

"OK, Mr. Silva. Maybe I sounded like I was trying to rush things a bit. But you see, I booked my flight out for tomorrow evening so I can spend a couple days in Rio to see what that's about." There was an uncomfortable silence during which no one spoke. Finally, Wally said, "I guess I would like to go to my hotel and rest up. Then we can have dinner at 9:00. OK?" Ventura knew that President Silva was not warming to Wally, so he decided to see if he could get the relationship back on track. Since he and Wally were about the same age and held the same status within their respective organizations, he felt comfortable doing this.

"That sounds very good, Wally," Ventura said. "We will pick you up at 9:00. And please, call me Agosto."

Once he was settled in his hotel room, Wally phoned Henry Williams to check in as instructed.

"Yeah, Dad," Wally said. "I met with them at the airport. They drove me to the hotel and we're going to dinner tonight to get acquainted. Can you believe they want to eat at 9 pm?"

"That's good," Williams replied. "Did you see their facility yet?"

"No. The president, Mr. Silva, is kinda stiff. He said he wants to get to know us better before he talks business. I think he's doing the Latin American thing about *mañana*. I tried to get the ball rolling this afternoon, but he wouldn't hear of it."

"Well, he's just being cautious, like I am. I like to know a man personally before I enter into a long-term contract with him, too. Wally, this isn't like selling cars. It's building relationships that have to work day after day. I'm sorry I threw you into this situation alone."

"You know," Wally said, "I think he's upset that you aren't here."

"I hope you conveyed my apology to him," Williams replied, "and explained that this deposition came up at the last minute."

"I sure did."

"OK. Call me tomorrow afternoon to let me know how the dinner conversation went. How long do you think you'll be out there?"

"Well, I made reservations to leave for Rio tomorrow evening for a couple days," Wally said.

"Why are you going to Rio? Who is out there?" Williams asked.

"I promised Mindy I'd check out Rio as a possible vacation spot for later this year."

"Wally, you don't work for Mindy. You work for me. If Mr. Silva wants to talk with you for the next few days, that's exactly what you're going to do. Forget about going to Rio!"

That evening at the restaurant, Mr. Silva insisted that Wally sit across the table from him and Mr. Agosto.

"Mr. Astor, I want to thank you for joining us for a Brazilian business dinner this evening," said Mr. Silva. "We always start with cafezinho, a very strong espresso. We think it helps the conversation to flow."

For the next hour, Wally found himself talking freely about his wife, their relationship, his in-laws, his childhood and parents, and many other topics that would never find their way into a business discussion in the U.S. To encourage Wally, Mr. Silva and Agosto shared humorous stories about themselves, and shared their favorite sports, movies, pastimes, wines, and vacation areas.

Their free exchange about themselves continued throughout the dinner, and as the three men were served cafezinho after the meal, they began to talk business for the first time that evening.

President Silva introduced the topic.

"Wally, I think tomorrow morning you should join us to see the plant. I want you to meet with our Purchasing and Quality Assurance Managers. We pride ourselves on using the best materials and maintaining the strictest tolerance standards. After you are more familiar with how we do things, we will meet again for dinner before your flight to Rio and discuss when Mr. Williams can visit us to resume exploring our potential business partnership."

"Sir," Wally began, "I cancelled my trip to Rio so I can learn more about your operation, your products, and where our mutual interests may lie. Perhaps we can have dinner again tomorrow night and decide what our next steps should be for the following few days."

"I'm very happy to hear you say that. And please, call me Alessandro."