

Due to the fact that the Public Declaration issued by my brother is in Spanish and google translate does not cut it as far as I am concerned, I have decided to translate it myself...So here it is, for those who do not speak, read or write Spanish.

~ M. Blades, Blades Translations

Public Declaration

I wish to make a public declaration that besides being necessary, pleases and satisfies me for various reasons that will be easily understood once you finish reading this note.

A couple of years ago, Joseph Verne publicly declared that the possibility existed that I, Ruben Blades, was his natural father. Already in a previous occasion I was approached about this, but I never gave it any credit.

Nonetheless, on May 13 2013, one of my family members agreed to undergo a DNA test with Mr. Verne, and though the result seemed to evidence a clear consanguinity between both of them, I was not notified of it. Six months later, December 2013, a letter was received at my father's home in Panama, informing him of the fact.

At that moment I was in Panama and my father gave me the letter to read, which was addressed to him not me. The information contained in the letter captured my attention immediately because it seemed to have serious scientific character, so upon my return to New York I contacted a group of lawyers in Puerto Rico. I gave them the necessary facts so they could communicate to Mr. Verne my purpose to undergo a DNA paternity test that he had previously requested.

The lawyers located Mr. Verne and made logistical arrangements so that he, as well as his mother and I would go to a laboratory to undergo a DNA test. Those tests were achieved on February 2014 and the results were conclusive: Joseph Verne, 39 year old male, is my biological son. Joseph's conviction turned out to be true and I, of course, was wrong to consider that the possibility did not exist.

Though nothing can ever placate the shame I feel toward him and myself, we got together in March of 2014, and since then we have maintained optimal communication, including my granddaughter, a brilliant 13 year old young lady.

In August of this year I took them to Panama so they could meet my father, my country, my friends and my origins which are theirs too in some way. We are in the process of normalizing the situation as much as possible, personally and legally, understanding that this is a task that shall last 'til the day we die.

It is still hard for me to believe and assimilate what's happened and though I continue to be tormented with the fact that I did not assume the responsibility that corresponded to me in this situation, the contact that we have and that we have increased in time and

intensity, has led us to joyfully consider the new possibilities that this sudden turn of events in our lives offers us.

I wanted to wait until now to make this announcement because I wanted to have a time of tranquility for us that would allow us to establish the needed and wished for connection between us. I didn't want to make a public announcement without having established the base for a real relationship between the two of us. As you can understand, the situation is not easy for anyone to handle.

Just as I have always managed my affairs, I consider that this is a personal matter that shall be dealt with privately as it should be, especially since it's a fact that took place 39 years ago, with the difficulty involved in the management of different memories and the impossibility of adequately proving any of the existing versions.

On the other hand, I will not contribute to the development of any action alien to us that will make my wife, my granddaughter, Joseph, his mother, Mr. Verne or our families uncomfortable, taking part in programs or interviews that only seek to satisfy morbidities and obtain commercial advantages. I do not intend to give another public declaration about this theme. Joseph and I consider this public announcement to be clear and sufficient.

On the personal level, I aim to do all that is necessary to mitigate the adverse consequences of an event that took place many years ago, and that due to my stubbornness and apprehensions was not taken care of in the correct manner. I think it's never too late to correct an error. I said so too via a personal communication with Joseph's mother, including Mr. Verne, who raised him and took care of him in a very correct manner. I owe them my eternal gratitude and my absolute expression of shame, for not having considered possible what has been demonstrated. I should've shared my son's upbringing with them.

I have the rest of my life to try to complement, wherever possible, what they have done and of course contribute to the upbringing and education of my granddaughter. With this I shall also improve my own character and behavior with the experiences that only this type of relationship can offer to a human being.

From all of us, much happiness, and have a prosperous 2015!

Rubén Blades

December 31, 2014