, as unfortunate as it was for him to have significant debts, it was repaying the debts that was driving him; whereas the view on success should have been the driver.

For a couple of months, we were trying to find a solution so we could deliver the machines. At a court hearing with a judge, my father insisted that we should put the interest of the clients first and deliver the machines, but Kaltenbruch was not interested, which can be considered as suicide as the machines and their fabrication were associated with him not us.

Essentially, we had two problems. We were wasting valuable time and money on Kaltenbruch trying to fulfill our obligation to at least satisfy the customers, and all the people, machines, material, etc. that we previously had access to were no longer available.

It was also coming to a point where something needed to happen. My father never liked to involve me in how the finances looked. Yes, I did do the transactions and payments, but I was not in a state of mind where I made the calculation of how long €300,000 would last us. At the same time, I should have realized this, as we were spending a lot of money on a monthly basis.

Fortunately, we sold the last two properties we owned in Germany and in the U.K.

The pressure was on for sure now, as we had gained another lifeline in the form of cash, but there was no safety net or something to fall back to. There were no other properties.

These sales would come at the last minute once again and, coincidentally, my mother's cousin, who owned a printing company, was able to accommodate office space for us, as well as 300 m² of workshop space. The only issue was that it was located 300 km from where we had our base before and, shortly after we had agreed to establish ourselves there, we lost our software developer.

I remember my father and him having a huge argument as my father would not accept his view that we would have to live with state-of-the-art conventional turbine technology,

as nothing else existed that would provide enough propulsion for the aircraft. Of course, my father was aware that there was nothing on the market yet, but that was going to change. So, the developer demonstrated a small mindset, whereas my father thought ahead about what will be. It was a typical characteristic of a visionary—just because it doesn't exist now doesn't mean it's not possible to make it.

The software developer leaving meant we had to focus on our development on the engine, something that we would be able to achieve without software, as it would be driven purely by its hardware.

Chapter 15: Revamping the Combustion Engine

With our newly gained workshop and the offices, which were essentially two garages that we modified into offices, we hired two people to assist us with the engine that would drive the generator and deliver the necessary power to the aircraft.

The challenge we needed to overcome was the power to weight ratio by eliminating the crankshaft of the engine. There have been so many different approaches in the past yet there are really only two types of engines that have not changed fundamentally over decades and are used in vehicles today—the Diesel engine and the Otto engine.

My father insisted that we would make it out of this alive, as he had an idea that came to him during the night. He was convinced that this was the game changer in combustion engine design.

Today some power plants use a turbine that runs on a combined cycle. These turbines burn the fuel and then turn the heat generated into steam and re-use that to generate additional energy. The efficiency of such a power plant is in the range of 60%, but this efficiency comes with astronomical costs with €1,000/kW. Comparing this with a car engine, which costs in the range of €20-50/kW, to generate the same amount of energy, you would just have to cluster them. This was already known from the IT industry and, even while working on marketing the F12, the mathematical equation always was:

$$n_{\text{small}} > 1_{\text{large}}$$

We hoped to achieve the same performance as a combined cycle turbine at a fraction of the cost.

In this way, my father was extremely dynamic. One day we could be making one thing and the next minute he would discard it for work to be carried on, on another idea.

For me, this was a time when I would have to learn so much. I never had an interest in combustion engines, and my father—as well as everyone else working with us—had the experience of taking an engine apart before and tinkering on them.

I felt lost somehow. I was young and arrogant, and I didn't understand why I had to learn more and more. However, despite myself, I did learn, and I was actively taking apart and modifying combustion engines that we purchased from China. But, I too was becoming exhausted.

Your surroundings play tricks on your mind. You start seeing the problem and can no longer see the solution or the end goal, which eventually caused many heated arguments and disrupted the family harmony.

That being said, there was never a doubt about my father's brilliance.

Chapter 16: My Father's Brilliance

My father's gift was that whatever the business idea, he was able to see its bigger potential.

While we were importing engines and continuing our development, I realized that there was actually a market to distribute goods imported from China and sell them onto the European market. The initial idea was to finance the development by doing this, as we had capital left for approximately eight to ten months.

We had already established a good relationship with our supplier and China, so we asked our supplier to fly to Germany to discuss a business model. We also discussed the idea with FedEx and UPS, who said that they would be capable of handling our proposal.

However, we had never dealt with Chinese products before, so we tested the water of what consumers would buy and at what price.

Some products were more successful than others but, generally speaking, we were making money, but not enough to cover the costs. Our revenues were in the range of €15,000 per month, but our outgoing costs amounted to about €30,000 per month.

After a few months, our Chinese supplier said she didn't want to continue doing this. So, we lost the point of where goods would be collated and shipped onto us, but we continued nonetheless.

Meanwhile, my father was always on the lookout for likeminded people that could help with the development of our engine. We had working proof of concepts, but the time came when we needed to move on to the next stage in the development, which would be a prototype.

There are many companies who could have easily built the prototype with very little effort, but my father didn't want to build engines for the RC model market, and the companies that demonstrated an interest in the principle were not able to see beyond their existing marketplace. They were happy with where they were in the marketplace, and they didn't have the ability to see the forest beyond the trees.

On the flip side, the problem was the need to do something out of necessity. An engine builder approached us and agreed to help us with our engine building if we helped him with his. He had designed rotary engines for model aircrafts that looked very nice and actually worked. He had the opportunity to manufacture them in India, but he didn't have the capital.

Despite the fact that he was capable of building our engine for us, his interests lay with the realization of his project first. My father helped him to get back on his feet but, when he realized that our project hadn't been started, the deal was not met, and my father cut him off.

Chapter 17: Nobody Wanted to Explore Something New and Exciting

We attempted to contact larger companies that had the capital to develop the engine through to its final commercial state and had immediate access to its market.

We were targeting two markets: the automobile and trucking market as well as the energy sector.

Companies to whom we sent our proposal were Mercedes, BMW, MAN, Siemens, and more but only a few would respond to us saying “Thank you for your letter. It is a very exciting approach but, unfortunately, our development is currently not focusing on other areas.”

We interpreted this as “Thank you, but we are still making enough money on our own patents at the moment.”

I remember at the very early stages when my father met with the DLR, which translates to the German NASA, asking for their collaboration, but they also assumed that he was mad, leaving him with something on the lines of, “Come back when you have something to show us.”

This might have been the reason why my father never attempted to raise money through other sources and why he tried to support this project through his own financial means. After all, he had never needed startup capital from a third party. His companies were always financed through the money he had earned and maybe financed here and there through a banking loan.

I never doubted him though. My father believed that once the world would see what we had achieved everything would be all right again but, unfortunately, it was not the world that saw, we were only able to reach the smallest fraction of people who had a different agenda.

At this time, I was standing on a crossroads myself. For the past several years, I would only see my wife and children over the holidays, as they were living in rented accommodations in Devon, U.K., for the sake of the children’s British education.

As we were all trying to find ways to cut costs, a decision on the locality in the U.K. would have to be made. Our children were suffering from my absence, as we were under the assumption that our children might have problems attending a German school. Having had a comparison between German and English schools, I grew to like the advantages of the British system for my children.

Nevertheless, I arranged for an interview with the local private school, where I was assured my daughter would be well looked after. I explicitly explained to them that my daughter was black, and I was concerned that she would be bullied for it, something that she had to endure on one occasion at her British school.

After the summer holidays were over, my daughters would start school in Germany. To our surprise, Hannah had to repeat year one and Kiara went to the kindergarten.

For both girls, it became a traumatic experience as they were bullied. But, Hannah had it worse, as she was not only bullied by the students but she was also bullied by her form teacher, who was also the school's deputy head and tried to convince Hannah that her name was Johanna.

I tried speaking to the teacher about how Hannah had integrated into the school and whether she found any friends. Her response was that she would explain to the children about color over the next couple of weeks. I was speechless and, from then on, things only became worse and something needed to be done about it.

Chapter 18: Work Was His Passion

One year later, I found out that my father felt that I had left him behind, and he was disappointed.

My wife and I found a British school in Cologne, Germany, that would enable me to travel back and forth between home and the company base, which was a two-and-a-half-hour journey by car.

I did that journey back and forth for about three months before the workshop and offices were wound down. I continued the online trade from my new residence in Cologne after I was able to get a €15,000 loan from my local bank.

Due to his health issues, my father remained in Baden-Baden, living in rented accommodations, to be near his doctors. Just a couple of months before, my father suffered from severe cardiac arrhythmia, which left him breathless and without energy.

It got to a stage where he collapsed while on holiday and he needed to be transported to a hospital in Austria, where he was transferred to a further hospital again, where he would get special medical treatment that would give him electric shocks until his heart was beating at the desired rate again.

For me, my father was a hero, and I was under the assumption that he would live forever. I couldn't see a world in which he was not there. However, this rather ignorant thought allowed me to be angry with him for our failure.

I ignored the fact that only several years back he had major brain surgery and his heart was not working properly. I didn't realize or acknowledge how much strength and energy he had invested in this project to succeed and, for him, it wasn't over yet.

Everyone called my father a workaholic, which is a funny term, because I don't think his work was an addiction. It was passion, and people observing from the outside couldn't understand how so much work could translate into passion.

There are many things that I cannot do like my father. At his prime, he would be able to write hundreds of pages in one day. My brain doesn't allow me to concentrate for that long on one thing.

The problem with those hundreds of pages, though, was that only one percent of all the people in the world would be able to interpret the meaning behind the words. I had gotten used to his ways of communicating, but sometimes even I couldn't understand

what he was trying to achieve with a document. But, that was always a good way for us to work and collaborate on projects and balance each other out.

However, the status quo was that I had to tinker on with the online trade. It didn't really fulfill my desires in life, and I would have liked to drop everything to be able to continue trying to promote our actual work, but there was no money available to do this.

On the other hand, my father was always very resourceful, and I never quite understood how he did it. It was one of his gifts, I guess, where he would go to a meeting and come out saying we just got a new lifeline.

He stayed with us in Cologne for a couple of days, as he was meeting someone from the Times when I was attending the secondary school my father bought. I believe he secured approximately €200,000 that would be paid over several months at €50,000 per transaction.

Chapter 19: A Double Agent

This investment helped my parents to keep afloat. They had a lot of bills to pay, and my father took the opportunity to re-engage the fight with Charles.

My father hoped Charles would be willing to pay my father back, and then everything would be all right. But, instead, Charles spared no expense to try and prevent my father from taking any action.

Nonetheless, my father kept on writing down and documenting the events, how they happened and why they happened, which had always been denied by Charles.

My father was, however, speaking to someone who seemed to have been a double agent. It was someone my father had saved multiple times from financial ruin in the past, Wenzel Vogel. My father met with him on multiple occasions to discuss plans of how to pressure Charles into paying back the money he took from my father.

According to Vogel, Charles had invested the money in property and lost everything through a bust. Whether this was actually true or not, I don't know until now, but it could have just been one of those activities where Vogel tried to deter my father from pursuing Charles.

Vogel too had agreed to pay his share for what he had done to my father and sent a book to my address with €2,000 in it. I believe that was the only time that he made a financial contribution (unless he did at one of those meetings).

My father and Vogel would always meet at hotels or service stations. I would drive my father there, and then I would wait for several hours in the car until I saw Vogel drive off again and my father would come out.

From what I know today, I presume that Charles was aware of these meetings and encouraged them, and he would wait for the opportunity to shut my father up for good.

Although my father knew that Vogel's allegiance would always be with the money, he knew no one else who could offer him the kind of insight into what Charles was up to.

It was all a time game, as my father was still under investigation regarding the insolvency of SER AG and hearings for that would start very soon. As my father pleaded for his complete innocence in all of the claims, it was in the interest of everybody else to see him behind bars.

My father always told me, that he would rather kill himself than go to jail for something that he didn't do.

My father had so many battles to fight in his lifetime that it's a miracle in itself for him to have survived that long, but my father was always a fighter who never showed a fear of anything.

Whether he actually was afraid or not, I don't know. I regret that I never asked him.

Chapter 20: Charles Was a Mean and Cruel Person

My father was extremely dangerous. He would say that he may have had brain surgery that had affected his short-term memory but his long-term memory was very strong. My father could remember the smallest details from decades ago, and the people wanting him in jail knew that and tried everything possible to get him there.

However, neither party got what they wanted in the end. My father did not get his acquittal, although it clearly stated in the sentence statement that his guilt could not be proven. His sentence would be the equivalent to one of the managers who took over my father's position at the time—he was sentenced to spend his nights in prison for three years with release during the day.

This was not something that my father accepted, especially because they could not prove him guilty and yet punished him anyway.

However, with my father's health issues, the authorities did not want to lock him in jail. He had warned them that he would die, and it would be their responsibility. Based on his health issues, he was not fit to serve in prison.

But Charles always tried to find ways to prove that my father was fit for prison and even threatened to send an image that they apparently got from the company's YouTube channel showing him in one of our videos at a later stage.

In all this, I tried to help my father the best that I could. I realized how important it was for him, but there was no sign of reimbursement from Charles, as Charles thought it would make him look guilty if he repaid the money. We, as the family, knew that anyway, so my father proposed ways that would allow his repayment to remain unknown.

For my father, it was not about punishing Charles and getting justice by putting him behind bars. All that my father wanted was his money back, but Charles never did what was deemed to be the right thing.

According to Vogel, Charles was so afraid of my father coming after him that he would hire bodyguards and became very paranoid of everything and everyone.

Of course, my father did not attempt anything of the like, and it did not give him any kind of satisfaction knowing that Charles felt unsafe, and his actions spoke for themselves, as we would continuously take an offensive position.

After being in contact with people I had worked with and who were U.S. based SER employees at the time, it has become evident that Charles would find joy in humiliating and insulting people while firing them.

According to some sources, Charles had planned the takeover of the company the minute he was offered the temporary position of CEO to replace Pete Stone, who my father let go just before. Actually, I was with my father in New York when he met with Pete, and I never understood why Pete was let go. I liked him, but I was very young and didn't know all the details behind it.

Nevertheless, Charles jumped up the ladder from being a corporate lawyer to CEO just like that. My father always said that he was a great number two, but he was not a leader. My father was always very honest about things like that and, actually, about anything. He said things as they were. Possibly, that's why people didn't like him very much. I had always appreciated his honesty, while I must admit that sometimes it could be hurtful.

Maybe it was my father's honesty that had triggered his thirst to overpower him. I don't know, and I don't expect to ever find out. I have no feeling of resentment against any of the old crew.

I admit to being somewhat thankful. Despite all the suffering my father had to endure, and the challenges we as a family had to overcome, if it had not been for the defeat, none of our current developments would exist today.

Chapter 21: The German Authorities Tried and Tried to Trick My Father

Despite the fact that Charles was not willing to give in, my father had many other battles to fight.

Especially the one with the German authorities who still tried to prove that he was fit for his jail sentence. It seems there were never conclusive results from any of the doctors designated by the authorities to check him.

I don't remember how many times my father was ordered to be examined at different hospitals and by different doctors in order to prove his fitness. I even remember him having to spend a night in a psychiatric ward. I was asked if I could also answer questions to the psychiatrist regarding my father. I was not really comfortable with that, as I didn't want to be responsible for anything happening to my father because of what I had said.

My father insured me that it would be fine, and I should just tell the truth. I remember sitting opposite the psychiatrist, who was a lady. My heart was pounding, as she asked me about my father's mental health.

I was extremely nervous but, somehow, words just came out of my mouth that may have shocked her, as I would tell her that my father was extremely intellectual and the reason people might think that he was crazy was simply because they were not able to follow his brilliance.

I remember when I picked my father up after he was released again that they had spoken about what I had said and, evidently, she did not declare my father crazy.

However, for my father, all these examinations and tests were torture for him. His health was suffering and, in retrospect, I believe that all these examinations and stress contributed towards the deterioration of my father's health. I am sure I would not have been able to withstand the amount of pressure they had put on him. They were always ready to trick him into saying something or doing something that they could pin on him.

However, there was nothing that they could trick him with. The stroke he suffered left him incapable of reading and his speech was still impaired. He was able to write, and he used a reading-software package that he would be able to use to listen to what he had written, but this was always a very tiring task for him.

He was able to hide his speech problems from people, as he was smart enough and, if you didn't know my father before, you would never know that his speech was impaired.

Chapter 22: Bolivia Had the Will; We Had the Technology

While the authorities were putting my father under the microscope, I attempted to promote our technology, and I wrote to our Chamber of Commerce, who published the first ever article about us. It was very small but sufficient for other newspapers to follow.

And it seemed we were on the verge of something.

There was an annual climate meeting called the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Conversation on Climate change). In December 2009, it was held in Copenhagen. After the conference, Bolivia's President Evo Morales was outraged with the outcome—the meeting concluded with a decision that something needed to be done to stop climate change. Great! A three-year-old child could have come up with that idea.

Evo Morales then declared that he would hold his own climate conference.

During that time, my wife was very involved in working with her fashion line that was based on alpaca clothes handmade in Bolivia. Her manager, who was situated in Cochabamba, made us aware of the planned climate conference that was to be held in April.

We discussed with her the possibility of working on promoting our technology throughout the event, as it was our opinion that further enhancing efficiencies by 1-2% is not going to be sufficient to reduce the carbon emissions in the world. Tackling the root problem was going to be required for this, and the root problems lay in the principle of energy generation and distribution itself.

I came to believe that Europe or the Western world would never become the primary user of our technology. The lobby was just too big to fight against, and it would take more than what we had.

However, Bolivia demonstrated a strong will in getting our global climate issues under control, but there was one problem. Bolivia was and still is one of the poorest countries in Latin America and does not have the technological recourses other than its voice to change anything about climate change.

We carefully followed the event held in April and realized that the attendance was very poor. We would later find out that Evo's outburst stating that eating chicken makes you gay was advice given to him to raise the global awareness of the event in the first place, as it was not covered by any of the major media channels. Evo was not taken seriously before the conference or after the conference.

This was then that I saw an opportunity, and it was imperative that we offered some kind of collaboration. They had the will to change the world, and we had the technology to change the world.

Chapter 23: Hope Gives My Father New Vitality

I was determined that the Bolivian strategy was going to be successful, but there was not enough capital to finance this plan.

At this point in time, my father was at a very low point emotionally and physically and, when I went to visit him, I could see his exhaustion. He looked as if he had given up and was just waiting to be taken from this earth.

I had not spoken in detail with him in regard to Bolivia simply because I didn't know whether it made perfect sense or not myself and discussing things like this with my father needed great preparation, as he would ask questions no one else would even think of asking.

However, he was taken by the idea and, from one day to the next, I felt he had hope again and picked himself up. He was fully motivated to take on this challenge. Money was still an issue though, and we needed to get to Bolivia for the preliminary investigations and get a feel for the country. My wife's assistant was already busy drafting letters to the vice ministers of energy and setting up meetings with the universities for when we would arrive.

It did not take my father long to find someone who would invest in the company that would allow us to travel to Bolivia and engage in conversations with the government to collaborate on the project.

The plan would be to somehow get a university involved to work with us in making a prototype engine and for Evo Morales to take this high-tech, that was made in a low-tech country, to the following UNFCCC meeting in Cancun in November 2010.

What a task we had at hand. Maybe we were a little naïve to think that within six months we would engage with the government and design and build a new prototype, but we all believed that it would be possible.

My wife and I flew to Bolivia at the end of May, where we would start an epic journey to the unknown and no one could have prepared us for what we were going to experience there.

With the assumption that we would be successful and with his regained strength, my father assembled a team to design the engine that was to be built and assembled in Bolivia.

Chapter 24: Big Plans for Bolivia

My Spanish skills were very limited while planning the trip and relied heavily on my wife's assistance to translate and interpret for me, as Spanish is her mother tongue.

I quickly gained the knowledge of vocabulary and was able to read texts. I slowly started composing emails in Spanish and the speaking followed soon after. I would say that it took me about three months to become fluent.

What I came to realize throughout the research was that Bolivia's president, Evo Morales, did have big plans for Bolivia. As Bolivia holds more than 50% of the world's lithium resources needed to make batteries, they have been working on extracting it from the country's beautiful salt desert and, together with help from researchers, develop a lithium industry.

Many of the known corporations, i.e., Nokia and Vodafone, had offered Bolivia their resources to help accelerate the process but, this time around, Evo would not let any stranger into the country and have them steal the country's resources. He believed that he would turn Bolivia into the Switzerland of Latin America by 2020.

Evo Morales is indigenous and believes in looking after "pachamama," which is quechua and translates as mother earth. Bolivia's indigenous people strongly believe in the preservation of pachamama, and I really enjoyed reading articles on it.

Bolivia is very small and extremely diverse. It only has eight million inhabitants in the whole country. Compared to its neighboring country, Peru, in the capital city of Lima alone, there are eight million inhabitants.

Bolivia demonstrates a great variety of diversity, both in culture and demographics. The three most important cities—Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, and La Paz—are completely different in appearance, lifestyle, and culture.

Bolivia is one of the most culturally and geographically diverse countries with over 60% of its population coming from 37 different population groups, each with their own culture and language.

Bolivia is a country with three different geographical zones: the Andean highlands, the moist slopes and valleys, and the tropical lowland plains.

Santa Cruz, which borders with Brazil, is the country's locomotive with its industry in manufacturing. Compared to the other two cities, Santa Cruz is tropical.

La Paz, which is situated 3,500 meters above sea level, is extremely mountainous. The airport at La Paz, El Alto, is the highest situated airport in the world and, due to the altitude and the lack of oxygen in the air, I have seen people get off the airplane and faint.

Cochabamba is kind of between the two cities. It is 2,000 meters above sea level and offers both mountainous as well as green surroundings.

Chapter 25: Someone Finally Understands Our Technology

As Bolivia had such a small population, it seemed that everyone knew each other there. So, at our first meeting with my wife's assistant, Amanda, in Cochabamba, she asked if she could introduce me to Jose Maria, a lawyer from La Paz who was supposedly well connected in Bolivia and would be able to assist us in achieving our goal.

He and his wife flew to Cochabamba to discuss the project further. His English was quite good, and I was able to talk to him about what we wanted to achieve in Bolivia and that we wanted to reach Evo Morales.

Jose Maria assured me that this would not be a problem, as he was a close friend to the minister of energy and that he would set up a meeting with him. I was cautious and asked him what he would be charging me for his time to which his response was nothing. He said he liked the project and the fact that we wanted to make a difference for Bolivia was a great reward, and we would be able to compensate him for any work when the goal had been achieved.

I was happy to accept his assistance under these terms and traveled to La Paz. I was curious of how the altitude might affect me, with it being the highest airport in the world, but I was fine. I wasn't able to run, but at least I didn't faint either.

Amanda, who thankfully we were paying, had arranged a meeting with the Vice Minister of Energy to whom we would present our proposal. Jose Maria was completely invested in this project and proposed a way we should present the project to the minister. So, we practiced our presentation in the hotel.

Through studying Evo Morales's vision and behavior, I realized that I needed the support from the Bolivians as well as becoming a Bolivian myself.

I wanted to reach the people with the technical element, but I also wanted to equally touch on the human and environmental factors that would present itself as a great opportunity for Bolivia.

I must admit, I would get very emotional presenting my PowerPoint slides, as I would talk about the thousands of people living without energy and without access to water. Thanks to Bolivia, access to safe drinking water has now become a basic human right.

I presume that showing emotions allowed the people of Bolivia to see that I cared about what happened to them and that my motives were genuine. In the city you only saw a limited amount of poverty but, once you travelled outside the city, you could see it, and there was plenty of it, and it really was a painful sight for me.

It certainly put things in perspective for me, as I enjoyed the most delicious and luxurious food.

Anyhow, I had no idea what to think about our performance during the presentation, as the vice-minister had his poker face on the whole way through.

Only after we had finished would he give some indication that he understood what we were talking about.

He asked, "So, your engine, will it also work only on steam?" to which the obvious response was yes.

The vice-minister explained that Bolivia was having a great energy shortage but they had discovered that there were many geothermal sources, which the country was looking to turn into energy. They were currently looking to commission this to a company and, if we wanted it, he would send us the specifications for the 5MW geothermal plant to which we would be able to send a proposal.

This was news that I did not expect, and I was overwhelmed. Meeting the vice minister again for dinner a year later, he said that he had the impression we were disappointed by this opportunity but, in fact, we were just overwhelmed and speechless.

We were speechless because I could not believe that within the shortest period of time, we would have been able to discuss our project with a minister, who clearly understood the technicalities and still wanted to give us the opportunity to work with the Department of Energy on this. To say it bluntly, I could not believe that someone finally appreciated our technology for what it was and what it could do.

Chapter 26: A Snake in the Grass

The enthusiasm from the presentation was followed by a shock. We had a meeting set up with the minister of energy arranged by Jose Maria for the following week.

Shortly after the presentation to the vice-minister of energy, Jose Maria presented me with two documents for me to countersign. His signature was already on the documents.

Without any preparation, he dropped this huge bomb on me. These documents would basically give him the exclusive license to represent the company in the whole of Latin America and a fee structure.

I invited Amanda to have dinner with us to address this issue, as she was the one who introduced us to Jose Maria. I handed her the documents to read and, once she finished, I offered her a pen to sign on my behalf, but she refused. She couldn't believe that he would write up such an agreement without previously discussing this with us. As a result, we had a difficult decision to make.

We had a meeting with the energy minister already confirmed. The problem was that Jose Maria had arranged it, and I feared that he would be able to blackmail us with something if he wasn't involved.

In retrospect, I believe that after everybody saw the response from the meeting with the vice-minister they all came to realize the opportunity and potential this could potentially bring.

However, the terms in the written agreement had no similarities to our gentlemen's agreement. For me, it was a completely different and unusual situation. I was vulnerable, and I never expected that so many people would take to our technology. In all the previous years in Germany, people continually told us that they had no interest.

I realized that I needed to be more selective in the people who would help us achieve our goals.

Amanda called the office of the energy minister to cancel the meeting. My father, who I had informed of the situation, was not happy with me making this decision, but I assured him that it would not mean giving up an opportunity, but it was important to protect what we had worked for. I asked him to trust me, as things were not like there were in Germany where you could trust a man's word.

It wasn't like we didn't have any further meetings to set up. We were scheduled to present to the head of the department of technology at the Elite Military Engineering University, EMI – Escuela Militar Ingeniera.

Now, we had to break the news to Jose Maria, which actually didn't go down well. He was extremely upset, as he could not understand our motives. It's funny because, over the years, I have heard this statement so many times, but I never understood why they said it. He said that we ruined his reputation, and he would get into trouble with the minister, threatening the friendship he had with him.

However, all we said to the ministry office was that we needed to postpone the meeting, as we could not attend on the designated day.

It should not be misunderstood; I made that decision with a heavy heart. I tried to imagine what the minister of energy could do for us, when his vice minister had already presented us with a promising opportunity.

So, no matter what the offence I might have caused to anyone, I stand by my decision and would make the exact same decision again.

Chapter 27: Nearing the End of Our Trip

The experience with Jose Maria made me cautious about how I might approach things, especially in preparation with the upcoming presentation to the university. I feared that they too would have ulterior motives and try to overrun us.

This fear however was unnecessary. On the day of the presentation, we were invited to present to Colonel Mattias Banegas, who was the head of the technology sector of the school. Later, he would turn out to become a very good friend but, during the presentation, he too had a poker face throughout the whole presentation. With a lack of experience in doing presentations, it was something that made me self-conscious about what I would say and how I would say it.

The idea behind the presentation was to gain their support in developing and assembling the prototype together, and that Evo could then take it to Cancun. This would be beneficial for the students and their research, and they would have something physical to experiment on.

In fact, it was the greatest challenge within the academic system in Bolivia! Most of the people there would have obtained two degrees by the time they were my age at the time, but they did not have an opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice. With their collaboration, this was something that we wanted to change.

I remember very well that at the end of the presentation, it was Colonel Banegas who suggested that we sign an agreement with the school's rector. He would set up a meeting where we could present our proposal to him personally.

Unfortunately, Colonel Banegas found it more difficult than expected to arrange the meeting, and we continued waiting for the confirmation of the meeting.

Meanwhile, through a contact of Amanda's, we met with an engineer from Cochabamba who had been working on power plants and had extensive knowledge in servicing them. He might be someone that could become very useful in the building of the prototype and the design process for the commercialization within the Bolivian grid network.

His name was Castro, and he ran his engineering business together with his sons. We would have a follow-up meeting at my hotel, where he invited me to come to his workshop where he could demonstrate his capabilities to support our manufacturing demands.

It didn't look like a workshop you would expect to see in Germany—all clean and tidy—but he did have all the machines that, until now, we did not have access to.

As it happened, Castro's son was dating a German girl, and he was scheduled to visit her in Germany over the summer. We agreed that he would get in touch when he was available. Unfortunately, I didn't have a good feeling about the son from the start. I couldn't handle his arrogance very well.

Nevertheless, it was coming close to the end of our first trip, and I was not really satisfied with our achievements. We were still waiting for responses from the university and the ministries, and we had nothing concrete to fall back on.

As a result, I convinced my father that after four weeks back in Germany we would need to come back and finish what we started. In Germany, we would be able to reassemble ourselves after having suffered from salmonella and various other things that had drained our energy substantially.

However, I was more determined than ever to move forward with our plan, especially since I could instantly see that people wanted us there by showing their appreciation and respect.

Chapter 28: Cramming It All into Ten Minutes

Returning back to Bolivia in July, things became rather complicated with the loss of my wife's assistant Amanda, just after our arrival. She had been overseeing everything.

So, all of a sudden, things looked very grim. We were alone and we had no leads.

We managed to deliver the proposal to the vice minister for the 5MW geothermal power plant.

Communicating our frustration and feeling stuck, we found a contact who offered us the name and number of someone who was supposedly well connected and could get us to where we wanted to be to achieve our goals. His name was Frederico del Monte.

We gave him a call. He seemed like a very busy man, but he agreed to meet us at our hotel for breakfast at 8 a.m., but he added that he could only spare fifteen minutes.

We were eagerly awaiting his arrival in the lobby of the hotel. Not knowing what he looked like, we were left to guess which of the people walking into the hotel he would be. It was already 8:05 and there was no sign of Frederico.

Just as we tried to call him again, Frederico came towards us and asked whether it was us he was meeting. He leapt into the breakfast room and seemed on edge looking at his watch. It seemed he met us as a favor to his friend who handed us his number.

He tells me, "Okay, Thorsten, you have ten minutes to tell me what you are doing."

I started explaining, and I was trying to talk as fast as I could and explain as well as I could until he interrupted me, saying, "This is magnificent."

He pulled out his cell phone and cancelled the next meeting he had. I didn't understand what was going on but, when he was finished with his conversation, he told us to get our stuff together. He said there wasn't much time, and he would explain on the way.

I didn't comprehend what was happening and, without asking too many questions, we went to our rooms. I put my tie on, grabbed my backpack, and off we went into a taxi. I was extremely nervous. I felt like he was kidnapping us, as he wouldn't talk much while we were in the taxi. I didn't understand what he told the taxi driver where we would be going, and I didn't want to ask him or my wife.

It turned out that we arrived at a military base, where we had to show ID and all our bags were checked. Frederico asked to meet with someone, and we all got visitors badges and off we went to follow Frederico.

In front of an office, Frederico told me that we were going to see a good friend of his, and I should tell him exactly the same thing I told him earlier that morning. I was extremely nervous, as I had no idea what to expect. We had already been waiting for thirty minutes or so, and that didn't help.

As it turned out, we were to meet the third-highest ranking general of the military, General Edwin De La Fuente, who greeted us with a rather odd handshake.

While shaking my right hand, he tapped me on the heart with the other. I didn't know that meant, so I just went with it.

Frederico introduced us, telling him that we wanted to come to Bolivia to do great things for the country. I had practiced my speech several times by now, so it rolled off my tongue quite easily. I really got attached to the idea that we could improve people's lives and create opportunities for the people there and the way we could do that was through the technology that we had developed.

For me, it was never about just trying to sell them technology, getting money for it, and disappearing again. I was so deeply involved emotionally at this stage that I could see tears in the eyes of the general.

He told us that he would support us all the way, and that he would be in touch with Frederico after he sorted something out for us. He handed me his business card. To my surprise, he gave me his personal email address and home phone number.

Frederico took us back to our hotel and said that he would be in touch again soon. Now he needed to go and meet some other people.

I was baffled at what just happened to me. It seemed like a dream, and I wasn't sure whether it was real or whether I would wake up any minute.

Chapter 29: We Finally Had Our Agreement

Having finally digested what had just happened hours before, I came to my senses. Frederico called and asked if he could come by in the evening.

This was very convenient for me, as I didn't want the same thing to happen as with Jose Maria—to all of a sudden get an invoice or a contract that was going to pressure us into doing something that was not in the interest of the project.

We explained to Frederico what had happened in the past and that I wasn't really comfortable with him taking us to present our projects without having a clear understanding of what was in it for both parties.

Frederico asked me about the name of the person who had done this to us and, after telling him, he grabbed his head and told us that we were not the first ones he had tried to do this to. It turned out that Jose Maria had taken advantage of other people. One was a Swedish company that wanted to invest a lot of money into Bolivia but, as it turned out, the company stayed well away after realizing what kind of game was going to be played here.

Frederico ensured us he was a serious person, and he would work with us and support us without the need to pay him until money for it was available. We documented this in writing and everyone was happy to continue working together.

The reason for Frederico actually wanting to come and meet us was for a completely different reason. He managed to organize a meeting with the command of engineering of the military for the following day.

So, we got ready for the same routine, taking the taxi to the military base, having our bags checked, and getting our visitor's badges, but today was going to be different.

We were invited into a meeting room. The person we were meant to meet was Colonel Rroel, who was the head of the engineering command. He was accompanied by eight other officers, and they were all glaring at me, waiting to hear what I had to say.

I did my presentation as practiced, but I could not get my emotions under control, and I teared up, just like every time before. I would be talking about the starving children without access to clean water and these emotions would overcome me, as they do even today, while I try to contain myself. My passion and emotional attachment is simply too strong, and I realize and accept it as a positive characteristic that identifies me. I believe that it makes me human and shows that I do genuinely care.

I told the colonels at this meeting what we needed, which was to have premises so that we could conduct our work and find personnel who could support us in the development. We had told them that we met with Colonel Banegas of EMI and were awaiting an appointment with the school's rector to discuss with him the basis of our collaboration.

It took Colonel Rroel one phone call requesting EMI's rector to meet with him to hear what we had to say. He informed the rector that we would all be coming to meet him now.

He ordered the cars to be brought around and, quicker than you could say blueberry pancakes, four SUVs were waiting to take us to the main campus of EMI.

We needed four vehicles, as it seemed everybody wanted to be part of what would come next. So, off we went in the cavalcade of vehicles. The most challenging part would be to walk up to the fifth floor at 3,000 meters above sea level.

Upon reaching the top, I was so out of breath that I couldn't speak, but as soon as we reached the top, we were invited into the rector's office. It was slightly cramped, as nobody wanted to wait outside.

After meeting for an additional forty-five minutes with Colonel Castellanos the rector, the terms for an agreement were agreed upon, and it would be our responsibility now to draft the agreement of collaboration.

Chapter 30: One, Two, Three Possibilities

Words cannot describe the emotions that I went through at the point where terms were agreed upon and I was able to discuss these with a lawyer who would draft these agreements.

I also remember telling my father about what happened that same day, and he couldn't believe it. In his lifetime, I don't think he had ever heard of such events, and he was glad that he had something positive to report to our investors.

However, my father intended to proceed with the backup plan, which was called Castro. My father had never met the man but set high hopes on him assisting us. Castro expressed to me that he was not very fond of the government, and I didn't believe that he would have been very supportive to our goal.

Nevertheless, while I was still working on the "government strategy," my father asked Castro to fly to Germany to discuss the possibility of his involvement. I expressed my concern about this. Despite his son's English being very good, there was no way of knowing whether his translations to my father would be biased to favor his father's interest.

I also tried warning my father that dealing with Castro or any Bolivian was not equivalent to doing business with a European. Even between Europeans, there are differences between individual countries.

With great hesitation and fear that the discussion between Castro and my father could jeopardize our mission to work together with the government, I invited him to La Paz to arrange his Visa and travel itinerary.

The fact that I did not have control over the meeting and the experience I had gained that my father lacked, left me concerned the whole time.

However, I needed to concentrate on getting deals done and continue my efforts in getting an audience with Evo Morales.

We had also made a name for ourselves by now, and we were invited to a publisher of energy magazines to feature us in their next edition. The company was located in Santa Cruz and the relationship with Santa Cruz with the rest of Bolivia can be compared to Scotland and the rest of the U.K. or Catalonia and Spain.

Off the record, they asked me why I was interested in working with the government on this. There could be other opportunities to work with companies and I could become a

millionaire. My response to this was that being a millionaire might secure my future but trying to manufacture our technology ourselves without the assistance of the government and without the dissemination through licensing, the benefits of our technology would not reach those who needed it the most.

So, as the publishers were in a good social position, they did not understand what I was trying to achieve, which is to go beyond enhancing the efficiencies and cost of power plants.

Back in La Paz, we attended an energy conference, where businesses from all over including Argentina came to speak. Something I had learned at this conference was that Argentina was incapable of keeping up with the consumer's energy demands, which has led to the cost per kWh to be astronomical and unaffordable to the average person.

Then I came to understand why the geothermal power plant, which we had prepared a proposal for, was so important. This power plant was to be located close to the Argentinean border, and it would be Bolivia's intention to export the generated energy to its neighboring countries, Argentina and Paraguay. Both countries have been known to struggle with meeting their country's energy demands.

The only privately held energy company in Bolivia came to give a presentation. It goes without saying that this energy company was at war with their government. Yet, it was talking about the reasons why so many people in Bolivia were still without energy and why the grid networks were so expensive to build and unable to reach small villages. The organization had to evaluate the cost compared to its return.

Despite this company being privately owned and being highly against the government, I approached its director and told him that we had a technology that could solve their grid and energy problems. He took my card and continued walking away.

It only became evident later when I looked at a photograph we had taken with the head of Projects within that company, that I was talking to him about our technology, yet he didn't reveal who he was at the time. His name was Orlando Tardio.

Chapter 31: Signing the Deal

As I was trying to continue to get the attention of the director, Orlando handed me his business card and told me that I should get in touch with him and he would arrange the rest.

We composed an email to Orlando with the technological details with the request to present our project to the company in person. Doing business with people from Santa Cruz was so different; their thinking was different to what I had become used to, and I didn't understand them.

It took Orlando several weeks to get back to us and he was very arrogant, requesting us to come within a short period of time and making us feel like he was doing us a favor. So, I decided that I would not attend such a meeting. In any case, it might have hurt our case and the progress we were making with the government.

Meanwhile, the first, second, and third drafts of the agreements had been shared between the other two parties, and it was almost done. The news that EMI and the Command for engineering were about to sign an agreement with us made its round, and we were invited to the offices of the second highest ranked General, Jose Agreda.

He was educated in the U.S., and he was a strong believer in Evo's mission. The routines of having our bags checked at the entrance of the base was nothing exciting anymore but Agreda's offices were located somewhere we hadn't been before. There were two guards standing at the top of the stairs, and there were large displays that demonstrated Bolivia's pride.

Agreda was curious about what drove us to Bolivia and had obviously only heard rumors going around the base. He had also spoken to General De La Fuente who told him about our meeting and the good things that we wanted to achieve for Bolivia.

We asked him whether he and General De La Fuente would be able to attend the signing ceremony between the three parties to express his support in the goal, and he told us that he would be at our full disposal. He told us that he had no other choice than to support us with all his power, as we were trying to help Bolivia become a stronger, greater country.

Agreda understood both sides of the story. By trade, he was an economist, which meant that he understood exactly what I was talking about, when I said that the only way to create economic growth was through innovation.

We would become very good friends, and our paths would cross regularly but, at some point in the not too distant future, we would meet again in a different part of the world.

Chapter 32: Our New Premises

Before we would sign the agreement in the presence of the Generals Agreda and De La Fuente and return to Germany to prepare for the development phase, we were going to see the premises the commando of engineering had allocated for us.



Image 3 Base in El Alto

It was located in El Alto, roughly 4,000 meters above sea level and about 1,000 meters higher than the city of La Paz. El Alto is where the international airport is located and, with a population of close to one million people, it is the second largest city in Bolivia. It would allow us access to all trade stores that we would require.



Image 4 Our workshop to be

Our premises would be situated within the commando's barracks. In Bolivia, all boys are obligated to serve twelve months in the military.

As we drove through the gates into the compound, the curiosity about us grew. Everyone was wondering what the official vehicle from La Paz might want here. It seemed that the barracks were not well visited by any colonels or generals that were not already in charge there.

Now there was me, "a gringo," getting out of the car, which seemed to raise even more curiosity. The second in command of the barracks came running towards us asking if there was something he could do to help us. The officer who had brought us here, informed him that we were a company from Germany and that they, the military, would be working together with us.

While showing us the workshops with their ancient machinery that was left behind from the time when the Americans had their bases there, the crowd that followed us around looking at what we were doing grew continuously. They instantly realized that something very exciting was going on.

But, I realized that they had a lot to get done if they wanted to accommodate us with a workshop. The whole compound was more or less a junkyard for old vehicles, trucks, and even tanks. Most of them were not functioning but they told us that they were either fixing the vehicles or using them for spare parts.

We were shown the office space, which was suitable for us and just needed some final touches; however, our workshop was basically not enclosed and was more of a huge carport with a roof and a couple of bricks.

They told us that by the time we returned to Bolivia with all of our team, it would be all ready for us to start working in it.

It truly was an exciting time, and I couldn't wait to return and start working there.

Any normal person coming from a developed country would probably not appreciate the beauty in the unorganized and rather dated infrastructure we would have available, but I believed that what we could achieve there would encourage others, and that is exactly what we wanted—demonstrating that high-tech works in a low-tech country. I was extremely excited, and so were the people that worked and lived on the base. I didn't see it for what is was but for what it could be.

Chapter 33: Signing the Agreement

The day had finally come—the day we would sign the agreement. I felt a sense of relief, as it had been a stressful time getting there. It may have just taken us a total of four months from start to finish, but I was mentally exhausted with all the rushing around, and the fact that I needed to do everything in Spanish was a challenge and would take a great portion of my energy reserves.

We thought we would go to see our lawyer's office to discuss final arrangements only to find out that they had moved the previous day. Unfortunately, they did not inform us about their expansion and, of all days, this was not a good one to mess around with us.

We finally tracked down the new offices and went through the final version of the agreement again, and then we arranged to meet at the top of the military base.

I assumed that the signing of the agreement would be the breakthrough we had been wanting for so long.



Image 5 Signing of Agreement 25.08.2010

Once we arrived at the offices of Agreda, we had to wait, as it was important for witnesses to see the signing. De La Fuente was also invited to witness this historic event that would change Bolivia, as well as our lives.

All supporters were invited to the conference room, where the ceremony was documented on video and photographed by officers. Essentially, the signing of the documents was considered as important for Bolivia as it was for us.



Image 6 In front of Agreda's office after signing

As a small celebration of the events, we arranged a dinner at our hotel and invited all the supporters.

Normally, General Agreda would have been accompanied by his security personnel, but he had given them some excuse. He told me that sometimes he needs his private time as well. Obviously, that demonstrated his full confidence in us.

It was a truly enjoyable evening, where we could all enjoy the company of each other without uniforms.

In reality, the easy bit was done. Now, we would return to Europe on 28.08.2010, and we would arrange everything so that we could be back in Bolivia by mid-September.

Meanwhile, my father hosted Castro to discuss with him the work to be carried out and, unfortunately, without my consent, they came to some sort of agreement that would later lead us to go our separate ways again.

Although nothing in the agreement prevented us from having the same machine built by someone else, it was not what I had advertised, and I was pushing forward despite Castro's reservations about working at the facilities that were allocated to us, rather than him operating completely independently. I did not agree with this Plan B approach, but I could not deny that I was unsure of the precision we would be able to achieve with the personnel that we would interview and hire. Precision was key in making the machine operate as planned.

That is why we had all the complex components manufactured at the last minute in Germany by manufacturers we had never worked with before. However, after explaining the project to them, they agreed to manufacture the components prior to our departure to Bolivia, despite their machines being fully booked for the following weeks. They squeezed our parts in, thankfully.

Chapter 34: An Honorable and Honest Businessman is a Rarity

My father was so eager to get to Bolivia that he flew there several days before me, and he almost missed his flight due to a last minute parts collection from one of the designers on the project.

He would travel to Cochabamba to discuss further the next steps with Castro. His son did not become part of this project, as he demanded ridiculous amounts of money for his time that not even a German designer would ever get. I organized an interpreter for my father, so he could communicate with Castro properly.

Normally, what we would be able to do is fly to Santa Cruz and then buy our flight tickets over the counter. This worked out better financially than booking a flight to Cochabamba ahead of time but, of course, when I arrived that night, all flights to Cochabamba had been sold out, and I had to wait until the early morning to fly out.

I was quite anxious to get there, as I had no idea how things were progressing with Castro.

The hotel I had booked for my father was the hotel we stayed in before. It was where Evo Morales held his own “climate conference,” and they offered us special rates to demonstrate their support of our project.

Nevertheless, after I arrived in Cochabamba around 10 a.m. to meet my father, Castro, and the interpreter, I did have a bit of a funny feeling about it all, especially since I could see that my father trusted Castro with details about the engine that were somewhat top secret.

Now, one could argue that he needed to know everything in order to do a good job, but I just didn’t trust him, and I feared that he would want to pull us over the table.

Maybe there was some insecurity involved in my emotions, especially given my past experience with Jose Maria.

Castro told me that he had almost completed all the components, for which he received payment upfront. This upfront payment would later be the basis for an enormous battle that I had to fight with Castro.

We only stayed in Cochabamba a couple of nights before finally heading to La Paz, where we checked into our regular hotel. They too were aware of us and all the receptionists knew me by name. I really enjoyed that, and you could almost say we were receiving celebrity status in Bolivia.

I arranged for Frederico to come to the hotel in order to introduce him to my father and then we would go and meet the rector of EMI, Colonel Castellanos. It was almost very cute, as my father gave a long speech about how determined he was to complete the project and even get his hands dirty.

It was his way of saying that he wanted the change for Bolivia as well, and he would keep his promise, which was actually my promise, but my father adopted it as his own—thankfully.

My father had an old school personality. He was a man of his word and, if he said something, nothing would stop him from sticking to his word. This truly is a rare characteristic nowadays, and it is possibly the reason why he lost everything. Because he was an honorable and honest businessman, he assumed that everyone around him would act the same way.

Colonel Castellanos supplied us with a bunch of CV's that fit some job descriptions we had of people that we would like to have on board. We started interviewing that same week at a conference room in the university.

We initially selected six people for a trial and discussed their potential involvement in more detail at our new premises at the barracks. Unfortunately though, the command was unable to keep their promise about having completed the workshop as well as our office space.





Image 7 Pictures of the workshop on the day of our arrival 30.09.2010

The office we had allocated to us was not emptied yet and, when we turned up, there was a big panic to get everything sorted out, as they clearly did not know what to expect from us. No one had informed them that we were going to arrive on that particular day, even though I gave them advance notice several days before. For me, it didn't really matter. I was glad to be there and, meanwhile, they were clearing out our office. The head of the barracks, a very nice gentleman, offered his office to us for the discussions.

I left my father in charge of that, while I tried to get things organized for us. We needed a chauffeur who could collect us in the morning, take us back at night, and collect and buy items for us.

Chapter 35: Promises Reneged On

Of the six people we selected, only two remained—Angela, who was to act as an interpreter and secretary and Hugo, who was an engineer and would assist in the assembly of the engine.

The others fell away, but not because we didn't want them. One just didn't show up, and the others called to say they couldn't make it and, naturally, with a start like that, we told them to stay home.

Surprisingly, the workshop got finished quicker than we had all expected. When they told us that in one more day we could move in, none of us believed it. Of course, it wasn't completely finished. They didn't have the money for a gate, so they were going to use a gate from another workshop and mount it onto our workshop after painting it.

They truly made a big effort to make everything look as nice as possible and, with that effort, we didn't mind giving them a little money for things like paint.



Image 8 Finished workshop with the team standing in front of it.

It was an amazing atmosphere, and we could feel the appreciation and excitement of us being there.

We even asked the commander of the barracks if we could utilize his people that were operating the machinery such as the lathes, as we didn't have the machinery or the personnel to operate them.

Although this was not something that was a term in the agreement, without flinching he agreed to it, adding that he was there for us and, if we needed anything, we should just let him know.

Meanwhile, the situation with Castro was escalating. A couple of days after we moved into our workshop, he sent an email to my father requesting more money for the assembly of the machine. My father started to realize that I may have been right, as my father clearly stated that Castro had quoted him \$10,000 for the manufacturing including the assembly.

Essentially, my father would question the reason behind him asking for more money, especially since all the components had already been manufactured, and he never mentioned assembly costs before.

My father became irritated with the problem and asked me to go and evaluate the situation in Cochabamba. I presume that my paranoia towards Castro rubbed off on him eventually, and he saw that this argument about money was not going to be resolved easily.

The problem was that they both argued that they agreed to the manufacturing of the components, but my father stands on the position that the money Castro received would include assembly, whereas Castro was adamant that it was clear that the assembly would be charged extra.

To be quite frank, I believe what these two had agreed to was more than enough to cover the assembly cost. In actual fact, the components made in Germany didn't cost that much and, at the time my father agreed to the terms with Castro, we didn't know that.

So, there I was, stuck in the middle between two stubborn people arguing their point, and I was the one who had to settle this. Of course, I was biased due to my interest in securing the future success of the project, but I didn't feel very comfortable with this assignment.

My father, however, always had a little paranoia in him as well and saw that the interpreter he used in Cochabamba joined me, not to translate but to witness any actions. As he was translating most of the discussions my father and Castro were having, he was the ideal person to do the job.

At the end of the day, however, it turned out that my father's paranoia worked out for the best, as the showdown between Castro and me was about to go down with a bang.

Chapter 36: Castro Goes Ballistic

Arriving in Cochabamba, we took the taxi to Castro's workshop. The most horrendous things went through my mind. I didn't know Castro that well and didn't know what he was capable of if he was pushed too far.

Being alone in the area where Castro's workshop was located with his high-security barbed-wire fencing and security freaked me out a little, and I questioned whether I would make it out of there unharmed.

We rang the bell and his dogs came rushing to the gates, and another thought rushed through my head—Castro would set his dogs on me. Thankfully, it never really got that far, but the atmosphere was truly tense.

Castro invited us into his office and, while he sat behind his desk, we sat on a very low sofa opposite him.

I clearly asked the question, what was the problem between him and my father? I really didn't quite understand. I told him that I saw the document that was signed by both parties, and I understood that a fixed price was negotiated.

Of course, Castro argued otherwise and the discussion became extremely heated. However, as stubborn as Castro might have been, I too was stubborn, and I was extremely stubborn in my views. His frustration grew, he raised his voice, and he hit the table with his hands.

That made me feel extremely uncomfortable. It's not like I had never seen that kind of behavior before. My father did that all the time but, with him, I knew how far he would go. For me, Castro became a loose cannon.

Meanwhile, Castro's eldest son, who I had not met before, joined the discussion, which calmed things down a little. I felt relieved, as he could understand the frustrating situation I was in, which was in the middle. So, there we were, two sons trying to solve an unsolvable puzzle.

At the point where Castro's son argued in our favor and asked his father to just let it go, Castro lost it completely. I went there to resolve the issue but, since there was nothing to resolve, my instructions were to salvage any components I could before Castro destroyed them in his anger, so I did bring it up several times that we just wanted to collect the parts and then everyone would go their separate ways.

It seems that he didn't want that either. Nevertheless, after his son intervened, Castro rushed downstairs and ran from one corner of the workshop to the other. He drove off and, after about twenty minutes, came back. I didn't know what he was doing, nor did I dare ask. Castro's son was more pleasant to talk to in any case.

I felt very sad after he told me that his father asked him to quit his job to help him in this project. He really liked working on it our project, as it was something that excited him. He was the one who was affected the most by the stubbornness of our fathers.

Until today, we didn't really understand why it escalated to this extent, as Castro's son said to me that we were only looking at an additional \$1,800 U.S., an amount that I heard for the first time. However, at the end of the day it didn't matter.

Castro somewhat reluctantly handed over all the parts to me, and we called a taxi and got back to the airport as quickly as possible.

At that time, I was under quite the adrenalin rush, and I was ready to fight if I had to, meaning I didn't pay close attention to the components.

The next morning, though, I evaluated the components for accuracy and detail, and it turned out both were inadequate. I should have seen it while in Cochabamba, but I was not focused on the parts at the time.

Thankfully, what this meant for us was that we did not agree to any further capital flow towards Castro, as none of his parts would have satisfied the required accuracy and the resulting engine never would have worked under Castro's direction.

Chapter 37: A Very Delicate Situation

With the extra components, which had more or less become scrap metal, we needed to focus on the assembly of our parts with the support from the workers in the barracks.

A big challenge that we needed to overcome was sourcing components that we either didn't think about bringing or that we just needed to overcome some technical challenges. Anything that you might need to fix a vehicle was never a problem but precision parts to our requirements—such as sourcing specifically sized bearings—was a great obstacle.

It took us a while to find a store that could support us in our needs but, rather than having a single go-to store, depending on our requirements, Juan Carlos, our chauffeur, would be gone for hours with his shopping list. Sometimes, he wouldn't return with all the items we were looking for.

A lot of the components that were not stocked, were delivered from Santa Cruz, which was more industrialized than La Paz with most of the main distributors located there. This slowed us down significantly, but we had other concerns that needed attending.

The original agreement we had signed committed the parties to support us, not only with the workshop, or assistance from the university, but also, and very importantly, to present the technology and the proposal to Evo Morales, the country's president.

Between, Colonel Banegas and Frederico we tried to find a strategy that would enable us to get the president's attention. It was already obvious that, in Bolivia, everything worked through connections. If you know someone who knows someone, you have already won half the battle.

As it happened to be, Frederico knew the highest ranked general, Cueto, very well, but we could not use this path directly. The reason for this was that officials started visiting Colonel Banegas in his office asking about our motives here in Bolivia.

There was a conspiracy theory going around that we were in Bolivia simply to steal the country's lithium resources, which, of course, was a ridiculous accusation. However, this caused our need to be very careful how we handled any situation.

So, Frederico discussing the project with Cueto directly would imply a personal favor, which could implicate Cueto and get him into trouble. Nevertheless, Cueto was obviously aware of our project because General Agreda and General De La Fuente informed him about our project and us, but he could still not approach us.

This posed itself to be a very delicate situation. Essentially, Colonel Banegas, with access to our information, created a PowerPoint presentation and presented our project to everyone possible at the military base, while Frederico drafted a letter of intention that basically outlined our reasons to be in Bolivia and what it was that we wanted to achieve. This letter was sent to General Cueto, General Agreda, and all other supporters that we had known of that could have an influence on Cueto. We did this because General Cueto was the key to everything.

Chapter 38: Stubborn Customs Officials

The reason why General Cueto played such a key role in getting to Evo Morales is that Bolivia is more or less a military state. Every Monday morning at 5 a.m., Evo Morales and his cabinet met with General Cueto and other generals from the air force and, believe it or not, the navy.

Bolivia lost its access to sea in a fight with Chile, making it a landlocked country. Knowing this, it came as a great surprise to me to find out they had a navy.

Anyway, at these Monday mornings, the schedules for the week would be laid out and proposals would be discussed. So, to reach Evo and see if he was even interested, we would need our proposal to reach the inbox of the agenda.

This was one of the most frustrating things to achieve but, first, we still needed to obtain Cueto's support.

Despite some technical difficulties and us continuously struggling to clear components through customs that we tried to import from Germany, we had to push on. There was no going back and, if we stopped pressing people for their support, who knows, we might never get another opportunity again.

The custom issue was truly a problem, as we realized that we would have to order more and more components from Germany and have them collected by our courier company for shipment to Bolivia. The transaction on the German side always went quite smoothly, but the corresponding courier representative in Bolivia was not as efficient, despite the fact that we communicated the importance of the goods being released as soon as possible.

I got on their nerves, but they would always blame the customs officers, which gave me a challenging new activity. Rather than using the courier company to do the clearance work, I undertook their work and communicated directly with the customs officers.

A parcel would be allocated to the customs officers and some of these officers would be more helpful than others were. Mr. Luna was my favorite. The first time I explained to him that we needed these components to be released quickly in order to present our developments to Evo Morales, he would support me every time in accelerating the release of our parcels.

However, sometimes I wouldn't be lucky enough to deal with Mr. Luna. In that case, I learned that I would have to go to the head of customs, and I would explain to him why

the expedited release of the goods was so vital. Unfortunately, at some point, he was replaced and his replacement would turn out more stubborn and unwilling to help.

In general, it would take between one and two days until a parcel was handed to us, after arriving in La Paz. However, at one point, I had an especially difficult customs officer, and he refused to release the parcels and they were stuck there for one whole week. No matter how much I pleaded, the officer refused to process the customs papers.

I lost count of how many hours and days I spent at the airport trying to release these parcels, but I was set to my goal and more than determined to achieve our goal. Maybe being German had something to do with it, but I believe that it was more than that.

I could identify myself with the people of Bolivia. Due to my past experiences, I couldn't say that I identified myself with being German. I hold a German passport, yes, but I feel that I'm just someone trying to get away from the bullies, just like the Bolivians.

I can and always could identify myself with the people of Bolivia, and I believe this element of "non-arrogant" behavior earned me the respect of the people I was dealing with. As a result, I had an incredible emotional attachment to Bolivia and its people.

Chapter 39: General Cueto Visits

My father and I had some heated arguments. This was partly because of the slow progress the assembly was making, and I promised to demonstrate a working machine to lure Cueto to our workshop to see what we were doing.

Another factor was the different attitudes we had towards this project. I was deeply attached to Bolivia emotionally, as I had to overcome so many challenges in the months before to get this far, and there was no way that failing to achieve our goal was an option. I was desperate for the “Bolivia Project” to work. For my father, it was important that the Bolivia Project worked out to set an example. So, for my father, it was just a small step towards a greater goal.

Whereas I tried not to demonstrate any arrogance towards the people we were working with, my father demonstrated a lot of it. He didn't mean it bad, though. It's just the way he was. Whenever we had arguments, he would accuse me of being arrogant, and I said if I was considered as arrogant, then what was he classified as. We developed a very funny relationship.

No one in Latin America would dare to raise their voice to their parents and people were probably wondering what was going on. This being said, I had the greatest respect for my father, despite these heated arguments. I never called my father by his name, despite the fact that he let me. But, my respect for him would not allow it and, to me, it just didn't feel right to call him Gert. Shouting at each other ventilated any built-up steam and frustration between us, and I realized that dealing with each other in such a way was wrong, but I wasn't mature enough to recognize it and become the bigger man.

At the end of the day, though, my father was right. I was arrogant. Despite me being very conscious about not acting arrogant, I was. The reality was that we needed each other to be successful, and that was my arrogant factor.

I regret not realizing and acknowledging how much strength this project was costing my father, starting early and finishing late under extreme conditions. I did not suffer any problems and was on fire full of energy.

However, the reality was that upon reading the data from my father's pacemaker by his cardiologist, his heart worked stronger and better in Bolivia at such high altitudes than ever before. This came not only as a surprise to my father but his cardiologist could not find a medical explanation for this at first.

We had now been working for less than a month getting things going, and we finally received the long expected news that General Cueto would be coming to the barracks

to view our work. Initially, it had been set to be on October 08, 2010, but this was soon changed to October 12. We were fortunate in gaining these extra few days but, at the same time, my mind was close to exploding, and I was praying that there would be no further delays in the general visiting us.



Image 9 working on the prototype

We informed the head of the barracks once we knew the general was coming, and he immediately prepped everyone at the barracks for the visit and rehearsed the band to play, followed by a salute “Buenas Dias Mi GENERAL”!

They would practice every day but, on the day when General Cueto together with many other colonels as well as General Agreda were scheduled to arrive at 11:00 a.m., General Cueto informed us that he was running late.

We were waiting for hours and everyone suspected he would cancel again. Waiting for them to arrive was absolute torture, but I believed that he would most definitely come and eventually he did.

For the first time in the barracks’ history, General Cueto made his appearance there, and that is why the commander made such a big deal of it. They were all so grateful to us for achieving that much.



Image 10 The general arriving and greeting his soldiers 12.10.2010

Chapter 40: The Most Horrendous Hailstorm

Once we saw the cavalcade arrive and General Cueto marching to the band's music to receive his final salute, we were standing by the door of our workshop observing the proceedings eagerly. Then he was shown the way towards our workshop, and we all lined up nicely waiting for him to enter through the door.

My heart was pounding. I was very nervous, as I feared him being disappointed, as the engine was still not operational and we did not really have much more to show other than half assembled engines with a written speech and a PowerPoint presentation based on the principles.



Image 11 Greeting the general

I held the presentation and I talked about the technology, why we chose Bolivia, and what we wanted to achieve for Bolivia. There was some irony there, however. The second I started speaking, the most horrendous hailstorm came down from the heavens and, with the metal roofing, I was unable to hear my own words.

The question was: could we recover from this miserable start?

I shouted at the top of my voice, realizing I was wasting my time. Then, within an instant, it stopped and my concerns about the audience not hearing me were slightly lifted, but then I was concerned about starting the presentation again.



Image 12 Presenting to the audience

I was extremely happy once the presentation was over, and it had not started hailing again. Now it was down to my father to do his part of the presentation. We had covered the engine components with towels and barrels so that nothing could be seen and, when they were lifted, everybody expected to see the full engine.

My father on the other hand, always had a gift in finding a way to engage a conversation, and he explained how Bolivian countrymen were building this engine. I was very nervous and wondered about the audiences' reaction, especially since everything that we said and did was caught on camera.

My father also had a gift of graphically depicting complex systems in a relatively comprehensible way, and he explained the principle of the engine. Consequently, I believed that anybody who attended this presentation would have been able to understand the technological breakthrough and opportunity that we were offering to their country.



Image 13 Applauding audience

To mine and everybody else's surprise, we got a huge round of applause from everyone attending. We invited the general and all the attendants for food and drinks, giving us the opportunity to engage into conversations with one another. The commander of the barracks showed a great interest in the details of what we were doing.

He was aware that we were trying to help Bolivia, and we were developing an engine, but the details of how the principle would work, he didn't know. He was one of the few people that spoke some English, and I think that was a relief for my father. Hugo, the engineer, spoke English, and he would direct everyone working for the command who could only speak Spanish. I think that was something that really got to my father.



Image 14 Last pictures taken before the event was officially over

Communicating for him was hard enough, but basing any communication on translation was something else. Alone, thinking about such a scenario, I believe I would have gone mad. Not wanting this scenario for myself had motivated me to learn Spanish at such an accelerated rate.

After everyone was satisfied with the information, food, and drink, it was time for everyone to leave again but not before we had some pictures taken. Bolivia took great pride in documenting these moments, and it surely showed us how much they valued our presence.

After all the pictures had been taken with us and the people helping us out, the commander of the barracks showed General Cueto around the other parts of the premises.

We were able to secure support from General Cueto, and he advised us that we should write a proposal for Evo Morales and leave it with Cueto's assistant, and then he would be able to add it to the weekly agenda meetings with the president.

Chapter 41: Things Started Heating Up

We were all very relieved and happy with the outcome. However, Banegas and Castellanos did express their concern about not showing the working engine, and we could not afford to show the unfinished engine to the president.

Naturally, I agreed with their concern, and my father told them not to worry. I was getting worried though as shortly after the presentation to General Cueto things started heating up.

We presented the proposal for the submission to Evo Morales for the next Monday, but we were informed that someone removed it from the agenda. Furthermore, we found out that there was a certain party within the army, navy, or air force, who had a keen interest in seeing us fail.

Even Colonel Rroel, with whom we had signed the agreement, started to pull his support, and he tried to pull the people away from us. The problem was that by now we were actually the ones paying these people's wages.

There was one time when one of the machine operators did not turn up for work for several days, and we asked the commander where he was, as we needed him. His response shocked us.

He said they didn't always get paid, so they needed to work elsewhere to make a living while obviously having a commitment to turn up for work at the barracks. Working at the barracks gave them some security, as it was considered as full-time employment but, again, not receiving their wages came as an enormous surprise to us.

As a result, we decided to pay them, simply to avoid them disappearing when we needed them the most.

They were so very loyal, and I really enjoyed their company. As a majority of them lived along our way home, we would all give them a lift, and my father would try to engage a deeper discussion with them. I remember my father asking one of the machinists whether he realized what we were actually trying to achieve and his response was yes, of course, with your engine you are trying to make Bolivia better.

It was nice for them to acknowledge and believe that we were there for them.

On October 26, 2010, we were invited to the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of EMI, and I would be able to find out if our proposal reached Evo Morales the day before.

The ceremony was attended by many highly ranked people from the army, navy, and air force, and I unexpectedly sat very close to the general of the air force. With the connections that we had established by now, I became aware of the fact that it was he who pulled out our proposal, and I hoped that he hadn't done it again.

Once the ceremony was over and we were all invited for drinks at the hall, I wanted to find General Agreda but, before I could find him, many people that had come to know me and what we were doing at the barracks stopped me and wished me all the best.

I finally found the only person who could give me peace of mind by telling me that Evo Morales had received the proposal in yesterday's agenda. Unfortunately, he told me something else, and our proposal was not discussed.

I was so furious, I was close to crying, and I didn't dare tell my father. As impulsive as he was, he would have asked us to pack our bags.

I needed to walk it off and, in La Paz, that wasn't difficult. Banegas saw me leaving in anger and asked if he could give me a ride, but I told him that I needed to walk. Although it was only a twenty-minute walk home, the lack of oxygen really got to me, and I wasn't really able to think clearly.

While walking, I decided to call Federico, and I told him what happened. I nearly hyperventilated, as I was already upset, speaking too fast, and continuing to walk. I did feel like I was going to faint, but I was so angry that I didn't let myself.

I told Federico I would come and see him if he had time for me. I think he had no other option but to say yes, really, as he noticed my frustration.

However, once I had calmed down and let out some steam, everything would turn around.

Chapter 42: More Traitors in Our Midst

We communicated with General Agreda making sure that there would be no further delays in getting our proposal onto the agenda and, with a great amount of effort, Agreda's assistant, loyal as he was to us as he was to Agreda, got the proposal on the agenda for the following week (on the first of November).

Now all we needed was to wait for his response, which we were all eagerly awaiting. At the same time, there was a small party within the government that didn't want us to succeed, and they were planning ways to sabotage our project. What their motivation was, I still don't know today, but it had become clear that some government officials did not live by the socialist agenda while having two or three houses in different parts of the country, very expensive limousines, as well as many other luxuries.

However, I believe we were a threat to a certain party because, while we had been in Bolivia for some time now, we had found not only a market for the country's energy generation and distribution but we also found a way the country could transform its pollution from its old, imported, fuel-consuming, and polluting vehicles.

The majority of vehicles that are driven in Bolivia have been imported from Japan. Due to the fact that the cars of Japan have their steering wheel on the right and Bolivia has theirs on the left, an industry of transforming these vehicles to become fit for the Bolivian road system emerged.

Actually, that is what they called these vehicles—transformers. As Bolivia is also very rich in natural gas, it is an inexpensive alternative to get around after having a gas tank retrofitted to the vehicle.

So, as an interim solution, we proposed adapting the hybrid principle of our aircraft to these imported vehicles. That would give the cars an extended lifespan, and they would become significantly more environmentally friendly.

Additionally, it would also allow Bolivia to have a domestic market for the development of its lithium, and we proposed that the development of the batteries, in combination with the vehicle's drive system, would be investigated and developed by the university.

Evo Morales, who did not have much of a formal education himself, acknowledged the importance of education and, as a result, favored EMI in educating some of the country's greatest engineers.

Essentially, what we were proposing would enrich the education for EMI's students as well as raising EMI to become not only an elite university of Bolivia, but it would also become a game changer, and it would become recognized around the globe.

Colonel Castellanos was extremely supportive of this idea, despite his upcoming retirement as EMI's rector at the end of the year. His motivation was not driven by his ego but by the greatness Bolivia could achieve should this plan become reality.

Unfortunately, not everyone could see the potential and, clearly, where there are winners there are going to be losers, and I believe jealousy got the better of people not willing to make sacrifices for the greater good of their nation.

Of course, it was the same people who would claim to be backing Evo's campaign to make Bolivia a strong and striving economy.

We were faced with a real battle at hand, where our helpers from the barracks were intimidated by their military command, the same command who had signed the agreement with us. When we heard of this, we couldn't believe it.

None of the people backed away and actually worked harder after we informed them that we had finally received word from General Cueto informing us that Evo Morales invited us to present the engine to him on November 8, 2010, following the documentation that we presented to him.

This was not the case for the electrician. He was supposed to come to our workshop to conduct some work with us, but he never turned up. After we saw him walking by the next day, we stopped him to ask why he hadn't shown up yesterday, and his response enlightened us of the situation that was going on.

They demanded that everyone stop helping us or else they would stop paying them, which was a joke, as they were hardly paying them as it was. However, we wanted to know who threatened them like this. We were shocked to find out that it was the party that was supposed to stand behind us—it was Colonel Rroel and his team.

Chapter 43: The Pressure Was Rising

Despite the big let-down by our co-partner, who tried to set us up for failure, we worked until the late hours to make sure everything would go smoothly on the November 8th, but time was not on our side.

However, due to the allegiance we had with General Agreda and so many other supporters, I believe an even greater opportunity arose. The presentation event for the eighth was canceled and replaced with the 200-year anniversary celebration of the military, where Evo Morales would be presented with the technology by EMI's rector, Colonel Castellanos, with a short presentation of the engine.

This raised the stakes significantly for us. I felt like it was a vivid action movie with a trap luring at every corner setting us up for failure. I didn't understand what was happening, as it was our objective to do something good for the country, and yet it seemed that the lobby against us was going to do everything to demonize us. Luckily, we were under the protection of the generals, and I know they risked so much for us to be successful.

Knowing this caused an emotional roller coaster in my father and me. There was nothing we could really do other than continue our work, but the pressure was building up so much, and we had no one else to shout at but each other.

As a result, the pressure of people wanting us to fail really got to us, and I can say that they almost succeeded. My father and I were so close to strangling each other at this point, but I do question why we went to such extremes, and it is regretful to know that we let go of our inhibitions and emotions like that. You could almost say that we had lost track of what we were doing and why we were doing it. All our focus was gone.

With the event getting closer and closer, we spent nights at the workshop preparing the engine for the event. Unfortunately, my father and I did not have even one second to consider the organizational issues of the event itself.

Thankfully, Colonel Banegas and my wife were on it and managed the whole event, from making banners and posters to ordering pens and other promotional items.

The idea was for me to introduce the company and our goal but, with my mind close to explosion, the last thing I wanted to do was to think about a speech. I didn't have the strength to do it. I was so mentally and physically fatigued that I ended up losing close to 10 kg during the weeks before the presentation.

We had many technical concerns. We were working at our workshop at close to 4 km above sea level, and the presentation was in a city at probably 2.8 km above sea level.

We didn't have the time to test the real effects of the altitude on our engine, as there were other concerns that needed addressing too.

My father and I didn't know what was going on outside the workshop anymore. We shut ourselves off completely from the outside world, which may have caused the aggression towards each other. However, we only went to work on the engine. Its disassembly and reassembly was very time consuming.

Our future and success remained unsure and that was an awful feeling, after having worked so hard. I would not wish these emotions on anybody, as it is likely to rip you apart.

Chapter 44: It Worked!

My father was never a religious man and, as a result, I cannot say that I was. I never had any involvement with anyone who could have influenced my beliefs, other than my father, through the years of working together.

My father was very well read, and he did read and study the Bible, amongst other spiritual books, at some point in his life. He was also extremely knowledgeable of the Koran and other religious scriptures. In fact, when he first had the prototype of Brainwear ready to demonstrate, he asked me to get “brainwashed” by Vogel. They used the word “brainwashed” to signify the transition in the access to knowledge from Google compared to Brainwear.

Vogel demonstrated Brainwear’s capabilities to me and showed me a graph illustrating Brainwear’s interpretation of all religious scriptures that had been scanned to illustrate the similarities at their cores.

At the time, I had no idea about the Koran, who Mohamed was, nor did I know the Bible. I knew that Jesus was God’s son and there may have been some stories such as David and Goliath that we would have been taught in primary school.

As a result, I had nothing to relate our situation in Bolivia to. Nor did I have the faith that everything would be fine, as many believers would have. The faith that I had was the faith in my father. For me, he was the almighty who would deliver us from evil but, the day before the presentation to Evo Morales, there was no strength left in him. He was exhausted from the stress, the extreme conditions, the long hours, and, possibly, my faith in him.

We can call it like it was and say that I was my father’s apprentice and, for me, my father would live forever. I was in denial about his health, and I would ignore his reminders of how he could not read and how he had to rely on my eyes, rather than me having to rely on him.

I didn’t want to accept that fact, and I didn’t. It would take me many years to realize that I was no longer able to rely on him. I would read to him, and I would write things for him but, subconsciously, I probably didn’t want to acknowledge the reality that he was getting weaker.

A factor that may have caused this illusion was possibly driven by the fact that he may have been thirty-two years older than me, sick and tired, yet he was still very well capable of keeping up with me.

I notice today, only five years down the line, that my physical strength is not equal to when we were in Bolivia, and it goes beyond my comprehension of how strong my father must have been in order to survive those extreme months.

It is somehow very sad that we always have to look back in time to acknowledge these things afterwards and are not able to do it in the moment. However, at this point in time, my father and I were not in a good place with one another, but there was no going back.

Despite all of this, somehow my father was able to gather enough strength to see work through the night and prepare for the presentation the next day.

At the last moment that day, the engine worked the way it was supposed to work, and there was a great sense of relief amongst everyone until the unreliability factor kicked in.

The performance was not consistent, and we didn't know whether we would present or not present at this stage. It was just another emotional rollercoaster that seemed to go on forever.

The way I saw it, there was no going back, it worked, and everyone saw that it worked.

Chapter 45: “Made in Bolivia for the World”

We turned up at the festivities very early in the morning so we could prepare for the presentation. We entered the guarded gates with very mixed feelings.

The presentation was scheduled to take place after the ceremony and the demonstration of the newly built premises to accommodate more soldiers.



Image 15 Last preparations on the engine before the presentation

However, things went very quickly when Evo Morales cut the ribbon to inaugurate these new buildings and, instead of viewing the premises, he requested to view our presentation straight away.

This was not necessarily because he could not wait to see us but, in fact, it was due to knee surgery that he underwent, which had also been the reason we did not present to him as originally planned on November 8th.

Essentially, Evo Morales had just been out of the hospital for a couple of days, and he seemed to be in agony.

Before Evo Morales entered the room, many generals and ministers found their seat. General Agreda gave us some motivational words before taking his seat.

Surprisingly, and almost too late, Colonel Roel slipped through the door and lined up with us awaiting the arrival of Evo Morales. What a shock! My jaw dropped to the floor, as it was he who initiated the trials to make us fail.

My father feared that he might be seen in public and pictures might emerge of him, which would give Charles the opportunity to enforce my father's sentence and put him behind bars. I believe that was Charles' ultimate objective, as my father would still present himself as a threat to Charles as long as he was free or alive.

Charles must have known about my father's activities in Bolivia, as I know that Vogel and my father spoke regularly, and Charles wanted to inform the Bolivian government that they were dealing with criminals.

I don't know whether Charles ever attempted this or not, but I have since gotten to know many ministers who have spent time in prison before. Besides, my father's involvement in this project was unofficial in any case. Legally, my father had no involvement in the project whatsoever, as I was posing as the company's director, and I didn't have a criminal record.

The only file that exists on me is when I rode my bike in the bike lane at a high velocity. I rammed a much older and much heavier person, which made me literally bounce off him, but I seemingly managed to break his bike as well as his fingers and a rib. My jaw was bruised, and my bike was actually fine. I believe I must have been around thirteen years old.

As a result of this, the judge gave me a warning to obey traffic regulations, and I did not receive a record. The person I had hit filed for assault charges. I must presume that it was an insurance issue more than anything else. I did not mean to hit him. I'm not a violent person, and I never have been, although I used to have quite a temper like my father.

While waiting for Evo's arrival, cameras were being put up, and I didn't think much about it. All of a sudden, Evo Morales, together with his security personnel, walked through the door on his crutches.



Image 16 Carolina Reinhardt introducing the project to the audience before the presentation was taken over by Colonel Castellanos

He had a big smile on his face and, as soon as he was seated, the presentation started by my wife introducing the project, followed by Colonel Castellanos taking over. The presentation went flawlessly, and I believe Evo Morales left the presentation in pain but with a huge smile on his face.

Evo Morales would go to Cancun the following week and, while we achieved our goal to present our technology to him, the idea for him to present a viable solution to the world would not be possible with so little time. However, we felt relieved that everything went extremely well. The ball was now in Evo's court, and we were curious as to what might happen next.

After the presentation, all our friends and family in Bolivia called shortly after the presentation telling us that they just saw us on live television, which was something we were not aware of.

In celebration, we decided to go for dinner with Colonel Banegas, his team, and several others. It had been some time since we had a proper meal, and it was thoroughly enjoyable to sit around this joyful table. It took less than one hour after the presentation for Colonel Banegas to receive a call from Colonel Castellanos to inform us that we had been summoned to the president's residence the next day at 5 a.m.

We were overjoyed and couldn't believe it. Not only did we manage to present our project to the president, but the president had also invited us to his residence to discuss this project further with us.

We believed good things were to come, but no one could have prepared us for what was to come just a few weeks down the line.

Chapter 46: Conspiracies, Phone Tapping, and Paranoia

After a tiring few months, it wasn't easy getting up at 4 a.m. to get ready to go to the president's residence, but it was a struggle we all endured with some pleasure, knowing that we had been summoned by President Evo Morales himself.

Soon after we arrived at the residence, Colonel Castellanos and Colonel Banegas arrived. None of us knew what to expect. Colonel Castellanos was only told that we should present the project to him again.

We waited outside the security gates for quite a while before Evo's security asked us to come through. I presume that was a standard procedure, as we had to empty our pockets, walk through metal detectors, and were patted down.

We all received visitor passes and were escorted into the house and into a little sitting room. When I saw it, it reminded me of what a formal living room in the U.K. would look like with the sofa and wallpaper having flowery patterns.

We were told to wait there until Evo was ready for us. A couple of hours later, a lady came in and spoke to Colonel Castellanos, telling him that we would not all be allowed to enter. So, we picked my father; Hugo, our engineer; and myself to accompany Colonel Castellanos.

At approximately 10 a.m., having waited around for five hours, we were finally invited to meet the president, but only two people were allowed all of a sudden. So, I grabbed my father, looked at Hugo for his approval, and off we went.

We walked up the stairs into a room that would lead us into another room, where not only Evo Morales was sitting but also his vice president, Alvaro Garcia Linera; Oscar Coca Antezana, who was the minister of the presidency; as well as some generals.

Alvaro Garcia Linera had not been at the presentation, nor was Oscar Coca Antezana so, for them, it was all pretty new. However, rumors said that Alvaro Garcia Linera was attempting to overthrow Evo Morales to become president himself. Whether this and all the other rumors were true, I didn't know, and I didn't care too much about it until weeks down the line.

Colonel Castellanos went through the presentation again and Evo Morales asked the question that we wanted from them. My response was that we only expected to have their support and create a partnership.

Both Linera and Antezana asked us some questions and Evo Morales summed everything up by saying that they were obviously not experts and could not make judgment on the technology itself, but it all sounded very interesting. Evo Morales proposed that we meet with ENDE, a state-owned energy company based in Cochabamba over the next couple of days.

We thought that it would be a good idea and said we would wait for their arrival.

Meeting with ENDE within several days turned out to be a couple of hours. We had not really prepared a technical presentation, but they demonstrated an interest in our project, and we were all quite excited about the speed with which things were happening.

What this all meant, though, was that those who wanted us to stumble would try harder to influence other people's opinions about us. Colonel Banegas told us that he was being visited by people more frequently who were trying to find out more about our motives to be in Bolivia and us in general, while also making ridiculous accusations against us.

With the number of connections that Frederico had, he was informed of a telephone conversation Vice President Linera had in regard to our project, and he too was trying to investigate what might be our motives as accusations made their rounds. But, Frederico told me that Linera admitted to it being a very interesting project.

Later we found out that they would go as far as tapping our phones and listening to our conversations, which made me laugh because through their paranoia they were willing to give up a great opportunity. It was not like we discussed anything regarding the project over the phone anyway but, once we had found out they were tapping our phones, we were obviously more cautious about the conversations we had.

Chapter 47: Corruption

In spite of all the conspiracies against us, even by Colonel Rroel, we decided to speak to General Agreda. We didn't want to continue working in our workshop, where we worked in fear that something might happen.

General Agreda made a phone call then and there and directed us to set-up camp at one of the workshops dedicated to the generals. It was located in the city center. We had to inform the people that were working with us that we had to leave simply because we were not welcome anymore. Packing up and leaving everything behind made me quite sad, as it really wasn't their fault.



Image 17 Work continuing at our new workshop

Nevertheless, the move was necessary if we wanted to continue working on the engine in order to improve it. At the same time, we tried to source some further engineers from outside who could conduct the aluminum welding jobs that we were not able to do at our old premises.

It felt like we were starting from scratch, as the people we were working with were new again, and the premises were new.

The commander of these barracks introduced himself and assured us of his support. If we needed anything, he would be at our disposal. We had about four weeks to do some work on the engine. We moved to the new premises on November 25, 2010, and we had permission to stay the standard ninety days in the country, meaning my father and I would have to leave the country around the end of December.

Work was progressing quite well, although we decided to make some significant changes to the engine itself and work in parallel with the building of a prototype for the single-cycle geothermal engine to run on about 20 bar of air.

We attached various sensors and electronics to the engine that would give us indications of the temperature in various locations of the engine and trigger valves and other elements.

It seemed that with the team we were working with now, we were able to make progress much quicker than before. Yet, my father and I were of divided opinions about the future. I continued to work towards a governmental arrangement, while he only wanted to finish the work on the engine and present it to someone else. I'm not sure whether it was just fatigue or if he thought that Bolivia wasn't interested anymore. Despite him trying to discourage me from negotiating further agreements with Cueto directly, as well as other parties, I still wanted Project Bolivia to be a success.

The obvious question that I needed to ask myself was what this success was going to be measured by. If you look at it from one side, we were successful and achieved more than we had ever dreamed of but, from the other side, what we achieved did not lead to the outcome we had wanted, Either way, I wasn't going to consider it a failure in any case.

Colonel Castellanos' duty as rector was going to come to an end at the end of December. So, while he still could, he came to visit us at the new premises to see the progress we were making.

Colonel Banegas also came to see what we were doing.

In order to make the engine presentable and function more reliably with all the changes we had implemented, we worked until 3 a.m. in the morning. Most of the time, I would send my father home, as everyone could see the exhaustion in his face by about 11:30.

We eventually presented the project to the head of Comibol, which was the governmental organization responsible for the extraction of the lithium. The government allocated something like \$40 million U.S. for this project, but some of this money never got to see the project due to internal corruption. In retrospect, we also found out about certain rumors about the head of Comibol, who was of Belgium origin.

The presentation to him went very well, but it didn't really go anywhere other than empty promises.

By this point in time, we had used up the majority of our funds, but we kept spending lots of money that would leave us bankrupt within a very short period of time.

Chapter 48: Out-of-Budget Expenditures

Even with the support from General Agreda and the new premises, we were still running out of money. Colonel Banegas was working on creating a technical document of our engine for our use but, of course, it was really for the use of the university. As much as I valued their support, our situation was not sustainable for much longer.

Luckily, my father did manage to convince our investor to hand us another lifeline but this was only going to see us through a couple of months without being able to make any out-of-budget expenditures, for which we were famous.

However, the out-of-budget expenditures were unavoidable as the project progressed. We were continually developing and building it, which involved components that we could not foresee being used in advance. There was only a rough manual. Everything else we would need to add on to the engine in order for it to function.

Discussing options with both Frederico and the military command, there was an option for the sale of the technology to Bolivia through a state-owned and military-operated company, which requested to hold the majority of the stocks.

At the time, I realized I wasn't thinking clearly and declined going further with this. I knew neither my father nor I wanted to lose the majority shareholding of what we had built.

However, our major interest was in distributing licenses for the mass production of the technology in Bolivia. The point at which I stopped thinking straight, and may have missed the opportunity, was based on the sale of licenses. There was no need for us to have any or even a very small shareholding.

This is where politics got in the way. I learned that Frederico used to be the governor in the Bolivian region of Tarija and, as much as I like Frederico as a friend, he has some traits of a politician that really messed with my head.

As a politician, he would agree with me one moment and then we would start discussing strategies to go into a meeting and, in front of my eyes, he was able to change his position instantly and, all of a sudden, agree with the opposing party. It was a trait that I did not enjoy of Frederico's, but I guess I had to accept reality, and the fact was that this was the modern day of politics in the act.

In reality, what I would have liked would have been for Frederico or anyone else to tell us, listen, I know you're tired and unable to think straight anymore after these exhausting months, but we can all come out on the other side by offering just the

license in exchange with an investment. The government would still need to rely on us for the commercialization of the engine.

Unfortunately, this was not the case, yet the interest from the government, as well as EMI and the military to work with us was still there, It just didn't seem as if we were finding any common ground for the basis of an agreement between each other.

We built the engine the best way we could, and my father flew back to Europe on December 22, 2010. Regretfully, there had been a lot of tension between us with the obvious worries of further funding, the strategy, and most of all, we were just the only familiar thing we had, and we got so very tired of each other.

I asserted my dominance over the past year, and my father was clearly extremely dominant himself. In addition, we are both known to be extremely stubborn and, given the circumstances, this was not the best combination, and it was a recipe for disaster.

Chapter 49: People Went Ballistic

While my father returned to my mother and the rest of the family, my family was with me in Bolivia, and I had ignored the fact that I had actually become somewhat of an illegal by overstaying my allowed ninety days. I didn't even think about it. For me, Bolivia had become home.

With the days leading up to Christmas, I managed to take it a little easier, as no one was really working, and I didn't think a deal would be struck with the focus shifting to families and festivities.

However, the next few days changed everything.

Venezuela suffered from severe flooding just prior to the Christmas celebrations, and Evo Morales flew there offering aid to the now late president, Hugo Chaves.

Rumors said that Alvaro Linera, the vice president, took advantage of the absence of the president to enforce a fuel price increase by 80%.

I didn't realize this until my wife and I returned from a visit to the cinema and, all of a sudden, the taxi driver demanded six Bolivianos instead of just three, which we had paid on the journey there.

We assumed he wanted to rip us off for being foreigners, but he explained that Linera announced the fuel price increase in a speech at lunchtime the day after Christmas. We were shocked and outraged by this.

Apparently, the reason for this increase was due to the black market fuel that was being purchased by the lorry loads and transported over to the borders of Chile and Brazil for resale. Bolivia subsidized its fuel very heavily, which is why it was so much cheaper than the fuel in its neighboring countries.

People went absolutely ballistic. From one day to the next, they could no longer afford to travel to work. Most people working in the city of La Paz lived in El Alto. Transportation was no longer cheap, and they could no longer afford it.

I guess we didn't realize the severity of the problem at the time, and we tried to get a second-stage agreement signed with General Cueto but, from one day to the next, things started escalating. We had already arrived at the base with all the printed copies. We waited for General Cueto in General Agreda's office. I remember that he asked me why I was wearing a black suit (it was a moment to celebrate). Moments later, he

received a call telling him that he was needed elsewhere to deal with some pressing business. Disappointed, we left the base again.

Women in El Alto went to the streets protesting against Evo Morales, telling him through the television that they got him to his presidency and now they were going to take him down. Young people were destroying government buildings in El Alto. They would set tires on fire and surprisingly managed to find the strength to catapult desks into the first floor of buildings.

Watching these situations on the news were heartbreaking, and it created a real division between the Bolivians. The great diversity that Bolivia demonstrates in its nature also comes with a great diversity in its people and its mentality.

As we were meeting our lawyer for coffee in a hotel in preparation to go to the military base to meet Cueto, a manager stopped by and looked at the television. The TV was reporting the news of the civil unrest and the manager waited for a waiter to walk by to tell him what he thought of his people.

I wanted to say something, but I was so surprised at the sense of aggression he had against these people, that I was left without words.

Soon, I would experience the anger and violence firsthand when the taxi drivers went on strike. Those still working would be punished by being pulled out of their vehicle, held by their arms and legs, faced down, and beaten with wooden planks.

At the time, we had no other way of moving around and were depending on a taxi to reach the military base for our appointment. My wife and I started walking in the hope a taxi would drive by. More than fifteen minutes passed when a taxi drove by, and I ran behind it. The taxi driver stopped, but we had to be very quick to get in. Two men were running behind us towards the cab and they were angrily shouting something. They were obviously after the taxi driver for doing his job.

The driver just drove to get away from any danger. He told us that he was not sure how far he could take us, but he would try to take us as close to the base as possible by driving the back lanes. We saw a lady who also seemed desperate for a taxi, and we asked the driver if we could pick her up as well.

Chapter 50: The Depths of Despair

Having picked up the lady looking to go our way, we were discussing how bad the situation was and how we hoped the government could resolve this issue.

In previous days, the news reported that the military would facilitate the transportation of people from the city to El Alto and vice versa and, at some point, I did see this happening. I saw how there were big military trucks filling up with people. To me it looked like cattle being gathered and transported.

The military facilitated the transportation of all these people. But, it was feared by everyone that the natural consequence of the fuel price increase would be an increase in grocery prices. To prevent this, the military started baking bread.

We had a meeting with General Agreda one morning and, when we arrived at his office, the clerk told us he was not there. We called his mobile only to find out that he was sent to deal with the organization of the baking. This was something that absolutely shocked me, and it was also something that was clearly not sustainable.

Meanwhile, the strikes were ongoing. Bolivian miners, who live and work in Potosi, in southwest Bolivia, went on the news with their tools and rope in their hands making a statement. They spoke directly to Evo Morales, telling him that they were going to start walking to La Paz, and he needed to put the fuel prices back before they arrived; otherwise, they would see that he would hang from the parliamentary palace.

I could not believe what I was hearing. Threatening Evo Morales in such a direct manner on national television takes great courage, but I guess they had the numbers on their side. With the miners announcement, greater support emerged to take Evo Morales down.

Barricades were put up in the city and people would try to break through the police barriers and throw rotten vegetables. These were all things I saw with my own eyes and, if someone had told me this story, I don't think I would have believed them.

It was a horrific time in Bolivia and we found ourselves in the midst of this devastating situation somewhat selfishly still trying to push through our agreement with Cueto.

So, while we were driving in our taxi together with the lady we had picked up, the road to the city seemed clear. As we approached a slight incline in the road, which would bend at the top, we suddenly saw twenty or thirty people charging towards us with wooden planks.

I feared that they would harm us, and I believe I must have turned white as a sheet.

Our taxi driver panicked himself putting the vehicle in reverse. There was a taxi behind us as well. It was a moment of utter despair as we tried to get away before they could reach us. But, our taxi driver lost control of the vehicle and drove it over the middle curb between the lanes, leaving the car resting on its chassis. There was no going forward or backwards. We were stuck, and we awaited our fate.

It all happened so fast. They came and smashed the windscreen as well as the car and then turned to the taxi behind us that also got stuck. I believe they did nothing worse to us, as there were more vehicles behind us that they could entertain themselves with.

Finally, they had all disappeared, and I could breathe again. The taxi driver asked us to get out of the car to see if we could push the car off the curb, so that he could take us and disappear home.

Somehow, we managed to push the vehicle off, but I was still under so much shock that my hands were shaking. When I got out of the vehicle, I didn't know whether to take my briefcase or leave it in the car in case he did a runner on us. Thankfully, he did no such thing.

Despite the struggle with money ourselves, we gave the taxi driver an enormous tip to cover some of the damage, for which he was very grateful. But, this whole journey turned out to be a waste of time and effort, as General Cueto informed us that while this was still going on he had no authority to sign any agreement. He was not willing to take a risk that could possibly cost him his position.

Still shaken up by what just happened, we managed to get a safe lift home without any further disasters.

Chapter 51: A Silver Lining

Things escalated further on the December 31, 2010, and we didn't feel safe in La Paz. We fled the city to stay with family in Santa Cruz, where the situation was calm.

I had not informed my parents of the situation in Bolivia, but that day my parents tried contacting me on my mobile. I didn't answer until I knew we were safe.

Just before boarding the airplane, I opened my computer, put the Wi-Fi dongle in, and wrote something to them on the lines of *There is civil unrest in La Paz. We are fleeing to Santa Cruz. Will get back to you when we are safe.*

I knew leaving La Paz would change everything. I had very mixed feelings. I was sad and disappointed. I was happy to be alive but, at the same time, I knew that there would be no way the government and we would be able to come together after this. I felt that I had failed. Getting on that aircraft was combined with the worst mixed emotions I had ever felt. It was over. We had lost.

I expected to hear that Evo had been executed that night but, instead, at 11:40 p.m., Evo Morales stood behind his presidential podium and spoke on all national TV channels and radios.

He started explaining why the government implemented the fuel increases. He further explained that the subsidies cost the government too much but, due to the current situation, the fuel prices would go back to normal effective immediately.

When the speech was over, it was close to midnight, and it was time to celebrate the new year, but I felt like I was stuck in nirvana. I didn't know whether I should be happy or cry for it to become a new year.

We had achieved so much in so little time but, with Evo Morales and the fuel prices, it was clear to me that with this action he had lost all his credibility. For us, it meant that whatever we had worked towards for all these months had become worthless within the blink of an eye.

The new year was here, but I felt so empty and lost, as I didn't know what to do next to save the situation.

Several days later, we spoke to Frederico, who had traveled to his hometown, Tarija. We explained to him what had happened and that we had to flee to Santa Cruz.

He invited us to come to see him in Tarija and sort something out. He proposed that we do business with local governments, rather than with Evo Morales.

I didn't understand at the time, but I agreed to fly to Tarija to see what Frederico had to propose.

Tarija was very forward thinking. Frederico told me it had great problems with its energy supply. It also had great ambitions about the transformation of all vehicles to operate on natural gas.

In essence, we agreed to focus on our hybrid transformer vehicle version and to present it to the local government. Frederico was well connected, and he quickly arranged a meeting with the mayor's assistant, who would then set everything up.

As a result of our presentation, we would receive the greatest letter of interest of all times. It stated that if we would demonstrate the technology in the way we presented it, and it would turn out in that way, he would compromise himself to install it in thousands of vehicles.

The only problem was that we were unable to finance further developments. Of course, I wasn't able to tell them that, but it was the reality. We hardly had any money left to survive as it was, but we had to keep up appearances.

Chapter 52: New Financing

Spending just this short time in Tarija was great as, once again, we were able to gain supporters, and we were able to see another beautiful side of Bolivia.

Regarding the financing of the development that I had gotten very concerned about, Frederico had an idea of who to connect me with. But first, we would celebrate by having a big BBQ amongst his family, and the honored guest was Jaime Paz Zamora, who had served the country as president from 1989 to 1993.



Image 18 BBQ in good Company

It was a very interesting and exciting evening, but I realized that all this would mean nothing without succeeding. I would be forgotten if we were not able to deliver and, even worst, we would have no future.

At least these were the things that were going through my mind. I was vulnerable and more or less at Frederico's mercy to help us find the finances necessary.

Once we returned to La Paz, we would have Skype conferences with the person who was going to save the project. However, he was based in New Mexico, U.S.A. It was not

really a country that I was fond of anymore, but the desperation of needing funding drove me to overcome my emotional barriers, and I started planning our trip to the U.S.

I also reconnected with someone in Virginia, and we managed to get accepted for what they called the “grubstake” breakfast. It was a pitching event to potential investors, which I guess I was happy about.

This had all turned out to be a mistake and now, many years later, I reflected on the conversations I had with people like Colonel Banegas. He took a high risk to come to our house to pledge his allegiance now and in the future, as we had no agreement signed anymore and eyes were still on us that could lead to the conclusion that we were after the lithium.

I realized that he couldn't say it, but I think he would have wanted us to stay, and maybe he was a little disappointed, possibly thinking that I would never come back.

The Bolivia we knew from half a year earlier did not exist anymore, though, and even our greatest supporter, General Agreda, was exiled, as we would shortly find out.

We had called him on his mobile to discuss something with him. He answered and said that they just fired him, and he no longer had anything to do with our project.

As the second highest general, he was clearly hoping that he would be able to replace Cueto in their biannual change in control. However, the book General Agreda wrote during his economics study was found and became public and it was perceived to being offensive towards Bolivia.

General Agreda came to our house one evening for dinner to tell us that they had sent him to Washington, D.C., to conduct some diplomatic duties. I believe that, essentially, they just wanted him out of the country.

The newspaper drew the most horrific cartoons of him, and it was all because of false translations and interpretations of his book. As part of his military training, General Agreda had the opportunity to study in the U.S. The book, or more accurately his study, evaluated the economic benefits of Bolivia's coca industry.

Bolivia is highly criticized globally due to people's ignorance in believing that because Bolivia has a coca industry that they are also heavily involved in cocaine. However, the coca plant has many medicinal purposes that are not related to illegal drugs.

In the case of Agreda's study, it was unfortunate that some people wanted him gone. They found the book and had it translated in such a way that it would reflect a dark light onto his belief in Bolivia.

In all the time I had been in Bolivia, General Agreda was the most patriotic person I had known, and he only wanted what was best for his country. I still think of my friends in Bolivia dearly.

However, the fact that General Agreda would be in Washington, D.C., was a relief for me, as we would be able to meet up while I was there.

The most difficult and devastating situation that I had been left with however, was having to leave my wife and children behind in Bolivia without any financial security or reserves. Although this was not the first time we would be separated, it was never with so much uncertainty.

Chapter 53: There Was No One There

A goodbye never came more difficult but, in the hope that we might solve our financial problems, I went, followed shortly thereafter by Frederico. We risked it all on this trip. We used every last dime. It was a sacrifice that was based on trust and a belief in New Mexico.

I spent the first week in Virginia where I would prepare for the grubstake breakfast. This was the first pitch event that I had ever done in such a formal manner, and I was only given eight minutes to convince investors that we were the answer.

At the same time, I realized that whatever we might have achieved in Bolivia, no one in the U.S.A. would even care about it.

I took the time to meet with Agreda. He agreed that he would come to join us when we did our presentation. But first, Frederico and I would have to travel to New Mexico, where I was looking forward to meeting many faculty members at its university who could give us insight into our future development plans and financing.

To my and Frederico's surprise, there was no one there. Frederico's contact explained that this weekend they were not available. One was traveling and the other one was somewhere else. I wanted to say to him that coming to the U.S. to New Mexico on this particular weekend had been planned for weeks and now he just wasted my time, showing me around the university telling me how good it was, but I didn't.

We survived the weekend by doing a little sightseeing and discussing the project, leaving our last hope of survival on the grubstake breakfast. I felt nothing anymore. I just wanted to fall through the floor and disappear, especially after I realized that I had made a mistake with the return flight booking to Virginia.

I had booked the return flight for one *month* later. I may have been able to change the tickets, but all United Airlines flights were booked for the next day, and we needed to get there to qualify to perform at the grubstake breakfast. We were supposed to perform a trial pitch to two executives, who would make sure that I wouldn't embarrass the event by saying something outrageous.

I had maxed out my credit card completely, as our credit lines from the bank had been canceled. The last option was to call my wife to ask for her private credit card details in order to book a flight with Delta. As my luck had it, all economy class tickets had been booked, meaning that my little mistake had just gotten a lot more expensive. While Frederico and I traveled in style the next day, I had no good feeling about it at all.



Image 19 Final preparations before the presentation the next day

The night before the actual presentation, General Agreda came to stay with us at our hotel room. I went to this presentation with Federico and General Agreda without a penny to my name.

I don't really know why, but I had never been so nervous in my entire life. I even forgot to press the mouse button to go to the next slide in my presentation before I was made aware of it by one of my "coaches."

I did the presentation in the time allotted, and there were some questions asked but, in the past, we had been spoiled with excitement, and I didn't see any of that. People came up to me later and told me that they thought it was a great presentation.

Unfortunately, pleasantries would not get me anywhere. The only other people that wanted to come and speak to me were the obvious consultants who wanted to sell you their services and tell you that it was hard to raise money in the U.S. but, with their help, we could get there.

The obvious problem was that in order for them to achieve what was necessary, we would have been a lot poorer but, with no cash on hand, it was not really an option anyway.

I was naïve enough to believe that someone would get in touch with us and tell us they were going to invest. I would test Federico's loyalty by asking him to move from our current hotel to a nasty little motel. Without a moan or a groan, we moved into our new

accommodations and waited for the phone to ring or an email to come through telling us that they wanted to invest.

Chapter 54: Threats and Consequences

As the desperation due to a lack of money hit us all, my father asked me if I wanted to try to speak to Charles. As I was in Virginia at the time, and his offices were not far away, what did I have to lose?

I looked up his number and got through to his secretary. She obviously was new and had no idea who I was or what significance the name Reinhardt had. I explained to her that I was an old friend of Charles and that I was in town hoping to be able to meet up or speak to him. After taking my number down, his secretary said that she would convey the message.

A couple of hours later, while driving towards a restaurant with Frederico where I was to meet an old friend, I received a call. My first thought was, finally, an investor. In reality, it was someone who claimed to be the sheriff.

His words were something on the lines of, “Mr. Merger has explained everything to me, and you should leave him alone; otherwise, there will be consequences.”

Not only did I find it quite amusing that a sheriff would make such a call, when clearly there were always two sides to every story, but surely Charles paid for this service. The “get the sheriff to intimidate old friends service,” only \$99.00.

Trying to figure this out logically, I couldn't believe that it was anyone calling from the sheriff's office, as it was such an unprofessional approach trying to intimidate me. Surely, justice wasn't based on the fact that I could tell someone a nice story and, no matter whether it was true or not, they would act upon it. Maybe I was wrong, but I wasn't losing any sleep over this.

My only response could be and was “understood.” They hung up, and I immediately informed my father of this event. He did find it as humorous as I did, as it seemed that Charles felt more intimidated by my call to him than anything else, and he obviously wanted to make sure that I would keep my distance. Surely, he did not sleep well that night, knowing that I was in town, but what was I going to do?

In spite of this situation, though, I wasn't quite sure whether Charles wasn't willing to go that extra mile and track me down. So, I couldn't say that the call from the sheriff didn't have any effect on me, especially because I didn't believe it was a real sheriff. As there was no sign of any investment coming in, I proposed to Frederico that we call it a day, go back home to reassemble ourselves, and see where we would go from there.

The only problem was that my return ticket would take me to Frankfurt, Germany, and Frederico's ticket would take him back to Bolivia, where my wife and children remained.

I was worried about not seeing them again for a very long time or even worst effects that this long distance and our financial struggles could have. I became weak, even more vulnerable, and insecure. The effects of my failure, I would tell myself. My wife, who had always been a survivor and found great refuge with Colonel Banegas's family, which had a very strong Christian belief, would start selling off her stock of her alpaca designs to Bolivians at European prices. Through this initiative, she was able to secure the rent for the house and even pay for private school for our daughters.

I admire her for having survived this time in the way that she did, and I think that she possibly handled the situation in the best possible way, which was definitely better than I had.

While I was reunited with my parents in Germany, albeit sulking and drowning in frustration, my father conceived a strategy to attract new capital. We had no home, so for the first weeks we traveled and stayed in a residence in Austria while searching for other living accommodations. My parents never wanted to tie themselves down to one location so, rather than renting permanently, they always chose to look for holiday lettings. This was obviously a more expensive way to live, and the other drawback was that they would have to move out and find somewhere else to stay in the interim period if there was another booking.

My mother managed to find accommodation, close to where I grew up as a child, near Bonn, Germany, and my father somehow managed to get three interested parties to invest in the business.

So, one might think that things were progressing again and, depending which angle you looked from, they were.

Chapter 55: A Big St. Bernard and a Brand New Mercedes

As my wife's passport had expired while we stayed in Bolivia and her new one did not arrive in time before we left Germany in 2010, I contacted the Bolivian embassy in Frankfurt to see if her passport had arrived. My wife was struggling to apply for a passport for herself in Bolivia, but we hadn't registered our marriage there. For the Bolivians, that meant that we did not get married, despite registering our marriage at the Bolivian consulate in Washington, D.C., at the time.

Thankfully, the embassy in Frankfurt could confirm that they had my wife's passport, and they would send it to me. I would then have to forward it on to her by courier. However, my insecurity at the time left me thinking that they might lose her passport, and it would still be months before we would be reunited again, given that it had taken almost eight months for her to get the passport through the embassy in the first place.

However, my wife receiving the passport would not get her back to Germany. I needed to file for a special visa for her that would allow us to be reunited. Unfortunately, this was a very complicated process, because it involved the registration office of our last registered address. By this time, we had canceled our tenancy agreement, and we had no formal residence in Germany.

However, I must admit that the clerk was very understanding and eventually gave the okay for the German embassy in La Paz to issue the visa for my wife. They would be able to come back, finally. A sense of relief came over me, as it had been so long since we had seen each other.

I had left the U.S.A. at the beginning of March 2011. I then returned to Germany at the beginning of April. As it would turn out, my wife would not set foot on European soil until June 30th. They were some of the longest months of my life, as I could not count on emotional support from my parents. However, these were months that made our relationship what it is today, solid.

While my wife was organizing her return to Europe, things became a little complicated when it came to the transportation of our dog back to Germany. We had a St. Bernard and, although we wanted to leave her in Germany at the time, no one was able to look after her for such a long time. So, we had no choice other than to take her with us. We never thought that we would have to transport her back or that we would have to count our pennies, and leaving her behind was not an option.

This being said, the airline they were traveling with, which would fly them to Madrid to catch a connection flight with Lufthansa to Frankfurt, would not be able to ensure the transit of the huge crate from Madrid to Frankfurt.

As a result, I needed to get a vehicle to transport the crate as well as the dog from Madrid to Germany. I owned a Hertz gold card, and I enquired about a nine-seater with unlimited miles. The mileage was important, as I was set for a new adventure driving close to 4,000 km over four days.

My father and I drove to the airport in Bonn, Germany, where I would receive the keys for a brand new Mercedes Vito. I told my father that I would meet him at the parking lot before getting on the motorway so we could take out the back seats and store them in our vehicle for the time being. I would then head south towards Madrid. It was already midday or so, and I had to get some miles on the clock.

The journey down wasn't a problem. I drove and drove and, at about 10 p.m., I stopped at a truck stop where I decided to spend the night. I set my alarm for 5:30 a.m. The room was prepaid, so I could shower, get in the car, and go.

I managed to reach Madrid airport just after my family had landed and time was of the essence, as they would have to clear our dog from customs before they caught their connecting flight. All the officers at the customs office were amazed when they drove this huge crate into the terminal. They looked like they had never seen anything like it before. The crate was huge, and they assumed a horse or something similar was in it.

A short while later, everything was sorted after customs requested to have a look inside the crate, meaning we had to let the dog out. We quickly managed to put the crate and the dog in the car and, without even thinking about it, I gave my wife my credit card and my Hertz gold card so they could get home once they would arrive at Frankfurt airport.

Chapter 56: No Cash, No Credit, No Gas

With no further delays, I got back on the road in order to get home as soon as possible. Everything went quite smoothly until I needed fuel a couple of hours after crossing the French border.

My wife told me that Barerro's family and their belief in God gave her a lot of hope, especially when she was without any money. I was not able to send money to her, and no one in Bolivia was wealthy enough to support her financially and, as a result, she turned to prayers and hoped for a miracle to happen. According to her own accounts, when she was only left with 200 Bolivianos in her hand, she asked God to multiply it. The next day, those 200 Bolivianos (about 20€) were multiplied tenfold as she sold her Alpaca garments the next day.

At first, when she told me that story, I felt very guilty for not having been able to provide for her, but I also thought that she had lost it, as I was not able to relate to the experience she was having.

She told me something very interesting, after I had left for the U.S., and it begged the question of whether we were really meant to present our project to Evo Morales. Was it fate?

My wife met someone at an event she had been invited to. This person was also very influential and, through Frederico, was aware of our project that was presented to Evo Morales. Out of pure curiosity, this person asked her how much we had to pay for our project to be presented to Evo Morales, and her immediate answer was "Nothing, of course."

She didn't understand what he really meant, but he explained that at more or less the same time that we came to Bolivia a Japanese corporation wanted to build some kind of industry in Bolivia worth hundreds of millions of dollars. When trying to present their proposal to Evo Morales, the corporation was told by one of Evo's advisors that they would see to it that Evo saw them at a cost of \$50,000.

The corporation declined and executed their plan in the neighboring country of Peru instead.

I never gave it any thought that we should have to pay for an audience with the president and, clearly, what was proposed to the Japanese company was considered a bribe.

God had never been in any of my equations. But I know that people, who believe in God, believe that things happen for a reason and that their God would not forsake them. It was just like when we would challenge our children to overcome certain situations in the belief that through overcoming these challenges they would be great in their later life and careers.

At that petrol station in France, however, something absolutely amazing happened, and I will leave it for everyone to decide for themselves whether it was spiritual intervention or just a coincidence.

After filling up the vehicle with fuel worth approximately 80€, I also got myself a sandwich and a drink. I handed the cashier my credit card, and she swiped it, but then she told me that it had been declined. Sweat started pouring down all over my body. My heart felt like it had stopped beating. The only other card I had was my father's debit card, to which I didn't know the pin. The only reason that I had it was because I needed it to make online transactions. Of course, the company accounts were empty as well as my private account, as I wasn't getting paid a salary anymore.

I called my father and asked him if he knew the pin for his debit card. I explained the situation to him very quickly, but there was not much he was able to do. I remember him even suggesting that I give them their fuel back by pumping it back out.

The cashier didn't speak English and my French wasn't very good. After she threatened to call the police, I showed her my passport and asked if I could leave it with her to try to find a bank to withdraw money.

Of all days for this to happen! The credit card was only just maxed out and, as it was June 30th, tomorrow the balance would be deducted from the current account, and everything would be fine again.

I would plea to people coming into the petrol station to help me. I would tell them that if they could lend me the money, I could transfer the money to their bank account when I returned home, but no one was willing to help.

Chapter 57: An Angel Saves Me

My last hope would be that my father would find the pin number of the debit card in his little black book where he kept everything. I also called the credit card company to enquire about the available balance. Unfortunately, it was something like 38€, meaning the most I could get out of the cash machine would be 30€.

As you would expect, my father couldn't find the pin number for the debit card, and there was not much I could do other than go back to the petrol station and at least hand them the little cash that I was able to retrieve. I was once again in one of those situations where I wasn't able to do anything. I didn't have the money and, unless someone miraculously appeared to pay my debt, I would be stuck there until the next day.

However, the cashier was not going to wait until the next day for me to pay up. It was her job on the line here, and she didn't really look like she was going to be forthcoming.

Words cannot describe how bad I felt, standing there not being able to pay for the fuel that I needed to get home. At that point, I didn't even think about the tollbooth that was ahead for which I would need an additional 30€ or so.

The petrol station was getting quieter, and I had already spent two hours trying to resolve the issue. I resigned, and I didn't even ask people for their help anymore.

A car pulled up in front of the petrol station. It was an old and rundown Peugeot 206. I had nothing better to do than look out the window thinking about what I could do, while the cashier grew more angry with me by the minute.

The driver came into the petrol station to buy something, and he asked the cashier what I was waiting for. She told him that I wasn't able to pay for the fuel. He asked her how much I owed, and I think with the cash that I had in my pocket plus the 30€ from the machine there was only about 22€ missing, but she was not going to let me go without paying the rest.

He started speaking with me, and he was upset that I wasn't able to pay for the fuel. I remember him telling me that he was unemployed at the moment and looking for work. He was French but lived in Spain, as he was able to speak both languages. He wished me good luck, and he returned to his car.

I didn't even think of asking him for help. I thought that I would rather rot in jail for one night rather than ask someone who was unemployed to help me with money.

However, this man stepped back into the petrol station moments after leaving, and he told me that he was an angel from heaven. Not only did he give me the remaining 22€ to pay my fuel, but he handed me 80€ and said I would need it to cross the tollbooth.

I was close to crying and insisted that he give me his bank details so that I could repay him, but he didn't want the money back. I was so overwhelmed by his generosity that I did ask for his email address, so that when we were back on track with the project I could offer him a job.

I thanked him the following day in an email, but I don't know whether he ever received it. But, in moments like these, you truly believe that God just saved you and you are thankful.

I knew I would have to sleep in the car, as there was no money until the next day, so I drove for as long as I could, parked the car, and got myself as comfortable as possible.

As I continued my journey and tried to get home as quickly as possible, I probably broke some speeding laws. As I was driving into a tollbooth, a car behind me beeped at me. He told me that my tire pressure was low. But, at least the credit card worked and I could pay the toll.

The vehicle didn't seem to have a spare tire, and it was another obstacle to overcome. Even if it did, I didn't know how I would be able to lift the crate out of the car without having the dog on the loose running across the motorway. The gas station I stopped at didn't have any puncture foam for sale, so all that I was able to do was to pump air into the tire and hope that it would see me home.

Someone seemed to have thought it was funny to release the air from the tire during the night while I was sleeping, as the tire pressure held up. That could very well have cost me my life, given my excessive speeding.

Chapter 58: A New Start in England

Finally making it back home in one piece, I was so thankful to be reunited with my family. I found myself at a crossroads, however. On the one side, I knew my father would want me to stay in Germany with him but, on the other side, I had my wife and two daughters to think about.

There was no money to send them to an English private school again but, at the same time, I had no interest to going to Devon, England, where we used to live. It was not a technology driven place. It was more of a retreat for retired people, and I wasn't quite ready for that yet.

It didn't take much to convince my wife that the U.K. would be a good option for us, especially for the children. But I needed to find an argument and a location to convince my father that it would be a good solution not only for us but also for the future of the company and the technology.

We struggled to find a place where we could move to. In preparation for this move, I put all our workshop equipment that was in storage—such as our workbenches and shelves—onto eBay. Altogether, we managed to get quite a significant amount, and the answer as to where we should go followed soon after.

Some friends invited us for dinner. Their daughter and our daughter Kiara were very close. He invited us to tell us about a secret that I would now identify as the law of attraction. He explained to us that the failure in Bolivia was meant to be, so that he could shape our minds. We would not have understood when everything was going well. I must admit, I mostly pretended to know what he was talking about, as it was too deep for my spiritual understanding at the time.

However, I do understand the concept of helping us once we hit rock bottom, as this was the time when help would be accepted. Someone cannot be helped if they do not acknowledge that they need help.

We spoke about our plan to go to the U.K., and we were struggling to figure out where we should start looking. His wife responded by telling us about Ashford in Kent. It was “close” to Germany and housing was the cheapest in the country there.

I didn't give it much thought. I didn't even write it down but, despite my awful memory for names, Ashford remained in my memory, and I was intrigued.

Ashford was not only interesting in terms of the cost of rent compared to other places in the U.K., but the whole county was promoting overseas businesses to set up camp in

the U.K., and it was luring me in with funding possibilities for SME's and start-ups. It all looked extremely promising and opportunities like these were not available for companies in Germany.

I would find out later from a German grant proposal writer that in Germany 60% of all R&D funding from the state goes to Siemens. The remaining 40% is distributed between smaller suppliers like Bosh, who are key for the car industry. The smallest percentage then goes to the "little ones" who actually need it and depend on it. Of course, this means that not everyone gets it and only a lucky few can benefit from government grants.

Based on how the U.K. was promoting the opportunities, I assumed that it would be a piece of cake. Even the country's prime minister said that there was no future without innovation, and in the U.K. there was a lack of it. This was something that I had never heard publicly announced by the German government, while the same more or less applies.

Innovation is dead in Germany, especially if you only give enormous amounts of funding to companies working on "old-tech." It had always been our argument to ask, why improve a system by 0.5 to 1% when, under a new principle, not only could you increase efficiencies by >20%, but you could also boost the economy at the same time.

The obvious answer to the question was the lobby that controls everything. I didn't know it at the time but, once again, I was naïve to think things would go easily for us in the U.K. just because we had an extremely innovative technology at hand. However, at the same time, all our technologies could be identified as disruptive and it seemed that no one who was eager to remain in power actually wanted it.

Bolivia was everywhere! It is something I say, and what I mean is that all the corruption and cheating and favoritism that we saw in Bolivia first-hand was not because it doesn't exist anywhere else. We were just able to see it so clearly, because we were so very close to the government itself. In other words, I don't believe any country is significantly more or less corrupt than Bolivia, it's just the way it is being hidden from the citizens.

Chapter 59: Completing Application After Application

So, it was decided, we would go and investigate Ashford, Kent, in the U.K. and, if everything worked out, we would relocate there to restart our project and start a new life.

Even though my father didn't really approve with this decision, he always had his way in believing that he could not force me to do anything I didn't want to do. This is a trait that I have learned to embrace, as I too have found that if you force someone to do something they don't really want to do, they're not going to do it well. So what is the point.

Unfortunately, I had no passion to stay in Germany anymore. I also came to a stage in my life where I needed to slightly distance myself from my father. Some horrific disagreements in Bolivia showed that we had the same goal, but our approach to things was completely different.

I cannot say if that was just my inexperience, and I would be unable to say that my approaches had now changed or aligned closer to my father's. In any case, I wanted to replicate the Bolivia experience in and for Europe.

Coincidentally, the weekend we decided to drive to Ashford, which was really only a five-hour journey, our friends, who had originally advised us to look at Ashford as an alternative, were also there visiting family. His cousin's family lived in Ashford.

We all clicked instantly when we met them and, over the years Emeka and Ebube would form a very important part in our lives in the U.K. Finding accommodation in Ashford, though, was very difficult and, while I was making final preparations back in Germany with my father, my wife was taken into the home of Emeka and Ebube after only a few encounters. It was a huge relief, as not only was the hotel we booked disgusting, but we needed to be very careful what we would be spending our money on, and we really couldn't afford an additional week in the hotel while continuing to look for our new home.

As it happened, though, I soon received word that a house was found and all the necessary paperwork needed to be filled. I rented a van to transport all our remaining furniture to the U.K. We moved into our new residence on October 8, 2011.

After we had settled in, I made a list of who to email and who to call in regards to our project and its funding. Money was very tight, as the U.K. was very expensive. It had become a big transition for everyone including the children, who, for the first time, would have to attend public school and would not find it all that easy to settle in.

I guess it was difficult for children that had never left Ashford to comprehend the extensive and educational journey our children had already experienced in their short lifetime. It was a very tough situation for everyone, as we needed to make it work somehow.

Unfortunately, I didn't get off to the start that I had hoped for, as there were protocols to follow when I first spoke with a representative of the Carbon Trust. The primary products that I was pitching at the time were our combustion engine and energy storage. We had started to develop the energy storage in Bolivia in spite of our work on the geothermal steam engine and the increasing news coverage on the necessity of energy storage for the renewable power.

I completed so many grant applications forms in the first few months and the frustrating thing was that they all wanted different information, so it was not possible to copy and paste any of the existing content.

The time it took for them to get back to me was nerve-racking. Unfortunately, all my efforts had been for nothing, as all my applications were rejected. Comments on the application would acknowledge that the technology might be considered as a silver bullet but, nonetheless, the success story I was hoping for did not appear instantly.

Chapter 60: They Were Absolutely Obsolete

Out of desperation, I tried to find people or companies that could help me fill out these kinds of grant forms. The panel acknowledged the technological potential, and I thought I would just have to find a way to formulate the forms in a more distinctive and attractive way.

It became evident that the service that I was looking for was available, but it demanded the availability of funds, which I was not able to spare at this time. I met with the Kent based organization "Locate in Kent" who, on their website, were very outspoken as to all the kinds of help they could provide to companies that were looking to position themselves in Kent. But, after having met them personally, I got the feeling that they were not really able or willing to help me.

The campaign on their website was written to look attractive to me but, in actual fact, what they were trying to attract were large corporations who would set up an assembly plant in Kent to create employment. In exchange, they would be able to offer attractive rebates for these companies.

I was very disappointed in being tricked by marketing campaigns. It seemed no one was able to see beyond the one-man band my father and I were. We knew people would line up to help us once we were successful, but the help was needed now.

Another alternative that came up was High Growth Kent, which was a free advice service for start-ups to get onto their feet with funding and any other needs they might have.

This was at the same time as when Pfizer announced that it would be leaving its R&D facilities in Sandwich, Kent. Consequently, my assumption was that Kent was losing a big player and surely it would be desperate for new innovative companies to come in. However, despite the fact that I was advised to fill out a form by my adviser to submit for a 20,000 GBP grant to move into the Pfizer premises and conduct R&D activities, it all turned out to have been a big spoof.

The reality was that my application was never sent off, despite it having been discussed otherwise. But, it actually didn't matter, because I would learn later that this grant was made available to any company. The real hope was for the laid-off Pfizer employees to get motivated to start their own research.

It was getting more and more frustrating, as even banks were advertising that they would offer government-secured loans for start-ups and small businesses. But, when I made the effort and carried my prototype to my business advisor at the bank to show

him in person, I learned that these loans were not set for companies like mine. He wouldn't be able to make a case for a loan that needed approval by the head office.

For me, this was a whole new experience, as I had to get used to the fact that nothing was decided locally. Everything needed to go through a head office, which I thought was a huge problem. Before we went to Bolivia, I met with my business bank adviser and told him that I needed a credit line. He made the decision within five minutes, printed off the form, and we were good to go. We didn't have any securities on which he was able to base the decision. Instead, he wanted the business and the project in Bolivia to succeed. He knew the business and, most of all, he knew me.

This is something that has been lost within the U.K. My business adviser in the bank might know me. He might even remember my name, but he has no authority over anything so, his role, in my opinion, became absolutely obsolete.

I really didn't know what to do, as I was only hearing "No!" I was too proud to discuss the issues that I was facing with my father. I wanted so badly to succeed and deliver good news to him that had I found money to carry on developing.

In parallel, I was tinkering and building things and testing them in the conservatory that I had claimed as my mini workshop, but it wasn't the same without the access to machinery and adequate tools.

Chapter 61: Blessed, Grateful, Touched, and Overwhelmed

Not long after we moved to the U.K., I found that we were blessed with irreplaceably good friends. Money became so tight, as I had not anticipated that it would take so long to get somewhere, and it felt like I was moving backwards and not even making baby steps. But somehow, I had to continue motivating myself and keeping faith that my efforts would pay off.

This was easier said than done, as it was heartbreaking to know that my wife would have to sacrifice all the jewelry that I had once purchased for her, in order to pay the rent and survive. We also sold my watches and that brought in enough to keep us going. Selling my watches didn't bother me though. I was almost glad they were gone. I didn't feel worthy of wearing these luxury watches, when I could not support my family.

As a gift, Emeka and Ebube purchased a freezer for us, so that we could buy goods that we could freeze for later use and, in such a way, reduce our shopping bill. Something that we found astonishing actually was the almost food-bank-like approach from supermarkets. They would reduce meat, vegetables, bread, etc. to as low as 0.05 GBP. This would happen every day at a certain time of the day. We lived off this, as it allowed us to buy things that we would normally not be able to afford.

The first year in the U.K. was extremely tough, especially because of the transition that we as well as the children had to undergo. They were still young, but they were old enough to understand that a year back or so we were considered wealthy and privileged, in Bolivia even famous.

None of this counted for anything anymore, and it really hurt having to tell your children for the first time in their lives that they could not have what they really wished for. However, we were blessed with wonderful children who would tell us that they understood and that we didn't have to buy it.

Their response, which was so innocent and mature, would hurt even more than saying no to buying something. Looking back, though, it can only be said that our children endured our journey in an exemplary manner, and they have become better and stronger because of it.

I would discuss new ideas and arguments with my father through Skype that should make it very visible and easily comprehensible how beneficial the technology would become. This was the result of me changing my mind about communicating the responses I was getting from people. We would take these comments and turn them around. The responses would be answered and they would demonstrate the extended impact.

It turned out that we had a 200-page document that I was sure no one would read completely. With the help of the High Growth Kent adviser, we managed to compress these pages into a condensed and clear business plan of no more than twenty pages in total.

I would get the opportunity through High Growth Kent and the newly prepared business plan to pitch our project to the Kent Investors Network.

High growth Kent and I were working and preparing towards the presentation for the pitch that I hoped would bring our salvation. Unfortunately, this was not the case. I would have preferred the pleasantries of them asking me their questions at the end of the pitch, knowing they were not going to take it further. I felt humiliated and upset after I got a call from one of the investors, telling me he understood exactly what I was trying to do and he thought it was great but, at this time, the panel decided not to invest in my business.

I was so angry and upset, which, in the past, has always helped me to overcome challenges. The fact that they said no made me question why they said it. And, once that why had been identified, what could I do differently. So, I channeled every experience and tried to turn it into a positive for next time.

Somehow, and miraculously, we never went to bed hungry, and we would always be able to pay our bills. It would be six months before we would be eligible to apply for benefits (such as child benefit) yet we somehow survived. We tried not to discuss our situation too openly with people at that time but in fellowship with our friends, we could only express our astonishment over our ability keep up with our costs.

Without saying a word to anybody, we were going to be facing one of the toughest months yet, not knowing how we were going to pay our rent. You might be able to say that through divine intervention, out of the blue Ebube called my wife and told her that they wanted to give us money. We naturally questioned why she wanted to do that but her gift of 800 GBP could not have come at a better time, as it would allow us to pay our bills on time this month. All our sleepless nights were for nothing.

From the past, I was familiar with the concept of emotional rollercoasters, but this was an experience on a different level. I felt embarrassed for having to accept the money, yet, at the same time, I felt blessed, grateful, touched, and overwhelmed.

It motivated me to keep cracking and not to give up.

Chapter 62: She Never Thought of Leaving Me

The rest of the year of 2011, as well as the first six months of 2012, were very unstable for us and my parents, despite the fact that my father managed to pull more rabbits out of his hat by asking people who used to work for him for money, which they willingly gave to him. For some time, my parents were still able to support us but, at some point, even that was no longer sustainable.

Despite having experienced so many encounters, such as the guy telling me that he was an angel sent from heaven, as well as our rent money miraculously appearing in our bank account, I never enjoyed going to church on Sundays.

However, whoever I spoke to about these encounters would tell me that God is good and that these were no coincidences. I did start dreaming and having visions of me standing on top of a rock, with a large number of people behind me.

I didn't really know what to think about it at the time, so I just followed my father's example, sat behind my computer, and worked and worked. And that's more or less all I did.

However, my father was getting tired and maybe he didn't know what he was fighting for anymore. It was just too much for him, maybe not the work, but the pressure on securing his family's future. My father once referenced an Arabic proverb that says, a herd of sheep led by a lion are more dangerous than a herd of lions led by a sheep.

I could see that he didn't have the lion's strength in him anymore, and he became tame like a sheep. This was caused by another surgery that he had to undergo where they replaced his pacemaker with a defibrillator. My mother was always at his side, even though she had been pressured by others to run away while she still could. My mother is a good woman, and she stayed true to her wedding vow: I promise to be true in good times and in bad.

Well, there was no doubt that these were the bad times, and I was worried about my parent's future. Even if I could get the funding that we needed, how would they be able to reinstate the wealth they once had? Would my father be strong enough to lead a development team once again that could lead to the success that he wanted to achieve?

Hospital visits became more and more regular for my father after his latest operation. I felt guilty now that I didn't make more of an effort to go to Germany to see how he was. While I was worried for my parents, I somehow believed that they would live forever. It

was almost as if I had special goggles on that would let me see my frail father as the strong and dominant character that he used to be.

Through certain circumstances, my wife was offered a position at a cosmetic manufacturer in Ashford where she would be the first person in the company's history to be made a full-time employee after just three months, and shortly thereafter, she was trained as a machine operator.

Many of her coworkers were jealous about her achievements, and they didn't like her. They would talk badly behind her back, which at some point did affect her, but the main thing was that we had a stable income coming into the household.

As it was shiftwork, a completely new responsibility was given to me. I would have to start making breakfast, do the children's hair, take them to school, cook dinner, and get the children ready for bed.

It was not a scenario I was used to and, for some time, I did feel uncomfortable no longer being the breadwinner in the household. I may even have felt a little insecure in my new role: depending on my wife. As in the past when my mother was told to leave my father, they would also make claims that my wife married me solely for my status at the time. My immediate family would make the most ridiculous accusations and claims against her and us, which would obviously cause some conflicts before we started to shut our ears to everyone else's opinions.

Against everyone's expectations, and despite me having to rely on the income of my wife, she did not leave me. Instead, she committed herself to working to earn money so that I could continue focusing on our project. Essentially, she not only supported me by doing this but she also allowed me to continue supporting my father, who would miraculously be able to gain enough strength again from somewhere to continue working on different concepts.

Chapter 63: No One Wanted to Be Part of a Revolution

I remember that shortly after having undergone surgery, my father would need to go to the theatre again. They would operate on his heart and the idea was to make it smaller. I believe the medical term for this procedure is ablation.

I also remember that I had spoken to my mother the night before the operation to ask how my father was. Her response shocked me, as she told me that he was scared, and he cried. Maybe I didn't realize what the chances of survival were, and I didn't really care. I knew he was going to live through this, and I told my mother that he had survived so many operations already; he would survive this one also.

Something that I have learned over the years is that if you surround yourself with people who have no faith in something or continuously think negatively, their attitude will rub off onto you, just the same way you can motivate yourself by simply spending time around likeminded people.

This was probably why my father was considered unsocial. I believe that his "unsocial" behavior had more to do with him not wanting to be surrounded by negative people or people who just wanted to waste his time chatting.

I am told that now I speak like my father, I have started to look more like my father, and I have definitely inherited some distinctive traits of my father.

Needless to say, my father survived the operation. It left him weak, but he was so driven that soon afterwards he was back on his feet working on a strategy.

Naturally, my father wanted to realize the projects, but it became almost more of a game of survival. So, the only person that he was able to turn to was the one person who gratefully saw my father step down from his positions at SER. He and Merger were not friends and, as far as I know, they just had a political relationship that was driven by clients and software packages.

That being said, my father managed to reach an agreement that would secure 50,000€ payable to my mother bimonthly over a significant period of time.

My father fought SER's liquidator for a significant amount of time in the past because my father tried to stop any further transactions after Charles had pulled my father over the table. My father argued that the liquidator signed a 1,000-page English agreement within one week without having any language skills other than his mother tongue, German. It was my father who drafted this contract and at the time, it was obviously in my father's interest for the liquidator to sign the agreement quickly to sell Brainwear to

the U.S., but no one could know what Charles was planning. But, it was too late. The liquidator would not accept any liability over the mistake he had made and the things my father warned him about.

Now, several years later, we must assume that the liquidator must have been aware of the transactions that would flow into my mother's bank account, but they kept on coming.

This was obviously a good thing, as it was one last thing to worry about. However, my parents always managed to spend most of the money just in time for fresh money to come in again. This was because my father was still dealing with the issue of his sentence, and one lawyer bill followed the next.

Essentially, we needed to develop our project with the little that we had, which was one of the factors that our technology had to be inexpensive. Our technology needed to be accessible to all, especially the people in underdeveloped countries.

Our business model had always been relatively complicated for people to comprehend, but the deeper I looked into the markets of our technology, the clearer it becomes that our technology could be implemented without the need for a trillion U.S. dollars from the World Bank.

I may be German and by association I am European, but I had only heard words being said that change was wanted. Europe did not want our technology because of its short sightedness. I have accepted the fact that only the tiniest percentage of people would truly understand what I have tried to build with and through the technology, which is why we were finding it so difficult to find investors who would put in serious money. We were promoting a product that would lead to a revolution, and no one wanted to be part it.

Chapter 64: The Riskiest Operation of All

The time from our move to the U.K. in 2011 to 2014 went by so very quickly. We grew in our experiences, and we were continuously filling grant applications in the hope that at least one person would be willing to take the risk on us.

Acknowledging that the concept was great and that it would work was never the problem. It was more the fact that we might have been too innovative for the panel, but there was nothing we could do about that.

Meanwhile, my father attempted a new project with an old Brainwear developer, for which I had no understanding whatsoever, with the money he was receiving from SER.

At this point, it could only be stated that the developer's signed non-compete agreement that would restrict him from developing anything that was at all similar to Brainwear in its applications or capabilities had recently expired. My father came up with the idea of Triplevoice, which would give life to what Brainwear was meant to have become and not what it is now. Triplevoice was an application through which people could express their opinion on certain subjects. The Brainwear concept would then categorize any comments that would relate to the same topic.

My father wrote approximately 200 pages on the way Triplevoice was meant to work, but he was interrupted after suffering more or less from being made homeless. I told my parents that they could stay with us in the U.K., and it was arranged very spontaneously, just like that. I picked them up from Gatwick airport the same evening, but my father's health was very poor. He was sweating, and he looked so very weak. While it seemed that he felt better the next day, he asked me to take a picture of his arm that was swollen and looked infected.

In the following days, his health deteriorated rapidly. He became very weak and complained about the pain in his back. It was amazing to see how caring my children were for him, making him hot water bottles, and doing everything in their power to comfort him.

The deterioration continued, and we eventually had no other choice than to take him to the hospital, where they clearly had no idea what was wrong. They realized that he had an infection of some sort, but they couldn't identify the source.

During this time, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in the hospital with my father, but he was so drugged up with morphine and other medications that he could barely communicate anything sensible. It was a truly horrific experience to go through. Nonetheless, I would shave him and, to ensure he could stay in his single room, I would

have to make sure that he didn't have any accidents in bed. It was a really sad sight, as it was like he became an infant again.

The biggest problem of all was that the doctors could see that there was something wrong, but they had no clue how to treat his illness. Everyone from the immediate family thought that this was the end now. My father would not be strong enough to overcome this struggle. We tried and, finally, after several attempts, succeeded in having my father transported by air back to the hospital in Germany where the cardiologists and other doctors were familiar with his medical conditions.

It turned out that within one or two days the doctors identified the problem. My father suffered from a sepsis, which is a common infection with people having pacemakers or any foreign objects in their body. Basically, bacteria surrounded my father's defibrillator and that resulted in the infection. To ensure his recovery, the device needed to be removed immediately.

So, very quickly he went into his next operation, where they would replace the defibrillator with a preliminary pacemaker. The doctors wanted to replace the pacemaker with a new defibrillator eventually, but my father said that he didn't want another operation. He thought he was becoming a test subject for the doctors, but my father's biggest ever operation was yet to come. The sepsis had affected his heart significantly, and they would need to replace one of his heart valves.

It was a very terrifying time for all of us, as this would be the riskiest operation he would ever have undergone. Chances for him were 50/50 with him being put on a heart-lung machine to temporarily keep his circulation going. There was no guarantee that his own heart would take over again once his valve had been replaced.

Chapter 65: Pie in the Sky

My father recovered relatively well, but the scars that the vast number of surgeries left on him were clearly visible. However, he moved forward with his Triplevoice idea and a prototype was made in preparation for the German elections in September 2013. Unfortunately, it did not reach a representable stage and the letters promoting the app did not go out to all the selected people.

My father was never very easy to communicate with, and over these past years, it would become increasingly difficult. Either the developer for the app did not comprehend what my father wanted or he was unable to do it in the time that he said he could do it.

It seems that history would repeat itself as my father was getting increasingly irritated by further delays with the development of the app. My father believed that his latest project would be a viable competitor to any social media sites today, especially when it came to information that people really needed and wanted to know.

I may have assisted a little by making a couple of graphs, but the Triplevoice project was my father's newfound love, and I wasn't able or even willing to see its potential. My father was very good at coming up with things from one day to the next, but his dynamic thoughts made him move from one thing to the next very quickly. This characteristic did have its pros and cons.

I too was not getting anywhere in terms of raising funds. It seemed that everyone had turned their back on us. However, after having a vision one night of going with my heart, I decided to search for business plan writers.

Where my true heart and soul was, was in the aircraft that we had not worked on for years. We may have mentioned it and referenced it but, generally speaking, it had been abandoned. We were under the assumption that no one could see the potential of the aircraft, and it was seen as a pie in the sky.

However crazy it might have sounded, I went for it and invited a business plan writer to discuss the project with me. However, I was naïve and stupid to think that Kent county council would let me do it.

I was still stuck with the idea of getting the backing of the government in one form or another, so I picked an area that would qualify for Kent's expansion loan, which had its focus set on creating employment. It was something that I was committed to do, and I only needed about 40% of the overall capital. If successful, the loan would secure me with the majority of the funds, and I foolishly believed that they would encourage our approach.

I didn't want to develop a full-scale version from the beginning, so I developed small-scale models that would facilitate the transportation of approximately 10 kg of cargo.

Several weeks after we had completed our work and had started a different route to getting the remaining 40% of the investment through equity crowd funding, Amazon announced its plans to deliver its parcels by drones.

I wasn't really sure whether I should be happy or sad about this announcement. On the one hand, it showed that I was moving into the right direction and, if Amazon could do it, so could we. On the flipside, we now faced competition from a company that could easily eat us alive.

The administrative work and the hoops we needed to jump through in order to get our pitch online were wearing me down. As crowdfunding was new to the U.K., every other day new regulations were imposed, and I was forced to write one thing one day, and the next day it would have to be either validated or eliminated.

I would not be able to write a sentence such as, I was born in Gernsbach, Germany, and grew up near Bonn without being able to prove that this was a fact.

The jumping backwards and forwards was bothering me, and I was close to telling the platform that I would not continue playing their games, as it took us almost three months to get our profile live, which was not until January 2014.

Chapter 66: Transforming Nations

I didn't tell my father about having done any of this, as I thought that he would not approve, but things always come out one way or another.

I was working with my very creative and loyal graphic designer who was based in Germany. I always liked working with him, as I didn't need to waste a lot of time explaining what I wanted. However, after my father spoke to him about a graphic that he wanted to have done, his response was that he would get to it immediately after he sent me the new graphics of the airplane.

Naturally, I would get a phone call minutes later asking what it was all about, and I would explain it to him. Crowdfunding had previously come up in our conversation, but neither of us really believed that it would work the way that it was advertised. And, I was more interested in the exposure than in the actual investment. Through the exposure, I hoped that we would get contacted by someone who would tell us to forget about building scaled models; let's start developing the full-scale aircraft.

It was wishful thinking, of course, but some fake Arab sheik did contact us offering 2 million GBP, but that turned out to be spam.

My father couldn't understand why I was doing what I was doing—wanting to start small and work ourselves up with an established sales and revenue channel that would free us from relying totally on investments. I believed that our thinking might have just been too big for people to comprehend and that scared them. So, I wanted to present the bigger picture step by step in bite-sized pieces.

I now regret having attempted this approach, as it was not our technology that was the problem but the close mindedness and ignorance of humanity. I had used up all of our personal finances to pledge investments and kick start the campaign to attract other investments. We did start receiving investments of 10, 50 and 100 GBP's, but it was going very slowly.

Towards the end of the campaign, we were about 40,000 GBP short. But, our salvation arrived—an investor from Singapore, who saw the promotional video, invested and only afterwards downloaded the business plan.

We made it, though, and we had our project funded. I would have liked to go into overfunding to increase the available capital, but I was advised that that was no longer possible, which left us with less capital than expected, as some investors changed their pledge amount or in the end just didn't pay.

The same day the campaign closed, I had to speak at the Kent County Council panel, who would decide the fate of our loan application. I believed that it was going well, despite being nervous and sitting opposite twenty people who were staring me down. It was my job trying to convince them that it was my objective to transform the Shepway area by turning it into a technology hub. I had great plans for the area, but I was obviously not capable of convincing them.

Having previously met our Local MP, Damian Collins, I told him about the objectives I had set for the surrounding area, and I left him positively impressed. However, it was not enough for him to influence the decision made by the panel.

My disappointment was great when I learned that they declined our application. Actually, I was furious, because they couldn't see what I saw. It seemed that everyone was keen to make history, but nobody wanted to take responsibility over writing it.

Then again, looking back now, I'm glad they declined the application, as my plans would change later. I wanted to have a positive effect on my local area and, as the project matured, I set myself the goal of transforming nations.

My father went into the hospital once again, as his sepsis infection had returned. Regretfully, I was so consumed by everything that was going on around me that I didn't even stop to think about it. It was my father's birthday on March 11th, and I wasted the opportunity to call him. I don't know what was driving me at the time, but it was nothing good.

Their income through SER had stopped by now, and they would have to live with what was available. My father was not in a stable situation at the time and, despite just going into the hospital again, he was close to securing funding for Triplevoice. However, his infection shackled him to his hospital bed, as medication was pumped into him.

Chapter 67: The Stroke

Through an employment agency, I would find the software developer who would work on the electronics and software of our quad copters initially. Robert started on March 24th, 2014, and only one week later we would commission our PCB's for design and manufacturing.

Things seemed to be going smoothly. Shortly after my father's release from the hospital, I talked to my father through a Skype call I was having with my brother. It seemed that he was still drugged, as he spoke very oddly, telling us that he would soon be in top form again.

Days later, I would get very busy running around trying to get things organized, and I ignored the Skype calls that I was getting from my parents. I was consumed with wanting to make it and prove that I had it in me. I came down from my high horse and called back after my mother sent me an email asking me to call my father, as he wanted to know something.

My father didn't sound well at all, and I guess he didn't have the strength to communicate with anyone, so he had asked me if there was a way we could put the investors proposal PDF on the domain somehow, so it could be downloaded.

I was blunt and told him that I couldn't do it. It wasn't a lie, as I had no idea how it could be done. I wasn't familiar with WordPress sites or the way the current website was operating, and I made it clear that I was not really interested in that problem.

After hanging up, I regretted reacting in that way, but I was too proud to call back and apologize. That was something that I will have to live with, as I got a call from my mother telling me that my father's situation had worsened again, and he would be taken back to the hospital the next morning. I asked myself if things would have turned out differently if they had taken him to the hospital that night, but we will never know for sure.

The next morning, on April 3rd, my mother called me crying telling me that they had collected my father to go to the hospital, but he was already so weak that he said his goodbyes to her. My brother would make his way to Kent from Devon to collect me so that we could drive together to Germany. I was acting like an idiot, thinking about whether or not I should go. I didn't understand how serious the situation was, and I was being selfish thinking about myself, the project, and who would look after the children. In the end, it was my wife who told me to go. She took the following days off work.

I received a text telling me that my father had suffered a stroke in the ambulance. I had no idea what that meant at the time, and I didn't know what was going on. While waiting for my brother, I tried to calm my mother down. He had a stroke before, so surely everything would work out again? My mother didn't believe so; she told me that he would not recover from this one.

After my brother and I set off on our journey, neither one of us really knew what was going on, what the situation was, nor how serious it might be. At the same time, we didn't talk about it at all. We were more or less talking as if it was a normal day. We would not arrive at the apartment before 1:30 a.m., and we would go straight to sleep. It was a struggle to keep our eyes open, as it had presented itself as a long day.

In the morning, I saw my mother. She looked shattered from the long day she had endured. My mother and my father's doctor visited him during the night, as he was stationed in intensive care. She didn't say much about his status, and I didn't want to ask. I could see in her face that this was it, but I was unwilling to face the reality.

It would be after a quick breakfast and shower that my brother and I would head to the hospital to see what was going on.

Chapter 68: In My Father's Shoes

I was getting more nervous as we got closer to the hospital. I didn't know what to expect, but all kinds of different emotions came over me when I walked into intensive care and was shown to my father's bed.

I was informed that my father had a stroke on the right side of the brain and the stroke had paralyzed the right side of his body. He had lost the ability to speak. The doctor showed me the images of his brain and explained that all the grey patches that I saw were all affected areas. I saw the majority of the brain shaded in grey and could not believe it.

While my brother and I were sitting by his bedside, there was complete silence. I was holding his hand, and he was stroking me with his thumb. I could see that he wanted to tell me something, but it was impossible, and he couldn't. For me it was just so unreal. I could never have imagined seeing my father like this, as it was far away from any fairytale ending, and my father had just turned sixty-four years old.

My wife called me on my mobile asking me how my father was, and I explained the situation to her. Over the years, my wife had cared for my father a lot, as direct as he might have been, he would never tell you something that he believed was not true. So, my wife accepted the fact that his outspokenness might be hurtful, but she could benefit from this truth. She found it much better than some other family members, who would smile in your face one moment and talk badly about you the next.

I told her that this would be an opportunity to say her goodbyes to him, so I held the phone to his ear and, as I heard her praying for my father and speaking to him, emotions overflowed me. I tried so very hard not to cry and hold it together, as I could see that he was listening by the movement of his eyes. He was making an attempt to say something, but no words came out.

I told my wife that he heard her. Then we were informed by one of the nurses that they were going to take my father off the intensive care unit and put him in a room upstairs.

We were unsure as to how we were to deal with this situation with our children. If we didn't give them the same opportunity to say goodbye, they would be sad and upset that they didn't get their chance to say goodbye. My wife prepared the children so they could make the call the following day. They were such heartbreaking moments for me.

I wanted to go home and see my mother. She had told me that my father had left a living will for her, so that she could decide on his behalf not to resuscitate him. The doctors told her that they could operate to save his life but, for the rest of his life, he

would not be able to walk or speak, let alone think on the level that we were used to with his beautiful brain. It would make and leave him an invalid.

My father would not have wanted to continue living like that and, based on his brain's swelling, the doctors made sure that he would go peacefully and without any pain.

My aunt, who lived in South Africa, came to support my mother, despite her anger against my father for having invested all the remaining funds in an attempt to make the world a better place. My sister hated my father even more and told my mother that she wouldn't come until he was gone.

I have tried putting myself in my father's shoes several times. Without the support from your immediate and closest family members, how on earth would you find the strength to conquer the world? No one was able to see the bigger picture, and I believe that if, for once in our lifetime, we could have stuck together as a family, things could have been different, but this was not the way it was going to be.

No one in the family liked my father. My sister hated him. My aunt only accepted him as my mother's husband and, as much as my mother loved my father, she never had the courage to put my sister in her place, even in her childhood.

My brother and I loved my father, but we all made mistakes and, by God, I wish I could have undone some of them, so that I could have had one last discussion with my father, but I had lost my chance for that.

We didn't know how much time we had left with my father, so we needed to treasure every moment we had.

Chapter 69: His Legacy

It was important for me to sit by the hospital bed. I didn't want my father to be alone or think that he was alone when he passed away. At the same time, I was so cold about it as well.

I remember writing an email to Robert, asking him if he could carry on working on his own. I explained my father's situation to him and ended by saying something on the lines of "But it will be over soon, and you can reach me by email."

I guess I didn't want to let Robert in. For me, it had been a difficult decision hiring Robert. He was the most immediate solution to tackle the development that needed to be done, and other candidates were too far away to do the job. I had trust issues and, in addition, I only had one shot at this. I was able to secure investment pledges for larger investments once the prototype was flying, so that I wouldn't necessarily have to go through any of the scaled prototype development stages.

I was just hoping that Robert would be able to figure things out in time, as time was of the utmost importance.

A gesture that I and I believe my father still really appreciated was the fact that all the doctors that had dealt with him in the past came to see him. They obviously did not say goodbye per se, but it was clear to everyone that the end was coming nearer.

A concern that my mother had was that Charles, Vogel, the liquidator, and all the rest of the gang were going to be celebrating my father's death, as with him the truth would have died and now Charles would be able to sleep soundly again. Don't worry I tried to tell her.

I didn't want her to be concerned about them. I realized that she was obviously concerned about her own financial security, and she would be laughed at by the "gang" but, NO, that was not going to be the case.

Several weeks before and in-between my father's hospital visits, he actually gave an interview to someone who was researching Charles' new role with the corporation that purchased Brainwear. My father told him all that he wanted to hear. Quite an interesting article came out of that interview that my father would not be able to acknowledge anymore. At the same time, I think he conceded with the issue of Charles and Brainwear. In fact, my father was so brilliant that they had nothing on him, and the fact that Brainwear was not living up to expectations was proof of that.

I have therefore made it my duty to bring all of what we had worked so hard for together, in order for him to live on through it, and for it to become his legacy.

Sitting there by his side, I would start writing. I wanted to document the past, and I wanted to find a way to tell his story and make things right, because according to the German justice system, he was not free. Lawyers told me it was because his explanations of what happened, why it happened, and when it happened was so complicated that no one really understood it. But, that was just like him. My father would always over-complicate things.

I hoped to be there with him and for him when he passed away, but that was not the case. I left the hospital after kissing my father on his forehead. He had already become so cold.

Arriving at home, my aunt told me that my mother wanted to speak to me. She told me that we needed to make an agreement between the company and her so that I would not run off. Later, I would find out that my aunt had put her up to that. I was shocked; my father wasn't even gone yet and the last thing that was on my mind was to betray my mother.

It was me who initially helped my parents financially after their payments from SER stopped. My sister refused to help at all, and they were trying to tell me that I was the crook.

Admittedly, I didn't let go of that money easily, as I didn't have much. I didn't receive a salary from the company, and I depended on the funds to make the project successful.

Chapter 70: A Great Man Is Gone

We went to bed late that night, around 12:30 a.m. I believe. When the phone rang only a couple of hours later, it was obvious what I was going to be told when I answered the phone.

They told me that they were very sorry to inform me that my father passed away about one hour ago. I was in shock. I mumbled and stumbled over my words. The lady on the phone asked me whether I would like to come to the hospital now, and I didn't know what to say. I couldn't believe what she had just told me.

I called my wife after I started processing the news and then I started crying as the reality slowly sank in. I only told her that it was over, to which her response was that my father would be in peace now.

I felt so empty. I never really had to deal with deaths before. My grandfather, from my father's side died when I was about six years old, and I was too young to really understand what had happened. My grandfather had been sick for a long time, so I would only know of him from the stories my grandmother would tell me later on.

My other grandfather passed away when I was in the U.S.A. I didn't realize it but the day that I said goodbye to him would be the last time I would see him or speak to him. He would pass away several months later. I remember getting upset about his passing but the fact that he distanced himself may have made it easier for me to process. I flew back home from the U.S. to a big funeral.

Then my grandmother from my father's side was told by her doctors that she had turned sick and there was nothing to be done anymore. We had a really good relationship, and I would visit her regularly. She loved my children and they loved her. She, just like my father, would say what she thought but that was okay.

She would always bake for the whole family, but I think no one really appreciated her the way I did. I remember that my father would sometimes join us on our visits, and I know he loved his mother. She was a good woman, but he never took the time to spend time with her when he was successful and, ever so quickly, time ran out.

I went to say goodbye to her a couple of weeks before she passed, and it was difficult. She was a real part of my family. To me, visiting her felt like home. It was a feeling that I did not have growing up. My children only have fond memories of her.

My parents were with her during her final days and, although my father was never good with emotions, I knew that he was hurting when she passed away. My father and I

would go through the funeral arrangements. My grandmother would call me sometimes to let me know things she wanted to have for her funeral. It was more or less a year before she actually passed, and we could have made a greater effort to see her more often. There were many missed and wasted opportunities.

Both my grandfather and my grandmother reached a respectable age of 72 and 75 years, but my father was still so young, and we had so much to do still. I wanted him to see the prototypes fly again, and I wanted him to see the new designs and ideas that I would have.

The truth, though, is that my father did see it. He saw it before anyone else and even before me. He saw what it was going to be; he was a visionary.

That night I still went to the hospital to see my father. I wanted to make sure it was true and not just a bad dream. When I opened the door, I saw him lying there. With his hands folded and flowers in his hand. The effects of his stroke were still visible, with one-half of his face sagging slightly. He looked so pale, yet somehow peaceful, but I didn't want it to be true.

The following days were full of drama. I knew what everyone was thinking about my father, and I really just wanted to be with my family.

With great certainty, I can say that we have brought up our children differently and that, when the time comes for me to go, I will not be treated and disrespected like my father was by his family.

Chapter 71: Relying on Too Many Others

I returned to the U.K. on April 20th. The last three weeks had a huge impact on me. I was not and never would be the same again. From now on, I would have to guess what my father would have done. I would have to assume what his opinion would have been, and I realized that despite having spent so many years by my father's side, it was not enough. It was not enough to know him, because I did not take the opportunity to.

I felt a vast amount of pressure piling up on my shoulders. This was due to the fact that, in order to further negotiate on their pledge to invest into the business, investors were expecting a prototype ready within three months of which one month had now passed.

At the same time, I was concerned over my mother's well-being, and I wanted to ensure that I realized the project in the best interest of my father, so that he would not have died in vain.

However, the first flying prototypes did take longer than three months to fly and, while the weeks passed, my worry for my mother grew stronger. She was okay for the moment, at least financially, but for how much longer?

The death of my father made me weak, and I tried desperately to do things right, but some things became impossible.

I wanted to honor my father through a history page on our website. Unfortunately, the marketing company I was working with at the time talked me out of it because of articles available online relating to the insolvency of SER that would not shine a bright light onto the company. I became indecisive and let others decide what was best for the company, when it was I who should have known what was best for the company, especially because all the people I was relying on did not understand the mission behind the project the way I did.

However, I was too easily influenced and just nodded to whatever suggestion came my way. With the loss of my father, my self-esteem was the lowest of all times. I didn't realize how much I was relying on others, trusting they would lead the company to success, something they could obviously not do.

I made stupid mistakes that would not only increase my workload but also increase stress. We managed to get our first quad copter into the air relatively quickly, but that was not even half the battle. But I believed that everything would progress just as smoothly as our work on the prototypes continued.

As a result, I decided to host a presentation event where we would do a flight display of how our prototype could land on a container and take off from it.

We were going to invite the media, investors, and our local MP, Damian Collins, as well as other selected people.

Damian's only free time was the beginning of July or the 26th of September. To be ready in July was too soon for us to get as far as we needed, so I agreed for the presentation to be held in September.

Due to our successful crowdfunding campaign, we were fortunate enough to be featured everywhere and anywhere. I would give telephone interviews and respond to emails from reporters, through which I could channel the news of our presentation event, but all that the media really did was make me feel somewhat important again. This however, did not have any effect on the other issues that I was facing.

I was so silly thinking that if I had a picture of myself all over the news everything would be okay. I assumed the media would become the answer to my problems, but this was where my lesson started. It was not about the project or me. It was and always has been about the lives that we could change through the dissemination of the project.

I may have always mentioned that we were focusing on the developing world, but when I said it, I no longer really knew how I was going to achieve this.

The year after my father's passing had left me wandering a maze, not knowing my left from my right. All focus on the project seemed there, but it wasn't. It had disappeared.

Until today, I cannot say that I have had the opportunity to mourn over my father's passing. I did not give myself the chance to process it and just carried on.

Chapter 72: Getting Ready for Our First Test Flight

I don't believe anyone noticed the state in which I was in and, in actual fact, I didn't even notice it myself. Only now, more than one year later, having tried to analyze what went wrong, could I come to realize the challenges and demons I was fighting against.

It had been decided to redesign the fuselage in preparation for the presentation event, but I clearly had no idea what I really wanted it to be. I thought just making it look better would do the job, but I could not have been more wrong.

The design that I, just like that, pulled out of my hat, had so many design flaws that it would cause us many problems further down the line.

The software development was on track, and we managed to fly, but we were not quite there yet. We found that the motors and controllers were not very reliable and, instead of changing the supplier at an early stage, we just replaced them. We rushed into the design of our PCB so quickly that we found faults on these that needed to be resolved, and the list continued.

I left everything to the last minute. I was not a trained drone pilot, but I could fly the prototype myself at the presentation. But I was more concerned with other things than to worry about getting someone proper who had the experience to do it for us.

The day of the presentation would come closer and closer, and I can't say that we were making the leaps in the development that I wanted to. We needed to compromise and not have tilting motors, making it basically just a funny looking octocopter with a pretty fuselage.

We were so consumed by overcoming technical challenges to perform a steady flight that only at the last minute would we work and implement the connection for the container. We tested the principle on the bench but not in combination with the prototype.

Looking back, we were making such trivial mistakes that I would normally have thought of and dealt with instantly. I feel so stupid now for not realizing it at the time. I don't know what I was thinking. I knew that my father was no longer there to rectify anything that was missed. Only now can I see what an excellent team we were, despite all the arguments and fights we had. In reality, I was alone.

Nevertheless, we pressed on believing that we would overcome the challenges before the big day came but, only a few days before the presentation, were we able to finish our fuselages. We had made two, one in black and one in white.

What a disaster it turned out to be, as not only did we have to attach our motors to the fuselage, but the fuselage presented itself as one big hollow shell, which would resonate all the vibrations generated from the motors to the PCB and sensors, which became heavily affected by this.

The test flight we did on the aluminum frame two nights before the presentation was successful and, with so little time left until the presentation event, we would be challenged to overcome the problem with the fuselage. Very quickly, we would have to find out what the problem was and implement a solution. It looked like it was the compass that was affected as the prototype was yawing like we had never seen before.

There was no going back, though. We had run out of money and the entire cost of the presentation was put on my credit card. The only way was forward. We had to make the presentation the best we could, as we had so many confirmations for the attendance of the event, including a reporter from the BBC, who, in the end, did not show up.

When I decided on doing the presentation, I wanted to do it at our base at the Lydd Airport. I was under the impression from my meetings with the management that we were in a similar situation. They needed publicity, as they were still fighting for their runway extension. They were working to become a hub for national and international air travel in the future.

Our business plan was under review by the owner of the airport, a Saudi Sheik, and I believed that it would have been the right gesture to host the event at the airport for that reason. One hand washes the other.

However, Lydd Airport was so far away for people to travel to and my gesture to host the event there did not pay off at all.

Chapter 73: It Had a Slight Yaw

On the day of the presentation, we decided to go to the airport extra early to tackle the problem afresh and, hopefully, solve it. Putting things together and then apart again was very time consuming, and we only had several hours before the presentation would start.

I didn't even have my PowerPoint presentation ready, and I needed to plan for that while I received one phone call after another from people wanting things from me.

As people working for the airport would arrive and drive by while we were setting up to conduct another flight test, it happened. Whatever we had done did not improve the circumstances. We made it so bad that the whole fuselage spun around its own axis and finally crashed to the floor nose down.

The damage to the fuselage was evident, and it was clear that we would not be able to use the white version any more. Initially, we wanted to use the black version, but it was almost 1 kg heavier and, as the flight would be conducted around 7 p.m. and the sun would be setting around that time, the white color would have stood out better.

I coordinated the presentation with one of the airport managers who told me that we would only be able to do the flight test after the airport was closed at 7 p.m. Another manager later told me that they could have sealed off a section from the airport for the presentation so that we could do it during the day, but it was all too late at that point. By that time, the invites had been sent out and after the fuselage crashed, we needed every minute we could get.

We went for a parallel working strategy. We prepped the black fuselage for the presentation flight while we also put together the aluminum frame in case the black fuselage followed the fate of its predecessor.

The hours felt like minutes, and I was sweating, as everyone could feel the tension. After we had finally assembled the fuselage, we hung it up in our office to see whether it yawed madly or whether we could actually present it to our audience.

It seemed to have a slight yaw, but it was not as bad as before. We were sure that our test pilot would be able to rectify any errors manually.

I did not want to risk testing it myself and, while the aluminum frame still presented itself as a reserve, we agreed that the pilot and Robert would do a test flight before the presentation and without an audience to see if it was fit for flight, and then they could give me the green light.

That day I realized what Murphy's law was. I had never heard of it before. My wife assured me that everything would go fine and everyone would love the presentation. She told me just to keep focused and, considering everything that did go wrong, everyone kept their cool.

As I finished preparing the presentation just in time, we realized that there was an error with the projector connection to my computer, and we had no replacement. Our marketing guy tried to make it as stable as possible, but it didn't hold.

As people started to arrive and we served them with tea and coffee and some snacks, I was eager to hear from Robert if everything went well with their test flight.

Instead, he called to tell me that the fuselage landed badly on one of the propeller arms, and it fell off. He almost resigned as he said that there wasn't enough time to glue the arm back on. But, I told him that he could use a female thread that could be attached inside the drill hole and it would hold the arm again. They got to it instantly, while I was under pressure to get on with the presentation.

We waited for the BBC reporter, who said he would attend, but we couldn't wait any longer, especially if we didn't want the flight to be performed in complete darkness.

The instant I started the presentation by introducing myself and informing all the attendants that our MP, Damian Collins, was called to parliament to deal with the ISIL situation, the projector stopped working. Murphy's law was at its finest.

I needed to improvise quickly, and I started blabbing about Bolivia and how things came about until a replacement was found, and I could actually go through the presentation without any further disruption. At that same moment, Robert walked towards me and whispered in my ear, "It's going to be a short flight," and I nodded.

In my presentation, I focused on the damage trucks are causing to our infrastructure today and also cited some facts about the projected investment in global infrastructure and the consequential requirements of further investments to mitigate the effects on climate change.

I tried to go into some technical detail, which for me was easily understandable, but it seemed that not many people understood the principle let alone the benefits that a full-scale aircraft would provide, but I did make sure the benefits were expressed on a separate slide.

After I went through all my slides, with all my excitement I told everyone to come outside, so we could see it fly. I was extremely nervous, and I just didn't want to look. I was preparing what to say if it crashed, but there it went ... flying very briefly. I shouted, "Come on, one more." It was evident that it was not flying straight, and we still had some errors, but at least it didn't crash. What a relief!

Chapter 74: Finally, Investors Were Interested

I was obviously nervous about the different questions that would now follow. Did they realize we just scraped it? Please don't let them ask me questions that I was not fit to answer.

All questions were relatively positive and clever and there were no embarrassing moments, so I invited everyone for some cake as, at that stage, I just wanted it to be over. I answered all the questions, and I was exhausted from the stress and, with the cutting of the cake, I was finally able to breathe again.

People started coming up to me and congratulating me, saying, "I hope you make it." My response was always the same, "There's not one doubt in my mind," and that's true. I didn't know how many hoops I would still have to jump through and which lessons still had to be learned, but I knew that I would see this project through to the end.



Image 20 Holding the prototype after its test flight

The presentation was not what I had imagined it would be, and many people did not know what to expect but, at the end of the day, everyone left happy.

The following week, Robert would go on a holiday, so I too had some time to relax and take it easy, as we were still racing against time. It gave both of us time to reflect on the technical difficulties that we were facing and how we could learn from them and turn them to our advantage.

It turns out that the problem that had caused the yaw could actually be used to our advantage. After having looked at the root cause more clearly and by being able to control it, we would be able to stabilize and maneuver the aircraft with much greater precision.

Due to the fact that the flight at the presentation was so poor and it was dark and not clearly visible on camera, I wanted to fix the white fuselage and attempt flying it for our YouTube channel.

The black fuselage became a museum piece for us after we had all memorialized that day by putting our signatures on it. It has value to me, and I didn't want to utilize it for anything else other than that, a piece of commemoration.

We quickly moved away from the foolish idea of wasting our time trying to make the white fuselage fly again. Instead, we focused on the further development and implementation of the components that should have been included on the prototype for the presentation, which was the tilting.

I realized that the presentation and its preparations actually affected the development process, as without the added pressure and goal to have something to show, we were making faster progress than ever before.

I believed that, as articles about the event were published, we should see some kind of effect, as most of them would explicitly say that we were looking for investors.

Even though a video showing our fuselage flying should have increased our online exposure, I remained adamant that investors would come. We were surviving purely from money I had in a savings account that we got from the sale of a car.

I knew money was also going to be coming in through the R&D tax credit, which would give us a significant amount of capital based on our research and development expenditures. I met with my accountant to do this as quickly as possible but, naturally, everyone had their own priorities. I sent the folder to their offices at the beginning of November, and process should have been completed by the beginning of December. However, it dragged on until the new year, which meant that I needed to inject more of my private funds into the company in order to pay the salaries. I didn't speak of this to Robert, as he should have been isolated from the financial problems we were facing. I presume he did know somehow that something was going on but, at the same time, he didn't ask any questions.

Before the year would end, we would be presented with numerous investment opportunities that seemed promising. An investor, who attended our presentation event, was to act as an intermediary and introduced us to investors with serious money.

He introduced us to someone who deals with the investor directly, and we would meet him in our slightly cramped workspace at the airport. By now, we had perfected our tilting mechanism and made other improvements that we were able to present.

It seemed that he was not really impressed by it, or maybe he just had his poker face on, but he requested that we make a report and a video that could be supervised by one of his people to demonstrate the payload as well as the flight time.

I was actually not keen on the idea, as the propulsion system I had in mind was not available as an off-the-shelf electric motor. The batteries that we would carry would also not represent the power to weight ratio I knew we could achieve through the generator and alternate means of energy storage.

Nevertheless, I did agree to make something for them, which was something we should have done a long time ago anyway.

Chapter 75: We Signed Our First Agreement

I did not like what I was getting myself into, as the investor's representative was trying to convince me that their organization was making billions of dollars in revenue, and they would be able to mitigate any issues that we might have with the certification of a full-scale prototype as well as the engineering side of things.

In essence, they were looking to invest into the technology with a figure of around £20 million, which made me feel slightly confused. Accepting such an offer would get the technology realized, but without any guarantee that it would be utilized to the size and capacity that I envisioned for it.

We starting working on the report, and it turned out that during the meeting I didn't have my head switched on completely. The battery power would only be required at its ultimate discharge levels during a short vertical takeoff, after which the fuselage would transition into a horizontal flight, generate lift, and then we would be able to operate the motors at about 15 to 20% of their capacity, giving this report some sense again.

However, I kept mulling the scenario with these investors over and over in my head. I also met with the person who introduced me to them. I tried to understand what they were actually after in terms of equity and what they might have in stock for me.

It became evident to me that I would be left with nothing should they invest, maybe 20% or even less. My lawyers told me that if they wanted me out after the development was complete, the 20% that I might still hold could be revoked, leaving me with nothing, while having given them everything.

Even if I received a salary of 500K GBP annually under such a scenario, I would only be left with half of that after taxes. I would have no say and, with development not taking longer than 3, 4, or even 5 years, I did not feel it would be worth the risk. On the other hand, I didn't have any more savings I could invest into the business or any other offers. The investor meetings I held did not present themselves as any better. I was in a free fall.

I tried to gain some time by letting the other parties know that we were trying to make the video the best it could be, as we were talking serious money. But they would have been satisfied with any old video based on their responses. So, my strategy didn't really work, and they wanted to see something soon.

With all my optimistic thinking, I hoped that we would have the video ready by the end of the year for them but, with some technical issues to deal with, I had another reason to gain some time.

Eventually, we were able to make the video and send it with our report that would calculate the behavior of the prototype. But I was still not convinced that I could go into business with them.

My wife became seriously ill in October 2014 and was not able to work anymore. She underwent two surgeries in November and December, and it wasn't clear when or if she would be able to return to work. We no longer had the secure income that we had been used to. This situation made an investment of 20 million GBP look very attractive, but it was important for me to stay true to myself, the project, and the legacy of my father. So, without any other deals on the table, I was willing to walk away from what could be considered a very generous opportunity.

My wife also supported me in this decision despite the unsure future that lay ahead of us.

I was hoping and certain that other financial opportunities would arise while I was eagerly waiting for the R&D tax credits to be transferred to our account, as the bank account had been drained to the last penny. At the end of the month of January 2015, there was no money available to pay Robert's salary. I had no way of paying him as I had exhausted all my private savings, and I even had unpaid credit card bills from the presentation event. Surely, something was going to come up.

Eventually, I received an email from one of our crowdfunding investors who had initially invested 100 GBP in the company. After his email, a telephone conversation, and a meeting in London, an agreement that his investment would arrive in March was drafted and signed on February 28th, 2015.

Chapter 76: Desperate Times

We eventually received the R&D funds after not being able to pay Robert's salary on time. Relying on the fresh investment to come in, I also used the remaining funds to pay off some of the debts that had accrued, not leaving me with enough to pay Robert's March salary.

I trusted this new investment too much. As fate would have it, the investment did not come when it was supposed to. The investor did not respond to my emails or answer my phone calls for days, and I completely lost my mind.

It dawned on me that I had made a mistake, as I needed to pay Robert's salary in just under two weeks, and I was certain he would walk away from the project once he found out the investment had fallen through.

However, Robert stayed and the investor eventually responded to my emails after telling him that I was walking away, and that I had never in my life been treated and deceived in such a way before.

"Shame on you,

Never in my life has my trust been misused like you have done these past weeks. The unfortunate thing about it is that I had put my faith in your ability and your word, while now I'm the one who feels guilt, in trusting in you, who left me starting from scratch again.

I don't know why you called. Actions speak louder than words and, so far, all your words are full of empty promises ... you know what to do!"

The email was triggered out of true emotion not knowing what was going on and what was about to happen. I blamed him for everything.

In response, the investor assured me that the money would come, and he would deal with his shortage of funds and commit to our signed agreement. I would later find out that the banker, who dealt with the raising of the funds, was now in prison and everybody's money was nowhere to be found.

Not receiving the investment made me very angry, at first, as I trusted and relied on the word of this investor. It was yet another error that I had made, and I jeopardized the future of the project. I should have realized it instantly. He was not a serious businessman and nothing could come from it, but the hope that he would still pay up, when there was no other alternative in sight, overtook my emotions.

These were triggered by not having any funds whatsoever and, privately, things looked very troubling with only 20% of my wife's usual income coming into the household. We fell behind with our rent payments, and there was no quick fix in sight.

At this time, my wife was not only still struggling with her health but we also received the news that she was pregnant and, for the first time in our lives, would we feel so stripped down of everything.

We had nothing other than the belief that everything would somehow work itself out.

Somehow, things did work out. Our landlord was very understanding of the situation and tried to help the best way possible, while clearly being disappointed at the same time. Despite my wife having paid taxes in this country, most help was denied to her because she was Bolivian and not a member of the European Union.

Nevertheless, we survived somehow. We received food bank vouchers and we were able to supply food for our children. We tried to keep them in the dark about our struggles, but they probably knew something was going on.

At another time, we were blessed with a gift of 200 GBP that came just in time for an upcoming meeting the following day with our landlord to discuss the rent arrears. Additionally, we had the weight of knowing about all the debts that we had accumulated in the company and people wanted to get paid.

Only six months after Robert decided to stay on board, he decided to leave, and I can only imagine that time will tell whether this was another blessing or not. He obviously lost faith in the success of the project, and he probably lost his confidence in me most of all.

All my attempts to raise funding through investment platforms failed due to a lack of interest from investors. It was impossible for me to convince people that the company could be profitable within three to four years.

In my desperation, I even wrote a letter to the existing shareholders, explaining to them what had happened and what the current situation was in an attempt for them to come forward and help. However, not one of them responded to the letter in any way.

Chapter 77: Stage Two

“Dear Shareholders,

I would like to address you today to inform you about our most recent activities and events.

Since our presentation event on September 26, 2014, we were able to focus primarily on our developments again in preparation for any potential investors who would engage into discussions with us.

The presentation did bring the attention of some investors, who have approached us with an interest to invest a significantly higher amount of investment than we were originally asking for. However, the vision of this party focused primarily on sole ownership and a manufacturing approach to the development, which we, in the best interest of the technology, could not agree to.

However, in the interim period, we did engage in discussions with other investors, and we realized that in order for us to complete our stage two prototype, we would not necessarily require £3.5 million, if we accepted that this prototype was not going to be driven through a hybrid system.

Our second prototype will consist of a frame structure and a fuselage, which demonstrates an overall length of 4.9 m and a wingspan of 4.7 m. The estimated weight will be 60 kg.

We have successfully engaged into discussions with a motor manufacturer, who will supply us with highly powered electric motors that are capable of generating a lift between 10 to 12 kg per motor.

Utilizing this approach allows us to further enhance our software development, which has advanced significantly since September. Through a self-configuration approach that we have developed, the software is capable of being up-scaled to different motors with different configurations and larger or smaller dimensions of the airframe.

As a result, we have decided to extend our development through an investment of £100,000 for 5% equity instead of pursuing a larger investment that we felt would have caused more harm than good.

Both parties signed an agreement for the investment on February 27th, and we anticipated the funds being deposited in order to facilitate the development.

Unfortunately, until today, no funds have been deposited into our accounts and we feel very disappointed in having been treated in such a way. We laid our trust in this investing party while giving up on alternative investment opportunities, as we believed they shared our same vision.

We have given the party numerous occasions to transfer these funds. They explained the reasons for this delay and what the root cause was, but now, more than four weeks down the line and with great uncertainty whether the funds would ever flow, the unfortunate truth is that a line has now been crossed, and we will refrain from any contact with this investor in the future.

Regrettably, having invested so much time trying to communicate with the investing party has now caused major delays and damages in our development as well as the reputation of the company.

Consequently, a lot of time has been wasted. We turn to you today in a pledge for the above-mentioned investment to facilitate us through the development of our stage two prototype.

Please do get in touch with us, should you have any questions.

Best regards,

Thorsten U. Reinhardt"

Chapter 78: Done with Europe

As a result of having been left with literally nothing, we would need to change our thinking. While the situation that we were facing presented itself as significantly worse and far more troubling than any others in the past, we were able to handle it in a much calmer and more relaxed manner, as by now we had appreciated the numerous blessings that we had received that would keep us from drowning completely.

The little help that we received was not going to pull us out of the water, though. That was something that we needed to achieve by ourselves. Essentially, all we had was our faith.

We underwent a transition period, where we would be reborn to learn from scratch how we would be able to overcome our challenges.

You cannot help someone unless they hit rock bottom and, well, we felt like it was rock bottom. While we were unable to sleep peacefully at night before this transition period, we would be able to look at things from a different angle and sleep over it.

Although our financial issues were not resolved, we knew that we would be supplied for, and indeed we were. We never lacked any one of our necessities such as food and water and everything else that we could not handle would have to wait.

I started taking a completely new and open approach to things and stopped denying my father's past. At the same time, we would be presented with an opportunity to continue our development.

Despite my wife's health issues, her credit card limit was raised to £3,000 as well as the same company offering her an additional credit card with a limit of £2,500.

This presented itself as an opportunity for me to continue my work through freelancers that I had found online. My objective was to find someone who could take time to properly understand and design the aircraft from scratch. I would also look for someone who could help me with the graphic rendering component as well as a website.

I felt so guilty at not being able to pay our graphic designer for close to a year that I could not bear to ask him to do any more work for us until the debt to him had been settled. Despite the huge amount of money we owed him, he has been very loyal and supportive.

The limits on the credit cards were quickly exceeded, but I was equipped with not only a new aircraft design, but with nice pictures and animation. I had found new supporters in my mission and they had decided to follow me on my path.

I decided to go against every rule that there was that was not approved by everyone. I had sent the animation, that was just a draft at the time, to the marketing company I worked with in the past. Coincidentally, I met them in the supermarket that same day and, after they did not respond in any way to the email I had sent, I had to ask if they had seen it.

Their feedback was not all that positive, especially because of the closing scene saying “technology for the developing world.”

However, for me this had become my new focus. I cannot really explain it, but during the nights, I would consciously hear a voice in my head directing me and telling me what to do. I refer to them now as “open conversations,” as I would have concerns and questions answered to me somehow.

The point is, I was trying too hard to make the project about me and trying to prove myself. But it was not about me. It was about helping the developing world and, while it might be true that the World Bank and other institutions had a great interest in places like Africa to shine and emerge out of their despair, it would not be acceptable for Africa to become more powerful than Europe or the Western world as a whole.

It can be clearly seen as the Western world still tries to hold China on a leash and suppress its power, while, in fact, it has become extraordinarily powerful over the past several years.

I had to face it; there was no point in kissing anyone’s ass any more in Europe. Here, in Europe, it is believed that we are leaders, but those days are over now and, as a result, Europe will not be the first to see our technology take off.

This became clear to me after I had sent an email to all media outlets that I was aware of and that I could find, yet the only one who could see the potential and the reasoning behind it was a magazine called *Africa Outlook*. They have featured our technology on numerous occasions.

Chapter 79: Africa Sees the Light

Email to the media, in which I did not hold back:

“Good Morning,

I am aware this email is not what you would consider your conventional press release but, then again, I am not a conventional person nor is the technology we are developing and our proposal in any way conventional. However, I truly hope that you can find the time to read through this email and give me the opportunity to tell you about what I believe is a piece of technology that will not only revolutionize the future in aviation but will also have a groundbreaking effect on the global logistics market and ensure a better standard of living—especially in developing countries who are struggling on a daily basis. This being said, during the times sitting in traffic for hours during an active operation stack makes me wonder ...

... as an image says more than a thousand words, I invite you to view an animation we have made that describes the economic potential for developing countries, who are struggling with their existing and non-existing infrastructure:
<https://youtu.be/poO0JTl6TjQ>

I, Thorsten U. Reinhardt, am of German nationality and have been working on the vision of this project since 2003. In September 2011, I relocated to Ashford Kent, with my wife and two children after having worked with the Bolivian government on an energy project that got caught up in a political unrest at the end of 2010. Bolivia did not offer a safe environment for us anymore, but to leave was a very hard decision to make. The energy project related to technology my father and I had been developing, and we were working with the government with the vision to secure a better standard of living for all people in the poorest country in Latin America. Unfortunately, my father will not be able to see the success of our technologies. His life vision was always to ensure a better standard of living for the majority of all people through technology. It was a vision that cost him his life.

The decision to relocate to the U.K. was based on my earlier schooling background in Devon, and my belief that the U.K. was one of the most open-minded countries in Europe when it came to revolutionary and disruptive technologies.

The aircraft and its software that we are developing is based on its ability to take off vertically and transition into horizontal flight without the need for an

expensive and complicated mechanical tilting mechanism. Our first prototypes were demonstrated to the media in September of last year, after only having worked on the control software for six months with a very limited budget.

The aircraft, the "TU 523" is not only able to combine the advantageous flight characteristics of a helicopter and aircraft in one, it will operate at the equivalent cost to current ground freight transportation such as trucks.

My personal motivation is to see this technology take flight in the developing world and help them emerge, purely because of the lack of existing infrastructure and the lack of funding to maintain it, let alone build new infrastructure. A recent report from the Ivorian Minister for Transport states that roads meant to last for twenty years are only lasting for two or three years, which has resulted in 60% of the country's roads infrastructure being in a degraded state.

Furthermore, the global benchmark for road infrastructure efficiency is for 100% of the rural population to live within two kilometers of an all-season road. In Cote d'Ivoire, this would require a new road network amounting to 400,000 km, which no one is willing to finance. Even if money were no object, it would take decades to build roads of that magnitude. In the U.K., it can be said that to build one lane of highway for a distance of one mile, the road costs would amount to approximately £1 million.

My ultimate goal is to give this technology to countries like the Ivory Coast in the form of a license allowing us to continue our developments. For them, it would mean learning to produce for themselves. It would enable these countries to have a chance to grow economically and have a fighting chance to ensure better living standards for the majority of their people.

Earlier this year, at the end of February 2015, we finalized and secured funding that would allow us to continue our development. Funds were sufficient to allow us to build a representative 1:4 scaled prototype that was to be debuted at the Intermodal Trade Show in Hamburg this November. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for these funds to be released by our investor's banker, who is based in the U.S.A. We had turned down more financially lucrative offers before agreeing to this one, as we believed at the time that this investor shared our vision. Since then, we have struggled to find investors, as we have no capital to continue. But I have no regrets.

Miraculously, we are surviving and this unfortunate experience has given me the opportunity to see what an exceptional team I have standing behind me. They have decided that, despite this setback, they will continue to share my vision and belief in being able to make this technology work. I applaud their courage, and I am extremely thankful for their support. I would have dreamed of people like that standing behind my father when he lost his company, which, in its prime, was the third biggest software company in Germany after SAP and

Software AG. But I find consolation in knowing that, if they had, we would not be developing this life-changing technology today.

While we are looking for other funding sources and continuing our development, a turn in events arose when we decided to speak to governments in Africa.

Our obvious determination and commitment to our vision appealed to one country in particular. Our proposal for a “minimal” investment in order to facilitate the continuation of our development, as well as the country’s ability to manufacture the technology for themselves, and according to their demand, within the next five years, was received positively by the country’s president. He has made it clear that he can see the enormous potential for his country and Africa.

My team and I are looking forward to meeting him personally.

We are going through some difficult times, but this only encourages me further and makes me more determined than ever to say that we are here to stay. I will not stop until we have achieved our goal in securing a better standard of living for the majority of the people of this world by revolutionizing industry.

I thank you for taking the time, getting this far reading, and I hope that we can count on your support in achieving our goals.

Best regards,

Thorsten U. Reinhardt”

Chapter 80: The Younger Generation is Key

Aime Okpo, an Ivorian national, who has been a great support to me as well as the business in the past, could not have stepped up his game at a better time. Although we had discussed it on numerous occasions in the past, he finally spoke to a representative of the Cote D'Ivoire at the London-based embassy.

This followed me meeting with him when I explained to him what my objective was. Cote D'Ivoire has been extremely explicit about their plans to emerge themselves economically by 2020. At the same time, they state that 60% of their road infrastructure is in a dire state.

They are currently planning to build a dry port 700 km away from its shipyard and the capital city of Abidjan for tens of millions of U.S. Dollars. I explained to him that we would offer the country technology that would help the country help itself achieve its goals.

Despite the fact that he claimed to have understood, he did not hold to his word of writing up a recommendation. I quickly saw a similar pattern to Bolivia emerging, especially after I found out that the president of the country acknowledged receipt of our proposal that we got to him by alternate means, which he passed on to his cabinet minister, who was supposed to deal with further proceedings, but it seems politics got the better of things.

As disappointing as this might have been, I reverted back to my open conversation at night. Although it did not come to me instantly, while speaking with Aime regarding the plan to transport our prototype to Africa by transporting it in pieces, the minute I hung up the phone, I saw a picture in my head.

The picture showed us transporting the prototype in a trailer that we would be hauling behind us in a 4 X 4 vehicle. The night before I did not have an open conversation, but I saw myself in Africa, speaking to African people in universities and villages, and it would be the population who would understand the benefits of our technology.

I have begun to realize that what I am attempting is extremely contrary to conventional business practices, but it is very easily achievable.

I want to create opportunities for the people in Africa, so they no longer hunger for a better way of life far away from home. So many well-educated people in this world choose to emigrate to Europe and other parts of the world, as they promise themselves they will find a better standard of living away from their home country.

Those people who are not able or willing to do that might find opportunities with big corporations but, based on the number of people who will be seeking jobs, too many will find themselves with an education but no job prospects. I don't even want to go into the vast number of children who are not educated at all or not educated to our standards.

I am of the strong belief that through the availability of innovation and technology in and for Africa, the continent will be able to rise to heights no one would have ever imagined, as it will create new markets and opportunities they never knew existed before.

I am not sure I can achieve this by only speaking to governments. In fact, I believe it is the young generation that needs to be addressed, while giving the government the opportunity to sit by and witness the euphoria that will be created.

While some supporters lost faith in the project and fell off the wagon, others came and pledged their support. Mukesh, who is now dealing with our marketing campaigns, has been able to increase our social media followings significantly. Of course, there are several elements that have played a role in achieving this.

However, for the entire year that we had all sorts of media coverage from all over the world, we did not receive the amount of social media following that we receive now.

The audience is clearly making that difference and, although it has taken me a very long time to understand it, the mentality of the developing world offers far more imagination than that of the Western world. That is why these are the people who are capable of visualizing the technology, and they can see the potential change that it might have upon them.

Chapter 81: David and Goliath

We should all follow our hearts in what we do, so that we may have the opportunity to fulfill a purpose in life. I realize that a lot of people that I have met and spoken to are not aware of their purpose. They just tag along with their life. This applies to religious and non-religious people, and finding your purpose is not an easy task.

After all these years, I cannot say that I could tell you what my purpose in life was. I could probably have come out with some marketing blurb such as “change the world” or something like that. In actual fact, when people asked me what it was that I was doing, I would respond by saying, “I’m trying to save the world.” As much as this statement may be true, it does not define my purpose in life; it just touches the surface.

With the technology at hand and already having ideas and visions for new technologies that will form part of the future, many challenges can be addressed and, as much as I have always wanted to make a difference in the world, especially in the developing world, I can now finally say that I know how.

I have seen a lot of poverty throughout my travels in the world and, for some reason, it was always something that touched me. I never quite understood why poverty still exists to the extent that we are able to see it, with the millionaires and billionaires of the world making donations and working through their charities to try to solve different aspects, whether it's medical or starvation related.

I never thought that they had given away enough of their wealth and, despite their pledge to give 90% of their wealth away after their passing, this might still take thirty years and is money really the issue?

I have mulled over and calculated and recalculated the opportunities developing countries would have through an unconventional way of licensing our technology to them, so that they could have the opportunity to develop their own industries, train people, and become pioneers in the future of energy generation and means of transportation. In my visions, I have seen the prosperity that it might bring to these countries that would bring greater equality to the world without the necessity of trillions of dollars being funded by the World Bank.

If every country were to invest in an assembly plant for themselves for about 20 to 30 million U.S. dollars, which considering the amount budgeted for their infrastructure and growth plan is miniscule, they would be able to see a return on this investment within three years' time, catapulting them into a whole new state of mind.

I understand that it is not as easy as it sounds, and it would require extensive planning and a more in-depth explanation as to why our technology would be able to catapult these countries' economies into a better place. The point is that with the will there is a way to enforce change. We, as a whole, just have to want it, and I feel that in the past we have faced much resistance not only because they didn't want change to happen but also because it was a game of *power* and who really rules the world. It is no secret that corporations have an enormous amount of influence over politics and legislations and the way our lives are controlled.

That is why I say that I never want to become another Siemens. I name Siemens as they are in the energy generation business and not because I am accusing them of anything. Nowadays, Siemens is so big that they own and do nearly everything. Surely, the company's founder, Werner von Siemens, did not have in mind for the company what it has become now.

I know of many corporations that have bought out inventors for their patents, so that they would never be realized, which is counterproductive if we really want to make a change in the world, to tackle climate change, and many other issues that is affecting every one of us.

Coming to realize that, I was not sure of how we could ever make it against such giant tyrants that would rather destroy us than see us succeed, but I have come to realize that I am not alone in this battle of David versus Goliath.

It is known that David was advised to use a sword and shield for the fight against Goliath, but he had clear instructions from God to utilize the weapon he was most knowledgeable and familiar with, his slingshot. Of course, we all know how this story ended, but with every battle that David fought, he consulted God to advise him whether to attack or not and, if so, how he should do it.

However, even David had years to wait until his time to be King had come. Against everyone's expectations, as he was a shepherd and he had no royal blood, he would rule the kingdom.

I am ready to take on the fight with Goliath now. I have my direction that will lead not only us to victory but will also put away the developing world's shackles and limitations that are forced upon them.

Chapter 82: My Vision

The story of Joseph is also one that I have learned to relate to, and it would continuously give me hope and strength to fight on in the seemingly never-ending battle.

Joseph had visions where he saw that his brothers would kneel before him, as he would become a person of significance. I believe his father favored Joseph and his two brothers grew increasingly jealous of him—so much so, that one day they would sell him as a slave.

From one day to the next, Joseph's life would change, and he was no longer under the protection of his father. He was transported far away from his home, and he had to accept his fate of no longer being a free man.

As a result, Joseph saw some dark days and almost gave up any hope until he was catapulted up the ranks and became in charge of all the land in Egypt. This was because of Joseph's gift to interpret dreams, and he was able to interpret the pharaoh's dreams that no one else could.

The point is that however dull and dark our situation may seem, there is a reason behind it, and although we cannot recognize it at the time, good things will come out of it at the end. The important thing is to never lose hope and give up.

Joseph, just like David, was not royal, yet the gift that was given to him saw Egypt through the seven years of drought and shortage, which resulted in him saving so many people from starvation.

It is always easy to give up when things are looking hopeless, but we must not give in to these temptations. Don't give in to any discouraging words and instead value those that have been encouraging.

It seems to be a human flaw in that it is easy to complain about the criticism we may receive, but we are unable to value any of the blessings and credits that we are given.

A vision that I have had on a number of occasions was very similar to the story of Moses. He endured forty years of drought before he could finally lead his people out of Egypt.

However, I was recently told an interesting aspect of his story. Moses had a temper, and if he had not killed the Egyptian soldier, he would have had the opportunity and power to free his people without having to flee Egypt and live as a shepherd for the rest of his days.

So he too, was stripped of all that he had and valued before he was able to fulfill his purpose.

I have only ever told a handful of people about the vision that I have had relating to this story, as it seemed so unreal and unbelievable for anyone who has not had the same experience. I am aware that people think of me as being crazy, and I anticipated that my vision would give craziness a whole new meaning. I almost feared that I would end up in a mental institution.

However, I have decided to disclose it now, as I have come to realize that the right people for me and the project will come to me and all those who want to claim that I'm crazy are more than free to, as they will not be or become an asset to the realization of the project.

Some of those people, who have not declared me as crazy and have proven themselves as a valuable asset, are already standing behind me, and I am certain more people will follow in due course. At this present moment, all my requirements have been met. I have mentally prepared for our strategy for Africa, where I will be successful. In my vision, I have seen myself standing in front of a river. Behind me stands a huge crowd of people. These people happen to be black.

On our side of the river, there is darkness, while on the other side I could see what could only be described as the Promised Land situated in the brightest light, all green and beautiful.

In this vision, as I would raise my arm, the water of the river would split giving us clear passage onto the bright side of the river.

I have had visions on several occasions where I would see myself standing behind a university podium talking to my audience who would be inspired by the dreams they had that could finally come true.

We cannot always calculate what is going to happen in the future, and that makes life so exciting. I have learned through a very painful process that worrying too much is just going to make me ill. I just continue walking the path in front of me that will eventually lead me to where I am supposed to be.

Worrying about things will not make my life any easier, but it will make my life miserable, and I will not be able to see and appreciate the blessings that are right in front of my eyes.

Chapter 83: The Purpose in Life

Standing naked and reborn in front of you, I can now say that I am ready for all that life may throw at me, and I am proud of who I have become throughout the process. I am especially grateful for the guidance my father gave me and the support and love from my family that has always kept me going along the difficult and stony path that, at times, seemed so senseless. However, as I matured, I have learned to understand the lessons to be learnt from all the challenges that stood in my way.

The decade-long journey guided me to my current state of mind, giving me the faith that I would need to lead Africa out of its bounding limitations. It is facing the masters that are depressing it.

So, to reiterate, my purpose in life is to liberate the suppression of the developing world by offering them our technology in an unconventional way so that the current and future generations of these countries can be presented with great opportunities that will consequently lead to these countries' economic success making them as powerful as the Western world. This will finally stop children from starving and dying from diseases that has been a result of their poverty. The world that I see is based on equality, something so little that people truly seek, yet it stands as the foundation of the survival of our world.

Despite the fact that my father was not a man of great religious faith, after Charles betrayed him, he often referred to his resemblance with Jesus, who gave his life for the people and was later resurrected.

I never dared to ask why he would do that, but I know that, like me, he would have visions that would direct and guide him along the way.

My father did not expect to wake up from every one of his very dangerous and complex surgeries that he had to undergo over the years. I believe that despite his logically driven brain, he could see and appreciate the miracles that essentially blessed him with life.

Once he overcame his first stroke, which led to his speaking and reading impairment, he identified it as his first rebirth, and that led him to refer to Jesus for the first time that I knew of. Never before had God or Jesus come up in any discussion, and I was unable to comprehend what was driving him to do so. As people might now look at me as crazy, I thought of him as being crazy to write about rebirth and his resemblance to Jesus. Only now have I learned to appreciate the gift that was given to my father, which will live on through his legacy of being one of the greatest visionaries known to man.

He will always be remembered for who he was by the family members who could see and appreciate the value that he would bring to humanity.

Chapter 84: Ghana

My youngest daughter was born on September 25th, and I am now able to appreciate the quiet time that I have been presented with. Unfortunately, with my previous children, I did not take the opportunity to spend time with them, as I was always focused on work, primarily trying to make everything work out.



Image 21 Happy family welcomes new member, Gianna Alia

The problem with that is that at the end it still didn't work out the way that I had imagined. I was in a different state of mind and left the responsibility of bringing up the children with my wife. Maybe it was a very old fashioned and conservative approach, but throughout our years in the U.K. since 2011, I would adapt and become far closer to my children.

I believe they will all achieve great things in their lifetime, and I am very proud of their day-to-day achievements.

I am continuously trying to appreciate every day for what it might have in store for me. I appreciate every moment that I am able to spend with my family as, in the near future, I will become very busy again with new opportunities down the line that will result in the long awaited realization of the project.

I have taken the past year to reflect on the situations and circumstances that, with the right approach, have resulted in a great motivational tool through which I have been able to find the way to the future.

A lot of my time will be spent abroad, miles away from my family, but this will serve its purpose of not only offering us a different life but also for all those other lives that I have attempted to touch.

It's a funny thing with new opportunities; you never know where they might come from. Despite the fact that you might hope the outcome from a meeting would have been different, it still teaches you a great deal.

Very recently, with us still having no funds to continue our development, I got a request to present our project to a former Ghanaian presidential minister, from whom we have been expecting to hear for quite some time. The request to present our project to him and his constituency came at the very last minute. We received the news on Monday morning— the presentation was to be on Tuesday!

I had expected great things to come out of this meeting, and indeed they did, but not to the extent that I had expected. The meeting did not present me with financial security, but it did validate everything I had written previously in this book.

Aime, who was in direct contact with this minister, arrived at the meeting location very early, while I was still making some last changes to the PowerPoint presentation. He informed me that the meeting was taking place at a personal residence, which came as a great surprise to me, yet I had no doubt that something positive would come out of this meeting.

I arrived an hour early to go through several things regarding the presentation (Aime was already there in his car waiting), when in the corner of my eye I saw a gentleman across the street looking at us. I presume he was trying to catch our attention, but I was focused on other things at the time. Some time later, the Ghanaian minister stepped outside with a big smile on his face. As Aime wound down his window, he apologized over and over again, and I asked him what he was apologizing for. It all seemed very

strange, and we told them that we would be with them shortly. The meeting was scheduled for 12:30, yet they thought they could attend at an earlier time because of some incomprehensible reason.

I had a bad feeling about this minister but, in our own time, we went to knock on the door after protecting us with some anointing oil. We were taken through the house, into the garden, and back into some kind of guesthouse. A bunch of people were sitting together around a table.

After all the introductions were made, I whizzed through the presentation that had raised obvious questions. I thought it was rather odd that children and a grandmother came to view the presentation. It was all so very informal, and I understood from that moment on that whatever I had envisioned for the outcome of the meeting, it would not be met.

I had done my research on this minister, and I didn't realize at the time what his resume of spending a lot of time in the U.K. and in Germany would have on his vision for Ghana.

It all became clear to me after I reflected upon the presentation, while driving back home in my car. Only one of the ten people present understood what I was talking about during the presentation, and he was the only person who had travelled from his home country, India, to attend the meeting.

I tried to engage in a conversation with the minister, which was very difficult, as getting a direct response from him was an impossibility. I asked him if he was still involved in politics to which his response was something on the lines of he was part of the party's opposition, which actually didn't mean anything to me, or at least I didn't realize what he wanted to tell me with that. I managed to get him to tell me that he was waiting for the current president to make the slightest mistake so he would have a chance to run for president in the upcoming elections in November 2016. My only thought was "God help Ghana if he gets elected."

The Indian gentleman had traveled all the way from India, which he calls his home. The reason why it seems he was the only who may have understood what I was trying to achieve was because he knows the state in which India is in. He came up to me and told me that he would try his very best to convince his company to acquire a license from us. There may be very rich companies and individuals in India, but there are still a vast number of people living below the poverty line. So, I believe he saw the solution to the problem and the need for change.

In respect to everyone else, I believe that the mentality of those living in Ghana had a European mindset that drove them to acquire power over real change.

It is difficult to acknowledge that what I call true innovation, which is innovation that is revolutionary and life changing, has not been seen for decades and can really only be seen by the way Microsoft enabled a clear path for the personal computer today.

True innovation is what will drive the future economies of the developing world, but this is not possible with today's European mindset.

It is my opinion that what the minister was trying to achieve was to increase his influence and power, to raise himself up, without a true commitment to better the life of his Ghanaian countrymen. It presents itself as a problem, as this kind of selfishness—or maybe just blindness—will leave those countries toddling along with a small economic growth.

It takes vision to grow the economy at twice the accelerated rate, which I have to realize not many people have the capability of, or are not willing to take the risk for.

I therefore conclude from this meeting that people work for their own agenda in order to empower themselves. What they have not realized is that, without having to try too hard, their empowerment would be automatic with the use of true innovation.

The only way that I can ever see developing countries emerging from the current economic climate is to acknowledge exactly that and take a very small risk that will carry fruits for them within a very short period of time.

I would like to leave by saying that this meeting has once again validated that, for me, only the developing countries have the capability to see what could be, and that it has once again validated my beliefs that have been documented in this work.

Through this meeting, I have been able to look at different avenues that will lead to the continuation and success of this project, and I am happy to say that these avenues have proven themselves extremely fruitful for myself, my family, and the business.

Chapter 85: Final Chapter – The Old Testament

With the year 2015 came to an end, a new chapter began, or at least that is how we perceived it. Nothing really changes between that one second that led us to the new year but, for so many years, I have been telling myself that this year is going to be a great and better year.

The truth of the matter is that every year has been different, and I cannot say that any of them were better or worse than others. The year my father died came to me with a great loss.

The year 2015 could be perceived as not being very kind to me. However, with the steps that I have been able to take over the past year, I can now translate them into reality. I can say that my mental state is not the same as that of last year, and that so many things I have learned and experienced over the course of the past decade will eventually lead me back to prosperity.

However, this prosperity will not only be for me and my family. Through the lessons that I have been taught during these past struggling years, I have learned that prosperity for me will mean nothing without seeing others prosper as well.

I can confirm that despite 2015 having been a rather tough year for my family and me. Within this short year, I gained more supporters and followers than in the entire time since starting this project in 2003. And these supporters are waiting for the change that they have bought into by deciding to support me.

The drastic change that is necessary to save humanity and prevent wars and deaths is very easily achievable, if there is a choice of true and honest democracy.

Nowadays, I fear we have to make our own democracy, and I will demonstrate throughout the next few years that there is another path we can take that will create greater equality in wealth.

For me, this book represents the past. It was my Old Testament. From here on out, I have adapted my life and attitude towards the New Testament, which I plan to document very carefully, as it represents the lifeblood and legacy of my father and myself, and God shall give me the strength to achieve exactly that—not for ourselves, but for everyone who deserves a better life.

To whoever reached this far in this book, THINK BIG, really work towards changing the world for the better and believe that there is no task too big for our Almighty God to achieve!

... To be continued in the New Testament.