



## All Relative: Defining Diego

### Episode Four: The Fall of International Adoption

A Production of Somethin' Else and Sony Music Entertainment

**MUSIC: Repetitive gentle plucking of acoustic guitars with sounds that are filled with innocent wonder begins.**

**Diego:** Previously, on All Relative: Defining Diego...

**Susi:** This is really very huge for the birth mothers. To give a child, to relinquish a child...is very very difficult.

**Felis:** Other agencies were charging \$50,000 to, you know, \$75,000.

**Kelley:** It's a huge red flag. It tells me that this is absolutely a business.

**Laurie:** Please let Isabel know that if we had the money we would be happy to have Diego's sister.

**MUSIC: Repetitive gentle plucking of acoustic guitars with sounds that are filled with innocent wonder ends.**

**Laurie:** So Diego. There was this one night when you were seven. I think you were already asleep. I got this phone call. And it was about Isabel.

**Karen:** You knew she was pregnant with...

**Laurie: We knew that she was going to have a baby in August. She told us that.**

**Karen: Okay. So that's our baby.**

**Laurie: Yeah, that's your baby...**

**Laurie:** It was 2005, and Karen McDonald had heard about us from a radio story I'd done.

So she was in the process of adopting Isabel's new baby. That's the baby Isabel had been carrying when we saw her a couple years earlier. The baby she asked us to raise.

Isabel thought he'd be a girl but he turned out to be a boy. The McDonalds were going to name him Gavin. Karen said they already had a biological sibling of yours — Gavin would be their second.

The first time she reached out, I thought she was nuts. I mean, I almost didn't respond. But then she emailed this picture. It was a photocopy of Isabel holding an infant who looked just like you.

**Diego:** Yeah, that was Carter.

**Laurie:** That was Carter! He was five years younger than you. So we started talking and emailing about how much you were like her boys. How all of you loved to jump and climb.

We thought we knew your biological family. But when Karen called from Georgia, I didn't know what to think. But Karen wanted to get together, and we said okay.

**Diego:** Yeah, I remember when we met. I was in 4th grade.

**Laurie:** Yeah. Carter was almost four, and Gavin just about two.

**Diego:** I remember you guys picked me up from school and we ended up driving to their hotel. And you know, Dan wasn't sure about the whole thing. But that's typical Dan.

**Laurie:** [Laughs.] It sure is.

**Dan: I'm excited and nervous...what if I don't like them?**

**Diego: Probably won't, Dad...**

**Laurie:** You know Diego, I was pretty nervous too. And I remember Karen and her husband Paul were at the hotel waiting for us. And when we got there, these two little boys peeked out from behind them. I could see right away they were mini versions of you. I mean, they had sturdy builds, and thick dark hair, and dimples. And the older one, Carter, he had glasses. The two of them were wearing matching khaki short sets.

**Karen: Hi there! How are you?**

**Karen: Seeing them together, I just can't get over how much they look alike...**

**Laurie: It's amazing...**

**Laurie:** You boys bonded instantly. Up in their room, you went tearing around like you'd been doing it all your lives.

**Carter: Diego!**

**Dan: He's looking, Carter!**

**Laurie: He can't find you, Carter! Uh-oh, he's pulling a double trick on you...**

**Karen: [Laughing.]**

**Diego:** One of the things is that it wasn't random like the dinner group. It was blood — it was biology. So it was kind of this intimacy I'd felt with Julia, only this time, we could speak the same language.

My brothers looked up to me and I had a lot of fun with them, just horsing around.

**Laurie:** I remember one day, we took you to a park by the river. And you and Carter saw those giant cottonwood trees. And you didn't just climb them — you scaled them. And Carter was following you around. He wanted to do everything that you did. Just like you used to do with Julia.

**Laurie: Do you notice how much you guys look like each other?**

**Diego: Mm-hm. Me and Carter and Gavin look a lot alike except for the glasses and age. Same hair, same eye color, same face, basically. We're not made of the same DNA, but...**

**Laurie: Similar.**

**Diego: Similar. A lot similar. Climbing DNA? Same.**

**THEME MUSIC: An uplifting and inspiring electronic beat begins with a strong guitar underneath begins softly and slowly.**

**Diego:** I guess we see the McDonalds about as often as we see Isabel. Every few years.

And it's cool to be like an older brother to Carter and Gavin. I feel protective of them. And I want to be a good role model.

**Laurie:** And we even know Isabel relinquished another sibling after you — a boy. But his family hasn't wanted to stay close like the McDonalds have. All of this is just another way adoptive families aren't like most other families.

**Diego:** I'm an only child, with siblings all over the place, including Georgia and Santiago Atitlán. But we all look alike. And I love every one of them.

**Laurie:** You know, you guys were lucky to find each other the way you did. It wasn't so common for bio siblings to meet like that at the time.

**Diego:** But also, finding my siblings all over the map was a sign of what was going on with Guatemala and adoption.

**Laurie:** You boys were part of the boom. But right around the time we met the McDonalds, things were starting to change in Guatemala, in ways that would threaten international adoption, maybe forever.

**Diego:** Yeah, because when there's a boom? There has to be a bust.

**THEME MUSIC: An uplifting and inspiring electronic beat begins with a strong guitar underneath swells.**

**Diego:** I'm Diego Xicay Luke...

**Laurie:** I'm Laurie Stern...

**Diego:** And from Somethin' Else and Sony Music Entertainment, this is All Relative: Defining Diego. Episode 4: The Fall of International Adoption.

## **ACT ONE**

**Laurie:** So — at the peak of the boom, one of every hundred Guatemalan babies was joining a U.S. family.<sup>1</sup> And actually, by that time, the Guatemalan government already knew adoption was out of control — and they were trying to do something about it.

**Diego:** In 2005, Guatemala made a new law that called *some* adoptions out for what they really were: human trafficking. And the government assigned lawyers to investigate. Prosecutors like Julio Prado.

**Julio Prado: El último caso es...que yo tuve en mi cargo, fue un robo de un recién nacido en el Hospital Roosevelt...FADE UNDER**

**Eng: *The last case that I was in charge of...was the stealing of a recently born baby at Roosevelt Hospital...***

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<sup>1</sup> [Erin Siegal McIntyre, \*Finding Fernanda\*.](#)

**Laurie:** His last case involved trying to track down a baby born at Roosevelt Hospital in Guatemala City.

**Julio Prado:** *Alguien se vistió como enfermera, entró a la pediatría y se llevó al niño diciéndole a la mamá que lo iban a vacunar y salió corriendo por las puertas del hospital.*

*Eng: Someone dressed like a nurse came into the pediatric unit and took the child, saying to the mother that they were going to vaccinate the child. They left — running out the doors of the hospital.*

**Diego:** He said someone dressed like a nurse came into the hospital. They told the mother they were taking the baby to get vaccinated.

**Laurie:** But the fake nurse grabbed the baby and ran away. And the mother never saw her baby again.

**Julio Prado:** *Las cameras en el hospital eran muy malas...*

*Eng: The cameras were very bad...*

**Diego:** The cameras in the hospital were so bad, Julio Prado and his team couldn't identify *anyone* — the mother *or* the fake nurse.

**MUSIC:** *mysterious synth sounds that loops with a pulsing percussion.*

**Julio Prado:** *Y...y esto, digamos, le hacía sentir una frustración enorme porque hasta ahora, me imagino a esa madre. ¿Se estará preguntando dónde está su hijo? Y yo también lo pregunto de vez en cuando que ha pasado con este niños.*

*Eng: And that...that made me feel so frustrated. Up until now, I imagine this mother. Is she asking where her child is? And I also ask myself every now and then what happened to those kids.*

**Diego:** He told us he still thinks of this mother and whether she's wondering where her child is.

**Laurie:** The 2005 law in Guatemala treated adoptions as crimes if their paperwork was faked. And that meant Julio Prado and his fellow prosecutors had some evidence to collect.

**Julio Prado:** *Cuando se incluyó este nuevo delito, nos tocó hacer un allanamiento...a raid.*

*Eng: And then, when this new crime was classified, we had to start conducting raids...*

**Laurie:** He and other prosecutors led dozens of raids at children's homes and orphanages. They found a lot of messed up paperwork. But it was difficult — often impossible — to find the people responsible.

Julio Prado and his team never solved most of the cases they investigated. He told us no one knows how many irregular adoptions might really have been crimes.

After 15 years, he quit working for the government and opened a private practice. In 2022, he published a book. It's a novel — but everything in it is based on things he actually saw.

In the book, there were two things I can't forget.

Doctors in a hospital would convince a mother to relinquish, then tell her she needed a C-section and give her anesthesia before she could change her mind...then they'd cut her open and take the baby while she was knocked out.

Other times, traffickers would pose as nurses or doctors in the hospital. They would steal the newborns, and then tell the mothers that their babies died in childbirth. The hospital would keep dead babies in the freezer to show the birth mother in case she wasn't convinced.

**MUSIC: Mysterious synth sounds that loops with a pulsing percussion fades out.**

**Laurie:** When I first read that story, I had to read it over and over because it seemed so grotesque, so unreal that it was hard to imagine, let alone that it happened more than once. But it did.

You know, that means the idea of bringing new life into the world...it kind of got turned into its opposite. I mean, it got turned into this perverse thing.

And I really don't know what to do with that.

**Diego:** It's so fucking bleak. The only thing I think you can do is to make sure people never forget. So that it never happens again.

And actually, there was a group of Guatemalan activists who were determined not to let anyone forget.

**Claudia Maria Hernandez: En 2007 entre mediados del 2007 y finales del 2007, empiezan a llegar mujeres...FADE UNDER**

**Eng Translation: In between mid-2007 and the end of 2007, women began to arrive...**

**Diego:** That's Claudia Maria Hernandez. She runs an organization in Guatemala City called Sobrevivientes — or Survivors. Originally, Sobrevivientes helped survivors of domestic abuse, but starting in 2007, they took up another cause: mothers who had their toddlers kidnapped were asking for their help.

**Claudia Maria Hernandez: Entonces empezamos a ver las cifras de niños para adopciones eran más de 2000...**

*Eng Translation: So we started to see the adoption numbers were exceeding 2000...*

**Diego:** Claudia Maria Hernandez could see that thousands of kids were being adopted every year by foreign parents. She wondered *Where are all these children coming from?*

**Claudia Maria Hernandez: Es como criminalizar la pobreza, porque entonces es justificar de que porque soy pobre, pueden venir quitarme a mis hijos...**

*Eng. Translation it's like criminalizing poverty — to justify removing children in order to put them in better conditions.*

**MUSIC: bright and mysterious glockenspiel loop, tender, flowing piano, warm percussion and calm vocals.**

**Diego:** She said foreign adoption treated poor women like criminals just because they were poor. Powerful attorneys used tricks and lies to take children. They bribed judges to rubber stamp adoptions. The system was rigged against these mothers.

**Laurie:** So by the mid 2000s, the government had tried a few ways to fix the problems with the adoption system — they tried a second DNA test starting in 2003, and the prosecution of some adoption workers, starting in 2005.

But it wasn't enough. There was always another way to outsmart the system. Pay someone off, or fake some more paperwork. It wasn't just a few bad apples.

**Diego:** And so Sobrevivientes organized a series of actions — and [they got the attention of the press](#). They worked with prosecutors to go after criminal gangs that kidnapped children and sold them into adoption. They posted flyers with the faces of missing kids. And [in 2007, a group of mothers protested at the Public Prosecutor's office, armed with empty baby strollers and cribs to symbolize their kidnapped children](#).

You know, Julio Prado's prosecutions and the pressure from Sobrevivientes and others — all of that *did* have an impact.

**Laurie:** Yeah, and international pressure had built up too. Spain, Sweden, Canada and Germany all stopped approving adoptions from Guatemala by 2002. So by 2007, the U.S. was one of the very last ones standing.

**Diego:** Here's President George W. Bush and Guatemalan president Oscar Berger at a press conference that year.

**MUSIC: bright and mysterious glockenspiel loop, tender, flowing piano, warm percussion and calm vocals fades out.**

**George W. Bush: We also talked about adoption. I don't know if my fellow citizens understand this but there are a lot of U.S. families who adopt babies from Guatemala. Thousands of babies.**

**Laurie:** Just a few months later, in December, Guatemala voted to stop international adoption completely. That law went into effect on January 1, 2008. International adoption from Guatemala was shut down.<sup>2</sup>

**THEME MUSIC: An uplifting and inspiring electronic beat begins with a strong guitar underneath begins softly and slowly and then fades.**

**Diego:** I mean, we didn't understand how big of a change that was, even though we were in Guatemala the year it happened. I was 10 years old.

**Laurie:** And we were in our own little world.

**Diego:** *My own little world — Santiago Atitlán.*

More in a bit. Stay with us.

**AD BREAK**

**ACT TWO**

**Diego:** When I look back on those trips to Guatemala when I was a kid, I was just so clueless about the big picture, you know?

I had no idea that the trip over winter break when I was ten was at the exact same time international adoption was shutting down for good.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ghrc-usa.org/Resources/2007/GuatemalaApprovesAdoptionLaw.htm>



**Laurie:** You know, I was clueless too. And I report on this shit. But I wasn't reporting that time. It was a total vacation.

**Pool water splashing, children playing.**

**Laurie:** We were with our friends from the Guatemala dinner group. We were just going to have a good time — show them Santiago Atitlán.

But of course, whenever we visit the village, we go see Isabel. So as always, we asked Dolores, our friend and translator, to help us find her.

**Diego:** But Santiago Atitlán is a small town. And we were in for a surprise. I remember we were in our room, and all of a sudden you told me to hurry up and get down to the hotel restaurant. When I went down there, there were all these women and kids staring at me.

**Dan:** Diego, come and meet these people. She's saying that's your aunt and that's your grandmother...

**Laurie:** Y ¿cómo se llama el, el padre? Cristobal! Es mi hermano.

**Laurie:** He's your biological father.

**Diego:** It was Cristobal's mother.

**Laurie:** And two of his sisters. And their kids. It was our first meeting with anyone from your birth father's side.

**Laurie:** Everybody cries every time they see you.

**Laurie:** They'd heard that we were visiting and had come to meet you. The women were crying. One by one, they came over to you and stroked your hair, wiping away their tears.

The oldest one, your grandmother — she went last. She kissed both of your cheeks and blew on your forehead with this little whistling sound.

**Grandmother speaking in Tzutujil.**

**Diego:** I had a dream like that once, where people kept greeting me. And they were just like...[blows.]

**Laurie:** Then one of the sisters took a picture of you on her flip phone. And I thought to myself, *Now your birth father will know about you.*

**Diego:** Maybe. You know, at that time I was just confused, you know, trying to take it all in. You tried to explain it to me in the moment — but how do you explain something like that?

**Laurie:** **It's because they thought you were dead because that's what the man said. Because they're related to the man.**

**Dan:** **Your dad.**

**Laurie:** **Who is your biological father.**

**Diego:** I think, just, until that moment, Cristobal had been this enigma. And someone that didn't really exist. But then, there I was, looking at his mother.

**Laurie:** Your eyes were so wide...and, like, just trying to explain that to you...was like...we didn't even understand what was going on!

**Diego:** Yeah, I mean, it was so quick and random but, um, Dan ended up asking me about it later.

**Dan:** **They thought you were dead...**

**10-year-old-Diego:** **Yeah.**

**Dan:** **What was that like for you...was that weird?**

**10-year-old-Diego:** **It was kind of weird because I thought that everyone thought that I was alive. 'Cause then...and my aunts were really happy to see me because they didn't know if Isabel was telling the truth about me being dead. 'Cause she gave me away the next day I was born. She just wanted to protect me.**

**Laurie:** Man, it's kind of painful to hear that. I mean, how did that strike you?

**Diego:** I don't know. I think I've always told myself that, you know, whatever she did, she did to protect me. And, you know, I guess I'm not really sure who's telling the truth and, like, how many truths there actually might be.

**Laurie:** So Dan and I — and you — we were clear that Isabel was family. And so we felt a responsibility. Whenever we visited, we pulled together whatever money we could spare and gave it to her in quetzales.

**Dan:** **What are we gonna do when we find Isabel?**

**10-year-old-Diego:** **Well, we have money — we saved money, and then we're going to find Isabel and give her the money. 'Cause she tried to do the best thing for me.**

**Laurie:** But this time, you brought something of your own to give her. Do you remember that?

**Diego:** Yeah. Um...

**Laurie: Sí. Es algo que Diego hace en la escuela...**

**Isabel: Ahh...**

**Diego:** It was a frickin' napkin holder I made in school.

**Laurie:** A napkin holder.

**Diego:** Out of blue construction paper. It had green feathers and a white snowman glued on.

**Laurie:** I remember Isabel thought it was a clown.

**Diego:** Yeah, I mean, they don't even have snow there.

**THEME MUSIC: a melodic, acoustic, stripped version of the theme music gradually swells and fades.**

**Diego:** You know, that trip was supposed to be just a fun trip. But when all these hard things came up, Dan asked me about it. We were sitting by the lake.

He asks me questions to help me kinda figure things out.

**Dan: So that must be very hard for you to feel like you have a family in Minnesota, but you also have a family here.**

**10-year-old-Diego: Um, not that hard.**

**Dan: No?**

**10-year-old-Diego: No.**

**Dan: Do you ever think what it would be like if you had stayed here?**

**10-year-old-Diego: Well, she probably wouldn't have been able to take care of me...**

**MUSIC: emotional strings with rising piano notes.**

**Diego:** That question Dan asked me — do I ever think what it would have been like if I'd stayed in Guatemala?

At the time, I said maybe I'd be hauling wood from the mountain or picking coffee but I don't really know, you know. But if I had been born 10 years after I was, we wouldn't be here talking about it because adopting me would have been illegal.

Starting January 1st, 2008, you couldn't adopt a baby like me.

And I really don't think I would be here — alive today — if I had been born post-shutdown.

We'll be right back.

**MUSIC: Emotional strings with rising piano notes ends.**

**AD BREAK**

**ACT THREE**

**Laurie:** Diego, you know, your adoption paperwork had more than a couple problems. A lot of things that were called irregularities when you were born — you know, less than 10 years later, those same things were called crimes.

When I was there in 1999, I heard it was against the rules for birth mothers to relinquish more than one baby.

And I just assumed that you were Isabel's one and only adoption — that's why I was so shocked when I heard about Carter and Gavin. Your birth brothers.

**Diego:** So we asked historian Rachel Nolan about that. She said she didn't know of any rule, but she had looked at thousands of adoption records. And almost all of them said it was the birth mother's first child.

**Laurie:** So that tells me the records were wrong, because just in the interviews *I* did, maybe half the birth mothers had relinquished more than one baby. Isabel had relinquished four. That *could* mean that tens of thousands of records were wrong.

**Diego:** But if it was irregular, was it necessarily corrupt? That wasn't clear.

**Laurie:** Yeah, I mean, to get you home, we paid a lawyer to clear up the confusion about your birth certificate. And we're not sure exactly how he did that. And we didn't ask. We were just so relieved to have you!

**Diego:** You didn't ask then, but lots of other people asked in the years that followed.

Including Julio Prado and Claudia Maria Hernandez...and an American investigative journalist, Erin Siegal McIntyre.

**Laurie:** Yeah, a couple years after the shutdown, she wrote a book about a Guatemalan birth mother whose daughter had been kidnapped and put up for adoption.

**Diego:** And she exposed a whole network of fraud and illegal activity.

**Laurie:** That book was a game-changer. Not only for how people in the U.S. thought about Guatemala, but for international adoption as a whole.

**Erin Siegal McIntyre:** There was absolutely an outspoken lobby at work. You know, local ministers, churches, adopt an orphan, help widows. There was a huge movement towards adopting — as this beautiful, godly endeavor that people should embrace and take on and feel wonderful about, that helped everyone. And there wasn't a lot of critical thinking around, well, how does this actually happen and why? And who's on the other end of the spectrum?

**Laurie:** She's pretty unsparing in her criticism.

**Erin Siegal McIntyre:** Honestly, my, my opinion is that it's just a bit cringe-worthy that American parents would sort of place their own self-interest as what mattered most over literally. I don't even have the words to describe it. It's a devastating human rights crisis in a very small, very impoverished, very not powerful nation that they in part created.

**Diego:** That may seem pretty harsh, but Professor Nolan actually said a similar thing. That ultimately, international adoption in Guatemala didn't have anything to do with “the best interests of the child.” Even though that's what everyone *said* they cared about.

**Rachel Nolan:** I know I should be able to say it was a terrible thing that international adoption was closed, or it was a wonderful thing given all of the abuses and all of the fraud that came before. I think if you are trying to honestly take into account the best interest of the children, which is what everyone says that they are doing, it is a little bit unclear.

**What is true, and what I'm comfortable saying is that the way that international adoptions boomed, uh, at their height in Guatemala, is not something that I think anyone who has intimate knowledge of it would care to repeat. Given the high levels of fraud and coercion of birth mothers.**

**Diego:** We can't forget that international adoption came straight out of the Guatemalan civil war in the '80s and '90s, when the army began poaching children from mostly indigenous communities.

**MUSIC:** piano strings that gradually builds with pizzicato and marimba melodie begins.

**Diego:** During the war, government forces targeted villages like Santiago Atitlán. They burned some down — and they raped and massacred people who lived in them. Sometimes the soldiers

that massacred entire villages were the same people who took orphans home and raised them as their own.<sup>3</sup>

The civil war lasted for 36 years.

**Laurie:** When it was finally over, a U.N.-backed commission looked into the damage.

**Rachel Nolan: The truth commission found that 5,000 children were forcibly disappeared during the war. 5,000 children. And the truth commission was able to trace at least 500 of those children to adoption.**

**Laurie:** Professor Nolan made a link between adoption and genocide. She said historians started using a five-point definition of genocide after World War Two.

Rachel Nolan: The first act that could be defined as genocide is familiar to everyone, which is killing members of a certain group. What is less well known is that the fifth act that qualifies for genocide is forcible adoption of children from a certain group to another group.

**Diego:** In other words, the forced adoption of children out of their culture is an act of genocide. And according to this commission, that happened in Guatemala.

So what does that mean for the thousands of Guatemalan children adopted under dubious circumstances?

**MUSIC: piano strings with pizzicato and marimba melodies that slowly ends.**

**Laurie:** Oh Diego, that is a hard one to sit with. I mean, we know that Isabel relinquished you knowingly. Right?

**Diego:** Right.

But you know, when you adopted me, people didn't think very deeply about what it meant to take a kid from one culture to another. It was kind of just assumed if the kid was loved, everything would be okay. I mean, that was you too, right?

**Laurie:** Kinda, yeah. But the cultural lens has shifted in the last 23 years. And now, we see the costs to communities and cultures. I mean, I couldn't — and wouldn't — do it again today.

**Diego:** For me, I've always felt like I missed what it means to grow up Tzutujil. What would it have meant for my birth family to keep me?

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<sup>3</sup> [What Happened at Dos Erres](#), This American Life, May 25, 2012.

I think for me, part of it is...obviously, I felt this guilt, like, I'm not a contributing member to the Tzutujil community. And, like, I won't really pass their traditions down, but I'm really happy and proud to know that in Santiago Atitlán, they're still maintaining their traditions. They're still passing down the language. They're still doing all these things. So...regardless of whether or not I can or can't contribute to this community, the community will be there long after I'm gone.

**THEME MUSIC: An uplifting and inspiring electronic beat begins with a strong guitar underneath begins softly and slowly.**

**Laurie:** Diego — sometimes I feel like the shutdown was like a judgment about our family. On how I got you from Santiago Atitlán to Saint Paul and whether any of it should have happened.

The shutdown was such a big, final thing. It felt like an answer. A big fat no.

**Diego:** I mean, it kinda was, right? I know you feel the sting, and I do too. But I can see why it happened.

**Laurie:** I can see it too — but I can also see that maybe with better guardrails and more regulation, it wouldn't have had to happen.

**Diego:** You know, no country in the world is sending its babies out for foreign adoption anymore. Most people agree that the best interests of the child are keeping them in their own communities.

Meanwhile, my generation was growing up wherever we happened to land because of who adopted us. Like — my life and our family didn't shut down in 2008. I was just a 4th grader!

**Laurie:** Yeah and in 4th grade, you were doing the Minnesota things — like hockey and fishing and stuff.

But when you became a teenager, all our questions about where you belong — they were challenged in ways we couldn't imagine.

**Diego:** And the fact that I happened to land in the U.S., and didn't stay in Guatemala like my older siblings, well, that was about to make the difference between life and death.

**THEME MUSIC: An uplifting and inspiring electronic beat begins with a strong guitar underneath swells and fades.**

**MUSIC: Bright piano and guitar with synths pulsing with discovery fades in.**

**Diego:** Next time, on All Relative: Defining Diego...

**Diego:** My birthday was the stupidest dumbest birthday that sucked, like, and I'm always going to remember.

**Diego:** I can't feel it...but...uh, yeah.

**Dan:** When you say you can't, you can't feel what?

**Diego:** The kidneys, like, going pshh.

**Dr. Barnum:** So, uh, thank you guys for coming in today. We do have some information back on the biopsy that you had from the lymph node.

**Dan:** That's when it hit me, it's like, Oh, my God, this, you know, he could die. And this could be the end of his life.

**MUSIC:** Bright piano and guitar with synths pulsing with discovery fades out.

**AD BREAK**

**THEME MUSIC:** A soft, acoustic, stripped down version of the theme begins.

**Diego:** All Relative: Defining Diego is a production of Somethin' Else and Sony Music Entertainment.

**Laurie:** It's written and hosted by me, Laurie Stern.

**Diego:** And me — Diego Xicay Luke.

**Laurie:** Mia Warren is our senior producer.

**Diego:** Associate producers are India Witkin and Kyra Assibey-Bonsu.

**Laurie:** Executive producers are Lizzie Jacobs, Jude Kampfner, and Tom Koenig.

**Diego:** Lizzie Jacobs is our editor, and we had additional editorial help from Megan Detrie on this episode.

**Laurie:** Dara Hirsch is our engineer.

**Diego:** And we had additional mixing by Sam Bair.

**Laurie:** Our theme song was composed by Gautam Srikishan.



**Diego:** Production management help from Ike Egbetola and Lily Hambly. Fact-checking by Natsumi Ajisaka.

**Laurie:** Our adoptee consultant is Erik Mohn.

**Diego:** Translation by Dolores Ratzan.

And special thanks to my dad, Dan Luke.

**Laurie:** Dan, we love you and thank you for your big heart and your great years.

**Diego:** If you loved the show, follow us on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, Stitcher or wherever you get your podcasts.

**THEME MUSIC: A soft, acoustic, stripped down version of the theme ends.**

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