Cafecito with Ángel Nakamura (2024)

Venue: University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus

Moderator: Dr. Ramaris Albert Trinidad

Translation: Alejandro Álvarez Nieves

Introduction

RAMARIS:

A warm welcome to all of you; we are very flattered and very excited. And I also speak on behalf of the colleagues of the major in Information and Journalism, who are hosting to this activity, right?; and fortunately, the colleagues of the UPR Digital collective are hosting this activity and wanted to share it with our university community and with our concentration. So, I want to thank them for considering us, for doing this collaborative activity. I also want to extend greetings to the president and vice-president of the student chapter of the Association of Hispanic Journalists, in this case from the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico, who are with us this morning, and also to several of its members, members who were invited, students of the major in Information and Journalism, of the undergraduate program, we also have students from the graduate program and other members of the university community, who certainly make us very excited to meet with us here. Today we have a very special activity, one of the *Cafecito* series that they are organizing within the UPR Digital collective with different fellows and, in this case, we have Mexican journalist Ángel Nakamura joining us. I am going to briefly read you a biography of the colleague who joins us today and who will be presenting a large part of his work with the idea that this conversation will not only extend between Nakamura and yours truly, but that it will serve as a general dialogue between all the people who are here, and therefore we can then share ideas, experiences and ask questions to our special guest about his work in multimedia coverage in different media and digital platforms, especially in recent years on CNN en Español.

Ángel Nakamura is a multimedia journalist with an extensive eighteen-year career, and has been at the forefront covering breaking news and several stories in Mexico. His reporting covers a wide range of topics, including organized crime, drug trafficking, politics, social issues, the justice system in Mexico, sports, the arts, and human rights. In this way, he provides a deep commitment

to providing impactful and current news. Nakamura is dedicated to exploring new formats that resonate with social media users, with a firm belief in the need for constant innovation in journalism. His passion for storytelling extends beyond traditional boundaries and reflects a dynamic approach to the changing landscape of media consumption. In fact, today we are going to see a scoop that will be published soon; so, we are going to be one of those lucky ones. Nakamura is a Texan by adoption and has been a valuable contributor to CNN en Español since 2020. The media company has served as his platform for growth and continuous learning in the field of journalism. In 2023, Nakamura was selected as one of the distinguished academics of the Mellon Scholarship for High-Impact Academics at the University of Texas. This scholarship, among several grants awarded to the university, recognizes Nakamura's outstanding contributions to multimedia journalism. As part of the grant, Nakamura participates in community activity, intellectual debates and artistic endeavors. Today he is with us as an integral member of the Latino Research Institute to share his knowledge and experiences as a Mellon High Impact Scholar during this Cafecito.

This series of events serves as a platform to present and connect with academics, fostering a community of shared intellectual efforts and strengthening ties within academic and artistic fields. Nakamura's journey reflects not only a commitment to journalistic excellence, but also a continuous search for personal and professional development, always open to new challenges. Welcome Ángel, good day.

ÁNGEL:

How wonderful to see so many young people! I remember many years ago, when I was in classrooms, and it was always a pleasure to see and hear from experienced people. I want to thank you, Dr. Albert, I want to thank the University of Puerto Rico, the college, the University of Texas at Austin as well, through the Mellon Foundation, which has given us the opportunity to wonderful people like poet Frank Baez from the Dominican Republic, visual artist Tessa Mars from Haiti, and Cuban superstar singer Daimé Arocena, who will close Cumbre Afro, by the way. My name is Ángel Nakamura. Thank you, thank you, doctor. How wonderful, what a pleasure.

Puerto Rico has always surprised me. I knew Puerto Rico, I told Dr. Albert, because of salsa. Salsa was always a form of expression in Mexico City, which is where I grew up. And whenever I listen

to salsa, the first thing that comes to mind is Mexico City and then Puerto Rico. Later in my high school, I told Dr. Albert, that I had an internet radio program, back in 2005, called Ritmo Urbano, and we played Panamanian *son*, reggaeton, bomba, plena, salsa, cumbia. And I always, always found this nation fascinating; I find it fascinating because even out of all the problems that you have, you know them fully, and this young generation, especially Mexico, there are a lot of problems as well.

And I want to talk to you today about a project that I'm going to announce in April, but that of course Puerto Rico has to get the scoop, and that has is possible thanks to the Mellon Foundation and the work everyone does. And here is the administrative coordinator, Agnes Savich, who I also want to thank for being there and for all the support. The University of Texas at Austin, which is wonderful, and so is the University of Puerto Rico, from what I'm experiencing.

And I want to introduce you a little, and then give way to questions and answers, of course, what I want is for this to be an act that provokes ideas and questions. I think that one of the things we have to have as journalists is to always question ourselves. There's an old saying, maybe you know it, that a journalist, jokingly and seriously, if your mom says she loves you, a journalist will say, prove it to me, let's see, I'll fact-check that you really love me.

Maybe it's a lot of exaggeration, of course, but it's part of the fact that we're always questioning truth. And I want to quickly introduce you to this project that I did through the Mellon Foundation, the University of Texas at Austin. I went to Tamaulipas, I'm from Tamaulipas, from Matamoros, Tamaulipas, and it's about the dangers of doing journalism in Tamaulipas.

Harassment, violence or death, the challenges of covering organized crime, and corruption in Northeastern Mexico. And I'm going to move a little bit quickly, but please, if you have any doubts or questions, I'm more than happy to answer them. This is my project, which thanks to the Mellon Foundation I was able to do in January.

I wanted to cover, then, what were the challenges currently in Tamaulipas to do journalism in the north, in the north of Mexico, and the approach I took was one of violence against journalists who

cover crime, corruption, and local stories. Also, the challenges that journalists faced to adapt to the new ways of doing their work. And so, the evidence is presented in this research project through cases that I collected, face-to-face interviews with publishers of newspapers, radio and television in Tamaulipas during the winter of 2024, the end of January, through ethnographic methods, that is, interviews and direct investigation.

I want to give you a little bit of what Tamaulipas is. Someone can say, well, what is that, where is it. Let's see, here are the numbers, really quick. Tamaulipas is one of the four Mexican states that share a border with Texas. The others are Nuevo León, Chihuahua, and Coahuila. Those are the four states. Right now, we are going to see it on a map so that you have a clearer picture. And, well, the trade, the international trade that exists between Texas and Mexico is 421 billion dollars. It is only the second frontier with the highest amount of investment, only behind Tijuana and San Diego; so, we can get an idea of the economic impact it has.

And 20 million, there were 20 million crossings of pedestrians on the Texas-Mexico border in 2020 alone. It's the second busiest port of entry in Mexico-United States, behind only San Diego, of course, and Tijuana. Where is Tamaulipas? Here is Tamaulipas.

I was born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas. There we see it that it is almost, almost on the shore. It's like a little elephant, the state on the Gulf of Mexico.

Here are the most important cities in Tamaulipas—Ciudad Victoria, Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Mante. Tamaulipas, to give us an idea, and I was looking at census data for Puerto Rico, has the same population as Puerto Rico, statewide.

As such, 3.5 million, 3.2 million residents. And Ciudad Victoria, where I practiced most of my journalism, has the same, almost the same number of inhabitants as San Juan. Here I brought the numbers, as a good reporter, you always have to be searching.

And I want to, I don't want to give you an incorrect fact, but the population of Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, and San Juan. Here comes the latest. Census 2020, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 342,259 people.

Ciudad Victoria, capital of Tamaulipas, 349,000, that is, practically 7,000 more, right? To give us an idea. Oh, look, here it is. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, where your truly is from, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. There we have a small line to give us an idea of what I'm talking about, so that we keep it in mind, quite presently.

What's going on in Tamaulipas?

ÁNGEL:

What's going on in Tamaulipas? There is an influence by the drug cartel. The Gulf Cartel, known [in Spanish] as the CDG, which was founded in Matamoros, the city I mentioned, found the criminal economy in Matamoros-Tamaulipas since the 1930s.

What is criminal economy? Kidnappings, extortions, robberies, rent collection, kidnapping of migrants, many migrants from all parts of Central and South America have to cross Matamoros to reach the United States, and all this was found by the Gulf cartel. However, they began to capture and kill their leaders, and there was a fight with the Zetas, which is a paramilitary group that was formed by the Mexican Army, and that changed the dynamics of the cartels. And of course, there was instability, which became cyclical, and which led to more violence.

And here we see a map of Tamaulipas, so that every flag you see there is a criminal group that controls that region, who control the cartels. We can see that there are, on the part of the Gulf cartel, there are several factions, including the Zetas, and the Jalisco New Generation cartel. According to the DEA, in 2023, the Jalisco New Generation cartel was the most powerful cartel in the world, controlling almost half of the criminal activities in the world. That's the extent we're talking about, which is the presence of organized crime.

And what is the impact of all this on journalism? How does it impact? Just to give us an idea, 162 journalists have been murdered in Mexico from 2000 to 2023, and to put it into perspective, there have been zero murders in the United States. In Puerto Rico, I was seeing the numbers and there have also been, I mean, fortunately, no murders of journalists since 2000. The year 2022 was the deadliest for journalists in Mexico, with 13 deaths, and Tamaulipas was the state where the most, the second state where journalists were killed the most, 15 journalists were killed in Tamaulipas.

What are the causes of violence against journalists? Well, in the seventies, there were threats that came from union bosses and political authorities. In the eighties, this changed, organized crime began to attack journalists, not only with death threats, that if you publish something I could kill you, or you or your family, but also a form of extortion was already coming from journalists, a charge, let's say, for seeing that you can or cannot publish.

And from the nineties to the aughts, Tamaulipas was classified as the main zone of silence in Mexico. Why the main zone of silence? Because journalists could no longer publish, leave crime stories behind, they could no longer publish the mayor's or governor's statement, it reached that limit of violence, which is why it was classified as the main zone of silence in Mexico. Well, what does violence against journalists look like? Narcos in Tamaulipas began to use more violent tactics to get what they wanted published.

ÁNGEL:

What are these violent tactics? Express kidnappings, drug traffickers would go outside your newsroom, you went to the radio or newspaper, they waited for you, they would take you in a bus, a small van, beat you up and tell you why they were upset or why you had been kidnapped. There were also attacks on newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and drug traffickers used grenades, they also used firearms; I know that you are fully aware of the firearm problem here in Puerto Rico, I have read that it is brutal. And car bombs, like in Medellín with Pablo Escobar.

This was the first car bomb attack against a media outlet in Tamaulipas; this happened in 2010. What you see here on that wall is Televisa, Televisa Ciudad Victoria. Televisa, you know, this big television conglomerate, there we see the Federal Police; this car exploded in the early morning

when the workers of the television station were just going to enter their shifts. This was the first attack in the modern era against a media outlet using a car bomb.

And this is how the media reported it—Zetas, who was already speaking to them, one of the factions that fought with the Gulf cartel, possible culprits of these car bombs in Tamaulipas.

This photo can be dramatic because this was another car bomb that exploded in front of the local police in Ciudad Victoria and, as you can see, there is a kindergarten. This exploded at six in the morning; if it would have exploded an hour later, there would be 150 children in that kindergarten. And like that, there were 13 car bombs between 2010 and 2012 in Ciudad Victoria alone, the capital of Tamaulipas. So, you can imagine the level of terror there was, not only of course against the media but particularly against journalists.

And this happened on March 19, 2012, and it touched very close to my house because, in addition to the fact that I worked at this newspaper, which was where the car bomb exploded at night, and that's how it was the next day, some parts of me working in a media outlet shattered.

The narcos were upset by a story that was published in a newspaper and, not content with threatening to kill everyone who worked at the newspaper, went to leave a car bomb as well. From then on, we stopped doing face-to-face work at the newspaper and started working from home in 2012. Imagine when the home office was not yet planned, COVID still hadn't hit, of course, and that's why it hit very, very close to home. This happened on March 19, 2012, at 9 in the evening. I remember it very well because it was my little sister's birthday, so, while I was calling my little sister to congratulate her, this was happening on the streets of Ciudad Victoria in Tamaulipas.

What was the official response from the authorities? Well, what do you think, they were very slow to respond, to the surprise of absolutely no one. Also, they failed to apply best practices to make their evidence, to gather who was attacking journalists. And it appeared or seems that they only prioritized presenting suspects even if they were not guilty, that is, if they had someone in their sights, the authorities would grab him or her and say, it was him, she was part of it, without presenting further evidence. If I'm going too fast, tell me, please.

And furthermore, what's most discouraging for journalists? Well, what do citizens believe? Well, they don't recognize the risk that journalists take when covering stories related to organized crime. Society doesn't believe in the media, and I don't think it happens only in Tamaulipas, I understand that it happens in many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean; they believe that the media are another political institution, and, since it's a political institution, I'm not going to believe it. Journalists are branded as sellouts; you're a sellout in Mexico, you say, don't you? You don't publish what goes on with violence in Tamaulipas, you're a sellout, you're probably being paid for drug trafficking, that's what they used to say, but they didn't know we were there, some were threatened with death.

Violence Versus Democracy

ÁNGEL:

Well, what happens when violence threatens democracy? Because violence against journalists violates freedom of speech and the right of all of you citizens to be informed. It also consolidates zones of silence such as Tamaulipas, and journalists report community problems, but imagine that you can no longer report a garbage collection problem in a neighborhood, in Condado, in Santurce—hey, garbage is no longer being collected. You couldn't publish that in Tamaulipas anymore because drug traffickers were getting upset. And this of course represents profound risks for the democratic life of Mexico and the region that, of course, includes Texas because of our closeness to the United States.

And this is the research project that the Mellon Fellowship... I was able to do thanks to the Mellon Fellowship and the University of Texas I was able to ask these questions. I asked, How are journalists doing today in Tamaulipas? How are they doing their job? What are some of the challenges they are facing right now? And have they received help from the government, and what does that help mean? (Slide 23)

Research Findings

ÁNGEL:

And this is what I found—this is the scoop for you. I spoke with 15 journalists who edit media outlets in Tamaulipas last January and they told me—we are applying self-censorship. What does self-censorship mean? I'd rather not publish anything at all that has to do with politics and that has to do with violence, self-censorship. Self-care, of course, affects the mental health of journalists. The terror they have experienced, of course, works. So, they're looking for therapy, they're looking for circles of help. And resilience, because that word that we have heard and that we say, well, what is that about? Survival, simply and plainly what they have told me—they therefore prefer to wait for the press release, right?; for press conferences and for government transparency instrument**s**. Instead of doing investigative journalism, they prefer that an authority and the authority's brief be what is going to be published. They work in units to protect themselves. It's something that didn't happen until ten years ago. In other words, if a journalist is going to investigate a case of corruption in a local government, he or she tells three more journalists, even if they are from the competition, come join me, I don't want to go there, let's just go, all four journalists. It is more difficult for four journalists to be attacked than to attack just one journalist. Of course, this is detrimental to the independent, independent journalism because everyone is going to bring the same article.

Newspapers have stopped publishing stories of violence. That's what editors told me. They prefer to avoid it. "We are no longer going to publish violence." And websites almost always prefer not to follow the beats, right?, which could be dangerous. Something that can be dangerous, that can be anything, not just having to do with corruption or organized crime. Editors also talk to the competition before they publish a story. There is a story about extortion in which merchants are involved. I, as editor of a newspaper, speak to my competition, I tell them, "Hey there's this, would you post it?" "No, I wouldn't publish it. I'm not publishing it." "Hey, there's this, shall we publish it?" "Yes, we published it." What's going on?" They all publish the same thing, and the population says, "Hey, everyone brings the same thing." The same newspaper brings this, this, and this, what's going on? There is no competition.

Some journalists have chosen to quit, to no longer be journalists because it's too risky, it's too stressful. They want to have a life; they want to have peace**.** Where have they gone? Some have

been teachers of Journalism or of Spanish or of English. They have gone to the government, they have gone to political parties, or they have gone to the private sector. Anything, some people told me, is better than returning to journalism. And they decided to open YouTube channels or work for international media, national international media before working for local media.

Journalists also told me that they don't believe in the rulers. And of course not, they don't ask for help. They prefer to seek other means before asking for institutional help. Some people have serious doubts about what they share with other colleagues. In other words, if I am working on a journalism research topic, I will not share it with anyone else because there are many doubts as to whether that other person, even if he is a colleague, can talk to someone who will surely know someone in Tamaulipas. We have a saying that goes—everybody knows everybody and everybody knows somebody. What does that mean? We all know each other, but not only do we all know each other, but everybody knows somebody. For *somebody* means someone who is working for someone in the cartel. A terrible reality.

What is the government's response? I spoke with two government officials. They have created workshops and conferences for journalists, to approach them, to ask for help, and of course there is a mechanism to protect not only journalists but also human rights defenders. And they have an open-door policy that tries to get journalists to believe in institutions again. That's what they're doing, but when I spoke to an official I said to him, "How many journalists have come to ask for help?" "Zero", "Why?" , "Because they, they don't believe us." "They don't believe in us." I tell him, "That's terrible." They have a mechanism, but it's not working. It has operations, it has resources. It's not working.

The Future of Mexican Journalism

ÁNGEL:

What's next for journalists? I've talked to some of them and they're quite pessimistic. They tell me, the new generations, they want to be influencers, and they want to, they care a lot about engagement and being seen in a video on Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, but I don't see much conviction that they are journalists. Be careful is what they tell me, I don't agree with them, but that's what they tell me.

And then they think that only a few newspapers will survive. There are currently 25 newspapers in Tamaulipas. I spoke to the editors and they said, “If five newspapers survive next year, that would be a lot.” “Think that the majority will disappear.” And this was brutal to me, newsrooms are going to be irrelevant in the next five years, they told me. They’re going to be irrelevant; people don’t want to be in a newsroom anymore. No... in the newsroom, in the flavor of the newsroom. You can do this from home; no longer, there will no longer be that companionship in newsrooms.

What’s next besides that? Of course, investigative journalism will only be possible in collaboration with international and national outlets, no longer with local outlets. They are slowly moving away from local investigative journalism. Local television stations are going to be irrelevant because they’re just going to cover national issues. “Local issues, forget about that,” is what they told me. Radio stations will stick mostly to music programming. It’s not going to be so much political stories or what’s happening in the community anymore. They’d better put what’s stuck in the moment and let’s go. No, for what? Get out of trouble.

Also, what they told me, “We don’t want to leave our state. We don’t want to leave. This is Tamaulipas, this is my state, and our city, Ciudad Victoria, the narcos should not win.”
That’s what several people told me. “The narcos should not have, should not be allowed to win.”

“It’s gonna take a lot of creativity, sacrifice, and commitment to keep doing our job.”

And another one said to me, “I’m not a hero; I put my family first. I love journalism, I grew up and I want to be a journalist, but I can’t do it anymore. I’m going to put my family first.”

What needs to change? Well, all right, according to this book by Dr. Celeste González de Bustamante, from the University of Texas at Austin, it’s going to take an enormous amount of effort to change. That, and the willpower of all sectors of society. The will of all sectors, not just the government, not just political parties, but of schools, universities, students, everyone. And the

government should, should have laws to provide funding to protect journalists. That's what this newspaper, this book, says, and I totally agree with that.

And in the end, what are the core values of journalism? And... of course, we can discuss it and talk about it. Of course, talking about problems is important, but it's also crucial to show solutions, a journalism of solutions. Isn't it? Because that shows people that there are active efforts to fix the issues, local, national, and international, right? And of course, we must provide inspiration and tools so that readers feel that the world is not completely lost. We hear that a lot of times, don't we? The world is lost. There are no values anymore, forget about that. Young people no longer want to study; they no longer want to work. I am quite optimistic and realistic, I feel that the new generations are going to push us forward, right? But for that you need a lot of will.

And well, of course, for a journalism of solutions, the goal, the objective is not to make people feel good, right? Although it's great impact when that happens, it's important. Its goal is to better inform people. I believe in that.

And of course, if you have any questions, I'll leave you my email. My two emails: angelnakamuracnn@gmail.com. There you can write to me, comments, questions. "Hey, your presentation was terrible, I didn't like it at all. I don't agree with you." "Hey, I liked it, but you missed this." "Hey, come to Puerto Rico". Of course, let me look for a flight and I'll go to Puerto Rico when you invite me. There they are both. So, there's the mail also from U Texas. Please, any questions you have, comments, doubts, I love to hear and receive them.

And finally, thank you very much to the University of Puerto Rico. Thank you for this great nation.

I want to... Thank you, thank you.

I will close with this. I went to a festival, to the poetry festival in Puerto Rico, thanks to an invitation from... Dominican poet, who is brilliant, who is here with us, Frank Báez. He... who is another fellow, of course, that is, with the efforts of the University of Texas at Austin, and I loved it because when I arrived, in Puerto Rico, I said, and when I saw the quality of its people I said,

Puerto Rico is poetry, Puerto Rico is everything that makes the blood boil. And I found a piece by a lawyer named Eduardo Villanueva, and I know there was a controversy there. I read a little bit about the controversy, but I don't want to go into that, I want to go into what he says. Attorney Eduardo Villanueva says of Puerto Rico, "In our colonial reality, poetry is anticlimactic, it is irreverent and challenging, but it is also song, and it is beauty, it is an affirmation that reality can be transformed and that justice is not a utopia. That is, the place that doesn't exist. The just, the beautiful, the passionate, the fire that burns in our consciousness not only exists, but is necessary." Thank you very much, Puerto Rico, for being poetry.

RAMARIS:

I don't know about you, I feel like a mix of sensations. I am very excited that there is such rigorous research with such pertinent findings, but at the same time I feel hopeless about the results of the research. And one of the elements that struck me, Ángel, is when you were starting out and mentioned that these drug trafficking organizations, these mafia organizations, have been established for almost, almost a century. So, we can talk about the fact that they have a power and a seniority that challenges even the political stability that many parties can have. They are much more entrenched in society, aren't they? And that, and this, then, leads to that feeling, to that sense of desolation that people have who don't believe the government, but don't believe journalists either.

Normalization of Barbarism

RAMARIS:

And when you posed the truth, part of these, of these findings, I wondered if journalists who decided to go to other professions because they didn't, couldn't continue to practice, if they decided to stay in the state or did the decision to give up their profession, no matter how painful, also entail leaving Tamaulipas and abandoning that reality completely?

ÁNGEL:

Yes, thank you very much, doctor. First of all, when I grew up as a child in Matamoros, we asked the question: What do you want to be as a child? They tell you: what do you want to be? I want to be a doctor, I want to be a lawyer, I want to be an artist, I want to be president, and some kids said,

“I want to be a drug dealer.” So, as a child, I used to say, “It’s another profession. Surely he’s going to college to be a drug dealer.” As time went by, I realized that no, that it wasn’t a profession, but it was so rooted in culture, in the Tamaulipan psyche, that of course it was a life option to be a drug trafficker, of course. And they’re realizing that it’s easier to get money quickly through that. So, there are a lot of kids today who want to be that. So, on the one hand it’s like the normalization of barbarism, isn’t it? You normalize violence, you normalize that there are murders, that there are so many firearms in the streets, that there are so many minors who choose drug trafficking. That’s on the one hand. And, of course, the second part, journalists are evicted. I don’t want to be a journalist anymore. Many, as in my case, left Tamaulipas in 2012 after repeated death threats. They called my phone and said, “Hey, uh, we know you’re eating at this place; we’re going to pass by to get you. We’re going to teach you a lesson.” But I, I didn’t even feel like it blocked me anymore. It said, “Well, okay. There’s nothing wrong.” At night I would receive calls and they would say, “Hey, we’re killing someone here. I want you to hear it.” And I replied, “OK”, and that’s it, they hung up on me. “Hey, we’re in a shootout right now. Listen to the shooting.” Yes, but it was occurring quite frequently. And the last time, when I left Tamaulipas for Mexico City, it was because they already told me, this, “Hey, you posted something you shouldn’t, uh, we’re going to have to take action against you.” Because they had a separate social communication department, drug trafficking; when I was in 2012, right? They had their spokesperson, they had press releases that they sent to the media, and they had a spokesperson. The spokesperson was the one who told you, “Hey, tone it down. Hey, don’t do this anymore.” And he was the one who told me, “Yes, you have to go. Because, because the truth is, uh, either jail or the grave. You tell me which one you want.” So that’s why I left Tamaulipas.

And many stay; many colleagues stay and go. Or they are doing institutional work, that is, press releases, working for the government or in universities. But in universities, unfortunately, with the professors I spoke to, they tell me, “Hey, there’s a big risk. I can’t talk much about this. I can talk about the basics. Uh... how do you write an article, right? What? Who? How? When? Where? Why? Why does it matter? Helping young people to provide multimedia tools. I can do that, but I can’t talk about these dangers that it has.” So, that’s it.

RAMARIS:

The thing is that what you say, for example, that they keep doing work like press releases, actually, in Puerto Rico, that is a task that is linked to public relations. So, there is, there is a dichotomy there in that not giving up implies to a certain extent giving up. Because you want to keep practicing journalism, but from a totally different perspective, right? According to the findings, official, restricted only to government communications, press releases... they are tasks of professional relations professionals, not journalists. And with this I don't want to judge, right? Because everyone, in the circumstances they are in, when they attack their life or that of their family, well, everyone makes the decisions they understand most pertinent. But that somehow contributes to the public's perception that journalists don't necessarily investigate in depth. Because then it's as if those criminal organizations, which have a structure even with a spokesperson, right? , with a press officer, so to speak, from drug trafficking, lead them directly to end up exercising what they were supposed to be doing, what they were fleeing from; what they wanted to avoid based on complaints from citizens. I want to remind you that the floor is open to questions from attendees. So, at any time, any comment, feel free to also make any contribution.

ÁNGEL:

And just to add to what you said... I don't know who said it, but—journalism is about publishing, and everything that can make the powerful uncomfortable, right? Make them uncomfortable. The rest is public relationism, isn't it? That's not journalism. So, that has always been very present to me.

RAMARIS:

And, besides, I would like to speak, along the same lines, to be able to learn about these findings, which have a great impact on knowing the harsh reality of these colleagues. How was the process that you could, if you could, manage to have those in-depth interviews, when some of the information they're giving you could even put their own life at risk? How was that process of the research, and the in-depth interviews you conducted?

ÁNGEL:

Thank you, great question. First, I get in touch with them through mail, uh, a cell phone. They were people I knew too. Not many of them, but most of them I knew, and I said to them, "I'm

doing research work, but no... if you want I don't say your name. Moreover, don't even say where you're working. I want to protect you as much as possible, because I know how difficult it is to work right now." And they told me, "No, no, no. I want my name to come out, I want it to go where I work and enter my details because I want to change this." Within this hopelessness, there was a feeling that it's important for universities to discuss this, to talk about this. "Because we experience it as journalists, but society doesn't know it, and it thinks that we are sellouts. Uh... that we talk about anything, that we publish anything, that only the government pays us to publish them well. So, we want to make it known." And I was quite taken by the reality of what it means to be a journalist. Because in one of my interviews that I had, they were in places other than them that they trusted. I said to him or her, "Where are you best suited for me to interview you? Which place? Tell me the place, the time, and how much time you have available." Also, be very respectful of your time and space, right? But I tell you that I paid for the reality check because in one of the interviews I was going to do, in a nearby town called Tampico, this one... which by the way has a very nice Miramar beach, some cars started following me. So, they had followed me before, when I was working in Tamaulipas, from 2006 to 2012, they had already followed me. A taxi started following me, then two taxis, then three taxis. And one comes to my side, and I see that he's armed, and he tells me to roll down the window. Then they followed me for like 15 minutes, and at a traffic light he said to me, "What are you doing here?" I say, "Uh... I'm here to do research." "Okay." He's already gone. That's what I said to myself, that's the way it was for me. Someone, someone commented that I was there, that I was asking questions, right? And that I was asking questions related to violence. Then someone hit the *pit*... Back in Mexico we say the *pitazo*, to blow the whistle. Someone warned them that I was there. Fortunately, with all that... the mental block that I used to do when working, among other things, you have to block yourself and not panic, which is very difficult. So, I said, wow, I was struck by the truth of, ok the violence is still here, it has decreased, hasn't it? , but... if you ask too many questions they can follow you.

RAMARIS:

Because we all know everyone, and everyone knows someone.

ÁNGEL:

Exactly, that's it. In Tamaulipas, 3 million... 3.5 million inhabitants are in Tamaulipas. So well, that's it.

Bravery and Self-censorship

RAMARIS:

There is a very interesting concept that you mentioned, which is the zone of silence, and how journalists themselves recognize that self-censorship that is imposed. The reason why they don't go to the government, despite the fact that in the interviews... the government itself recognizes it, right? That it has, that it has some mechanisms to help, is it because of the lack of effectiveness in those mechanisms, the slowness you mentioned at the beginning, or is it because journalists also believe that the government is corrupt and that it is in league with the cartels that govern the area?

ÁNGEL:

Yes, great question. We have two. Well... two former governors were under arrest. One in the United States for drug trafficking and for involvement with organized crime—Tomás Yarrington Ruvalcaba from Matamoros, Tamaulipas. He is currently imprisoned in the United States. He was... receiving money from the Zetas so they could do drug trafficking. He was given 20 years in the United States. The other, also accused of links to drug trafficking, has just been released from prison. He's already a candidate now, he's running for senator. He has an extradition process from Mexico to the United States. It's in process, so he's looking to shield himself. What do I want to tell you with this, doctor? The rulers, from the highest point, the governor... who have arrived in prison for drug trafficking, speak of a lacerating reality, don't they? If the highest authority in your state has links or presumed links, let's put it that way, presumed links, then imagine the rest of the authorities. Something happened to me; I'll tell you very briefly. The first time I saw that the authorities could be colluding with the drug dealers... I went to cover a story, uh... very relevant, one Friday afternoon. I arrived at the place, took pictures, a couple of interviews, didn't I? The official party, the affected party, and I was leaving and a person who was a policeman approached me and said, "Hey." I brought them here, didn't I? the files. He says to me, "Hey, delete that for me, delete that, delete all that for me." I tell him, "Hey no, because they're going to scold me, I have to deliver the story." "I said delete if for me; I'm not asking you. Delete it for me right now. I am the spokesperson for the Zetas, in this, in this region, and either you delete these for me or there

will be problems." "Ok, yes sir." I deleted it all. He's a cop, telling me that. I delete it... and the mayor was there. Then, I'm leaving now, well, quite sad, *agitated,* as we say. Quite agitated, a bit... I'm gone, too bad, I don't have the story anymore. And the mayor was about ten meters away, and he just sees me and does... And I, okay, it became clear to me. It's perfectly clear to me. If the mayor of my city is seeing that... uh, a city that I say is like the population of San Juan. Uh... well that's that. So, that was in 2010, and I came to the newsroom, and I was going to tell my boss. "Boss, they told me I was deleting the photos." He told me: "Don't worry, they've already come here too. They already came here, they told me. Stay quiet, that's all." "Ok, that's fine."

RAMARIS:

So, they're clearly on a double payroll.

ÁNGEL:

Yes, yes, yes , yes, totally. And it's worrying, and it's also absurd, isn't it? Because you say, "How can the authority you trust, your mayor, your congressman, your senator... how can they have... how can they be so permissive?" There is a saying in Matamoros that if you want to be mayor of Matamoros you don't have to tell the political parties, you have to go to the Gulf cartel, knock on the door, and say, "Hey, sir I want to be mayor, can I be mayor?" Either they give you the blessing, and say, "Yes, of course, you can be mayor," or they say "No, no, my son, you cannot be mayor".

Responsibility and Survival

RAMARIS:

Wow... you were also commenting a few minutes ago, that among the findings, the... journalists abstain from topics that can be dangerous. But the reality you are commenting on is that any topic, however trivial it seems, can result in it being linked to drug trafficking and ends up being dangerous. So, is this a trial-and-error exercise, let's see if they call you or does the journalist automatically self-censor him or herself and doesn't, and doesn't raise the issue? Because, for example, what you were talking about garbage collection... if it is, if it is controlled by one, by a gang or the other... pavement work on the roads... who, who is hired? How, how does the dynamic of being able to face the obligation or social responsibility that we have to respond to the needs of

citizens in terms of information work, but not knowing if those issues are going to rub anyone the wrong way, as we say here, and ending with a death threat or execution?

ÁNGEL:

Yes, in order not to rub anyone the wrong way, what they do is work in groups; that is, they are already organized in units, literally. So, uh, I don't know... a worker from Televisa with a worker from another television station tells another television station. There are already three workers who go to the same place, report the same thing, have the same images, and reach an agreement. The story will be published at this time; the news report will air at this time; or an article will be printed in the paper at this time. So, there's that... society says, "Hey, what's going on with them, why don't you work individually, right? Because when I started out, there was value given to the note that you worked on, where you went on your journalism, isn't there? And I report what I can report. And besides, when you report a story you say to your boss, to your editor, "Hey, editor, can this come out?" And he or she already own, and you investigated on your own, and it was exclusive. Exclusivity was very important. Now it's like, "No, I want to survive." So, I work, I work in a unit. It all struck me as quite interesting. Because that didn't happen ten years ago, and now it's happening. I work as a unit to protect myself, don't I? And to protect my colleagues as well. But at the end of the day, well, there is no... what they said, there is no longer independent journalism as such. There is unit talks to certain people. Again, the "everybody knows everybody." So... "ok, we have the green light, yes we can publish," "Okay, perfect."

RAMARIS:

In other words, do editors consult with the cartels to find out what topic can and cannot be published?

ÁNGEL:

Yes, in some cases. I'm not saying that in absolutely everyone, but in most cases it's better to ask before they put a car bomb in your newspaper. Yes, yes, yes.

RAMARIS:

That perhaps partially answers the other question I had posed. Are you aware, or have there been circumstances in which it is known that there are journalists under the payroll of drug gangs?

ÁNGEL:

There was a golden age of journalists... they were invited to barbecues with strange characters in the 90s. I'm no one to criticize them, but I was well known. "Well, hey, look, they made me a little roasted meat, he invited me, and this character introduced himself to me, who was the boss there in the *plaza*, the territory." That's what we call them, right, to each [drug] territory—the *plaza*. Plaza this and that... ok? Perfect. That changed. When the war against drugs began in 2006, in Mexico, that changed, which is when I started reporting. I saw the change, how was it that I invite you over, you are my friend, to "hey, don't publish that", to "hey, I'm going to hit you if you post that" to "hey, I can kill you if you publish that." And to answer your question, doctor... unfortunately it was known.. I don't know, but unfortunately it was known among colleagues that there were certain favors that could be given to you, that certain characters could give you if you stuck to their guidelines. Strange characters... a certain person once told me that what was offered to me was dollars, trucks, luxuries... that I should just talk to him. I know you, I have seen you, I know where you live, I know that your sisters leave school at such an hour. You're a good boy... let me know if you need what you want. No, sir. Thank you very much. Because that meant, well, that they were going to put you on a certain payroll.

RAMARIS:

Nothing is free.

ÁNGEL:

Nothing is free in this life, of course.

RAMARIS: I remind you that the floor is open to questions by the audience. Yes.

Leaving Tamaulipas

GABRIELA:

Thank you, best regards. Good afternoon. I wanted to ask you, What did you post that you had to leave Tama... Tamaulipas?

ÁNGEL:

Ahh, yes of course. Great question, thank you. Uh... I published that the vehicle agencies, the car companies that sell Nissan, Volkswagen, were having, were being impacted by the ambience that was there, right? That's how I phrased it. Not even because of the violence, but because of the atmosphere that existed, their sales had fallen 35 percent, and they expected that by that year they would fall by up to 85 percent. That economically affected thousands of families, hundreds of families, didn't it? And therefore, it caused the economy to decline. That's what, that's what I posted. That's what was published. At no time… because apart from that we had a lexicon… We couldn't say *narcos*, we said *criminal gangs*. We didn't say *drug traffickers*, we said *armed civilians*. In other words, we sort of took over the construction of language, which is very interesting, right? We didn't say *los Zetas,* of course, we said *the company*, *the business,* right? And... in some cases, *skill*, we said. But that's as far as we went. Uh... so, that's what I posted. An agency... the vehicles that weren't being sold in Ciudad Victoria, and that was going to affect the city economically, of course. And that's what bothered them because it was heating up the *plaza*. It was getting the attention of the authorities there.

STUDENT 1:

I wanted to ask: What motivates you to continue to practice the profession despite these cases—right?—because the truth is that it is difficult. I'm trying to put myself in your position, which I'm obviously not in, but it's something very difficult you must evaluate. What motivates you to continue practicing?

A Realistic Optimist

ÁNGEL:

Thank you very much. First, I am a realistic optimist, and I believe a lot in the new generations, in students like you who are going to take forward not only San Juan, Puerto Rico, but all journalism as such. So, I always had that optimism, but I'm also a realist. That's why I left Tamaulipas. Otherwise, I was going to be a publicist, and I didn't want to do that. I went to Mexico

City, I started working for CNN, for Bloomberg, for other international organizations because I want to believe that, that, that journalism matters. That information matters, but also being quite realistic regarding what you can or can't do. I couldn't go on there anymore, and many colleagues are realistic too, but they say what someone told me, "This is my state, the narcos should not win, no. Why? If I was born here, this is my place. This is my neighborhood. What's going on with them, right? I mean, why? Why do I have to go? Why don't the authorities act?" So, uh... and I, and I deeply respect my colleagues. In the last five years, four of my former colleagues have been murdered. Uh... one was murdered with his little girl, he was going to drop her off at school, a... men on motorcycles murdered him and... it was in 2022, June 2022. It is a case, and is has not been solved. Justice for Antonio de la Cruz, of course. And that, and that's what motivates me. To be quite clear. What I can do and what I can't do, right? Knowing the limits.

STUDENT 2:
Good afternoon.

ÁNGEL:
Good afternoon.

STUDENT 2:
Considering that reality, because it is distorted by violence, how much does self-censorship affect the credibility of a medium, and how can it be recovered after it is affected, right, do people find out about it?

Credibility and Self-censorship

ÁNGEL:
Nooo, it's a big shock. Great question, thank you. Uh... It shocks too much. People don't believe in you anymore, they won't buy your paper anymore. Why? Because you don't post. "Hey, I found out. I saw, I saw what happened yesterday in my neighborhood and it is not here in the paper. What happened? They are sellouts. They just publish what interests them, don't they? They are sellouts." So, imagine. That's why sales have declined, and because of the 25 newspapers in Tamaulipas, the sectors I spoke to tell me that 20 will disappear in five years. There will only be

five left, they will only be a website, nothing more. It affects too much. How to gain credibility? That's what they're trying to do, and they see it as complicated. They see it complicated because the government is the biggest customer of the media; it's not the people who buy the daily newspaper. It's the government. And to be a customer of the government, you have to speak well of the government. It's going to be difficult to regain credibility.

Between Informing and Protecting

STUDENT 3:

I also have a question, which was more about this project as such. What made you decide whether you were going to publish this? Considering that the information you are going to share can endanger both your life and that of someone related to you who still lives in that place, as well as the journalists who are your sources.

ÁNGEL:

Great question, thank you very much. First of all, the support of the University of Texas at Austin, who have sent me all their support and the Mellon Foundation, who said do it, go ahead, they give me the green light. The second thing is what you say, I said to my interviewees, "How do I protect you? What is the best way? I want to know this, but I don't want to put you at risk." Tell me, "How can I protect you; how can I help you?" And they, the first... and I was surprised, they said, "Post it, I want someone to talk about this. I want someone to say it." I haven't published their names; I'm not going to publish their names or the medium where they work. No... I'm only going to publish the period in which I did it. That they already know, besides. People already know I was there. Uh... and not because I'm important, because everyone knows everyone. That's what, that's what I decided. Because I said to them, "I'm going to... I want to publish this, is that ok?" "Yes, it is ok." "I can't publish it, nor will I publish it in my lifetime." They tell me. "But I want someone to talk about it, I want the United States and Puerto Rico to... know the truth of what's happening in Tamaulipas." Right? It's like their contribution in the midst of all this... hopelessness. I want to contribute something, so that my... that my daily struggle is not in vain. So, that, but yes. Then I'm going to do. I'm not going to publish their names, nor am I going to publish what media they work in. Uh, just... nothing like that. Nothing that has, that could in any way lead them to know that I am talking to such a person. Unfortunately, as I said, we all know someone already. So, people,

people, people, people saw us, well, testing the limits, but it's a fine line. Thank you for the question.

RAMARIS:

Is your family still in Tamaulipas?

ÁNGEL:

No. Well, yes. My mother is still in Tamaulipas. She is very combative. Uh... she is also a journalist, and she has protection. She's in the mechanism. They give her, they give them two bodyguards. So, she has two bodyguards and an armored vehicle. She is being, she is combative, she is a rebel, a *red one* they call her. She's super combative. Uh... passionate. She inspires me a lot, and she was also my first boss. So, uh... my respects. The truth is that, women journalists, I interviewed three journalists who were so strong and determined. I admire… I always admire women journalists. And my colleagues, but women journalists because they are, unfortunately, and due to Mexican and Tamaulipan chauvinism, they are heads of families, caregivers, they are cooks, they are teachers, they are housewives, they are journalists, and they are some of the best things in Mexico. So, uh, that. And my sisters, one studied at the UNAM in Mexico City, is a sociologist and is now in journalism. And the family was like no... my God no, another journalist. And my other, and my other little sister, the youngest, is a chef. So, she's completely in Mexico City, but she wants to go to the Atlantic, he wants to go to the Dominican Republic to study too, to Santo Domingo, to Puerto Rico to travel around the world, so that's that.

RAMARIS:

It's just that they're recording, they're recording the conversation.

ANGÉLICA:

Hello, thank you very much Mr. Nakamura for everything you are saying. I'm a communicator, I studied journalism, but I'm more into photography. Photography made me fall in love. And my question for you is: Are you aware that everything that photojournalists are telling they also suffer it, they are living it; all this perhaps, persecution, obligation that perhaps the content that they film or that they take in still photography is also not allowed to be published?

ÁNGEL: Currently in Tamaulipas, you say?

ANGÉLICA:
Yes, in Tamaulipas.

ÁNGEL:
Ok, yes of course. Great question. Uh... and it was my experience because , when I started covering journalism, the first thing they tell you is, "If you're in a place and the photojournalist from your newspaper isn't there, you have to take the picture." Then, I saw how gradually I could take pictures of *narcomantas* [narcoquilts], these large things in which they write messages from the drug dealer, and bodies as well. I was touched by the certain reality that you have to photograph bodies in every possible form of violence, shootings... what does all that mean? All the horror, isn't it? But little by little, photojournalists had that freedom. And little by little it was limited, and then the security spokespersons too, there were photographers hiring to take those photos and be the ones that were going to be published. The photojournalists didn't go to the places anymore because they said, "Well, I'd rather take pictures of the plaza, photos of a demonstration, but there are issues of violence, I'm not going to go because they already have their own photographer, they already have their own photos, and those photos have the green light to be published in the newspaper." So, uh, but of course, it is a lacerating reality that still exists in Tamaulipas. They are harassed, intimidated, and I would say that not only in Tamaulipas, in Mexico City there are several photojournalists who have been beaten by the police, especially during women's marches, imagine. On International Women's Day, on women's marches, and they are beaten up by police, fellow photojournalists. It strikes me as absurd. But yes, to answer your question, yes, there is still this harassment and this danger towards photojournalists who deserve all my respect as well. I think that capturing—challenging a story—in a photograph is one of the most... not only courageous but beautiful things that journalism has. Yes, thank you.

STUDENT 4:

Hello, good afternoon. Welcome. I have two questions; the first one is extremely important. Were you able to go to National Salsa Day last Sunday? That's the first, and the second, can you elaborate a little more on the topic of the demographic profile of the people interviewed?

ÁNGEL:

Yes, both great questions. I'm going with the first one, in order of appearance. And I quickly tell you, this one... I was invited to a television program with Rebeca de Alba, who was with Ricky Martin well into the nineties on a show called *Un nuevo día* which is like *Good Morning America*, but back in Mexico, and let me tell you that I was impressed. Salma Hayek, the Mexican actress, was a guest, but I was fascinated by this man, Eddie Santiago. He sang, "Tú me haces falta" [I miss you], "Qué locura enamorarme yo de ti" [How crazy am I for falling in love with you], and "Lluvia" [Rain], live, in a small studio like this one. This was the television studio; it seems huge, doesn't it? But it was the small studio. I was fascinated, I said this man, how wonderful. That's where I got to know live salsa, and to answer your question, I couldn't go. But I knew that it was very good, that Jerry Rivera was there, that people from Cuba were there. I think that comrade Daymé Arocena, who is a privileged voice of Cuba, long live a free Cuba, by the way, this... yes, she was able to go. So, I think she'll have a better, better anecdote from that. I couldn't go, but I'll surely come next year. And if you remind me, if you are so kind and remind me of the second question.

RAMARIS:

Demographic profile.

ÁNGEL:

Demographic profile, of course. And this is one... the journalists I interviewed were four women journalists that I interviewed, between 50 and 65 years old. The young journalists, the youngest I wanted to interview—but, but she said, you know what, I prefer not to—was 38 years old but is not willing any more. I then interviewed 50 to 65 years old, four women, ten men. Ten men between 40 and 70 years old, and you will ask yourself, what happened to young people? The youngest journalist, with whom I could talk, but who didn't... said you know, I don't want to, was 28 years old. And it's a reality that they also told me, "A lot of young people don't want to work

in media anymore; they bring their camera and bring their cell phone, and they want to upload stories to TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat," right? And that's the way they make a name. But it's the demographic profile, lower middle class. This... in Ciudad Victoria the income is about 400 dollars per month. Just imagine, the rent is 250, you have 150 dollars left to do everything else. That's why many, many journalists work in two or even three media outlets. So, men, women over 40, lower middle class, originally from Ciudad Victoria, this... from Tamaulipas too, and who have covered, have been in the media for at least 20 years. That's the demographic profile of the people I interviewed. Thank you very much for your question. They are still active, of the 15, 12 are still active, and 3 have already gone to other places. One works in the private sector, one works in a political party, and the other works in the government. They, yes… thank you.

STUDENT 5:
Hello, good afternoon.

ÁNGEL:
Hello.

STUDENT 5:
Thank you very much for coming here. Here's my question, right. I know that journalism is a profession that has tangible consequences for everyone you cover and for readers as well. How do you cover in Tamaulipas or what measures do you take for security, that is, to ensure that a note does not harm a person you are covering, a person who is involved, etc.? What measures does this environment create? That you... sorry, I don't know if I'm expressing myself properly.

ÁNGEL:
No, don't worry.

STUDENT 5:
What measures does that environment create for you to fundamentally protect the person you cover?

Protect the Sources

ÁNGEL:

Of course, I have a rule. The person must always be protected. If you're going to interview her, you have to thank her for the time. That's why I thank you for the time you have to share with us. Uh... to be very precise, like, "Hey, I want to do this story or I want to do this report." I ask him or her, can I do that? Can I, can I interview you?" Yes or no, ok. Yes or no. Then, "Where can I interview you, where is it best for you? In the afternoon, at night, at home, in a studio, do you want a coffee?" And they already tell me, don't they? "Can I include your details; can I include your name?" "No, you can't." "Perfect." And... yes, tell them everything. "I'm going to record you, and what comes out on this recording can be published." Just so they're clear. And expect what they say to me, "You know what, that can't be done." "Ok, perfect." And also, one last one, "Hey, I'm going to publish this." When it comes to civilians, right? I'm already going to post this. This... please tell me if it's the most accurate thing you told me, isn't it? You have to be kind of protective. Tell me, yes.

STUDENT 6:

And how, in a matter of... Not long ago, you mentioned that there are articles that you are looking for and that you don't know that they have to do with those situations and then you get the call—"Don't publish it." How can you determine when it comes to publishing, perhaps this article, which I consider to be quite sensible and sensitive, can harm someone when it comes to publishing it? How do you determine that this note has a tangible risk to the people involved?

ÁNGEL:

Great question, and I think there is no wrong question. The questioner is never mistaken. I feel that's interesting, you better ask, ask away. Thank you for your question. Uh... in the end is a negotiation with my editor, or in my case, in this case my editor is a woman, "Hey, I have this story, I want to give it this angle. I already have the official version, I already asked an official, I have the version of the people who are affected, and I have the data. I set out to investigate. It's already complete, it's the whole package. What do you think? I gave it this angle." Right? Because in the end, when you write a note, a story, I think the most important thing is why it matters, why I should read that. How does it affect me, right? Which is part of basic journalism, the closeness

of problems. So, that's what it is, and the back-and-forth with the editor. She can tell me, "You know what, I feel that this note could put that person at risk, even though you have the endorsement of the people who told you that you could publish it," right? So, it's a constant negotiation, it's an impressive text revision. I can't tell you how many times... it's just that, it's the wonderful thing about working on a digital medium that I collaborate on now called *En un 2x3 Tamaulipas*, that you can edit the note. Of course, you must be trustworthy with the reader. If you published something, and then you edit it, put an asterisk. This note was published at that time, a correction was made, or a correction was made, wasn't it? And if you can tell them why, also tell them why. So, they can say: "Hey, you posted something, and then you changed it. Do you want to provoke me or what." No, no, no. Be very clear, both with the reader and with yourself as well. So, it's a constant text editing.

STUDENT 6:
Thank you.

ÁNGEL:
Thanks to you, thanks for the questions.

RAMARIS: We are now in the last rounds of questions in order to conclude the activity.

STUDENT 7:
In that confidentiality, in that taking care of the sources, right? Have you ever had a case of someone you interviewed and then they beat them because of you, or did something happen? Because really, in that situation that you describe, that information is super complicated.

ÁNGEL:
It's a great question. There was a neighborhood dispute, there were two people who lived in an apartment, in a building. Uh... and a person started building and was exceeding the limits of the garage, so that affected the neighbor. And it was a citizen's complaint. Then I covered up the complaint for the radio, both sides. I interviewed the person affected and the person who was supposedly affecting him, right? Well, not supposedly, it was affecting him. I spoke to the

authorities, published the story. Two weeks later, I found out that this person, uh... died under strange circumstances. I can't say if he was murdered or not, and it hit me, it hit me hard. So, what I want to tell you with that, and thank you, sir, for the question, is that I try to be the best, to be as sure as possible that nothing will happen to anyone. But you never know, that's why you always ask, question, question, question. And yes, there have been cases where a person says, "Hey, you interviewed me and my name came up, or this came up, but the truth is that I no longer... I feel insecure." The first thing I do, I talk to my editor, and my editor says, "We're taking it down right now." It's coming down, isn't it? There's no more to it, we're not here to be heroes.

DAYMÉ:
Hello, good afternoon.

ÁNGEL:
Daymé.

DAYMÉ:
I thought a lot about asking this question, and I hope to be as polite as possible.

ÁNGEL:
Yes, thank you.

DAYMÉ:
And to put things in context a little, I am married to a Cuban journalist, photojournalist. We are both political exiles. I know perfectly well what it is to do journalism and photojournalism in Cuba. A country where independent journalism is prohibited by law, and all media are controlled by the Cuban dictatorship. Just yesterday I was riding an Uber, and we were talking about Puerto Rico. For those who don't know me, I've been living on the island for two years and he said, "Oh, this island is where I feel the calmest in my life, and I've been to more than 25 countries." And the driver told me, "No, no way, there is violence here, crime, one thing", and I said to him, "I don't minimize the situations that may exist on the island, but I assure you that in few places have I felt as calm as here." That being said, and listening to your whole story, what can you say to the Puerto

Rican people, and to these guys who do journalism about how you perceive the situation and the thing? Especially since every time I talk to my beautiful people here in PR who have given me so much love in these two years I always tell them, "Fight for everything you have to fight for, but be aware of what you have and the peace of mind with which you generally live. You don't know what it's like to shiver when a red light hits you at a traffic light." There is a level of violence in other countries that is one of real terror. In my country, things can be ripped off your neck from anywhere because hunger makes people like that. So, a little bit, you who come from this complex context, how can you also share that with these guys who are going to be doing journalism for this country?

ÁNGEL:
Yes, totally. Thank you, Daymé. A superstar, a prodigious voice, Daymé Arocena. By the way, are you going to be closing the Afro Summit, on Thursday, tomorrow?

DAYMÉ:
Thursday.

ÁNGEL:
At 6 in the afternoon, right?

DAYMÉ:
At 6.

ÁNGEL:
Perfect. Thank you, Daymé. Cuba and Puerto Rico, damn, what realities, right? Latin America and the Caribbean with everything fascinating, all the culture that exists, and all the violence and all, all these situations. I believe that Puerto Ricans are the ones, I think they should be the only ones who should determine, be self-determinant of their future. That's clear to me, I am quite respectful of that, as with Cuba and all the situations that you have experienced. And I understand, and I've read about the problems that exist here in the nation, on the island, and that's why I have a lot of confidence that these youth movements will, will move forward. And maybe someone can

say, “It’s just that the same thing was said about the young people of the nineties, and nothing like that happened. It was said about the eighties, and nothing happened.” I have a lot of confidence in this new generation. What can I tell them? Please, participate, please, get involved. As journalists, let them ask. If someone is saying something, ask them. “Hey, I don’t agree with what you’re saying. Hey, I’d like to know more facts about that. Can I ask you?” That’s why I said to the partner, and to the companions, this... please ask, ask. No, don’t keep that thorn. Anyway, if they can’t ask the public, when they approach someone they say, “Hey, I have this question”. Ask, please. In the... I do... I think the university has provided this. In, over here in Puerto Rico, the University of Puerto Rico has provided that. That they are always questioning and learning new truths, and always trying to give, to be good journalists. But to be good journalists, you have to be good human beings. I feel, there are great journalists who tell me that they are not good human beings. Maybe I’m wrong, but I feel that’s it. Be good human beings, ask, engage. Don’t be afraid to talk to the doctor, to talk to the professors. Say, “Professor, I didn’t agree with what you said, but I want to understand why, how I can do better.” And for that reason, I believe that the free self-determination of peoples, I believe a lot in that, free self-determination of peoples. And I think that Puerto Ricans are the ones who have that capacity to do so. And also, so do Cubans, adored Daymé.

DAYMÉ:
Thank you.

ÁNGEL:
Yes, thanks to you.

NADJAH:
Thank you. Well, we are now closing. My name is Nadjah Ríos, and I run UPR Caribe Digital. Taking advantage of the fact that I have this beautiful audience, I want them to open their cell phones and follow us on our social networks, Instagram and Facebook, please. We are counting on you to follow us. Also please know that we are looking for ten undergraduate students who want to become our digital humanists of the future. We have an open call to recruit ten students to take a digital humanities course over a full academic year with pay. Two thousand dollars per semester, and they will have the opportunity to work with a community group in the

development of a digital project. So, don't let that opportunity go by. It's all in our social networks, information. Soon, after the Easter break, we have two virtual orientations so that you can learn more about the project. I want to thank Dr. Ramaris Albert Trinidad, of course our speaker Angel Nakamura, and all the fellows of the University of Texas. We have some snacks that I want you to try because they are a courtesy by Comedores Sociales [community kitchens] de Puerto Rico, a community project dedicated to eradicating hunger in our country. So, I invite you to stop by that table, and eat our snacks made with a lot of love. And well, let them know that for us it is a great privilege to be able to be in the College of Communications and Information. We are located at the College of General Studies, room 222. Doors are always open.

RAMARIS:

Thank you very much for coming, have a good afternoon.

ÁNGEL:

Thank you, young people. Gracias, Puerto Rico.