HELLO AMERICA!—Life has many ups and downs as most of us know. Salvatore Scorza’s life is no exception.

What “saved” him is the fact that he was born an artist. One of his uncles was a world-renowned sculptor where some of his work is in the Los Angeles Coliseum, who he met once when he was 10 years of age. Never spoke to him again nor contacted him.

His parents were born in America, in New York City. His family has been in America 131 years—four generations. His family is from Sicily.

It may sound corny, but when he graduated from high school, his mother wrote in his autograph book the following: “Always make me proud of you.” That simple line, filled with love and great pride, stayed with him all his life. He is now 79 years of age. He went to a public high school in New York City, ART and DESIGN was its name. It taught him, and others, how to work, and become a commercial artist.

Sal grew up in Brooklyn, New York, in Bensonhurst. That neighborhood at that time (1940s to 1970s) was known by law enforcement as the “Mafia Capital of America.”

There he grew up with people from all parts of the world, Jews from Europe who came after WWII, Blacks who had been living in Bensonhurst since the 1800s. His father had gone to school with a few of them. Most where decent hard-working people and a few of the others became some of the most feared men in the American/Sicilian Mafia.

When Sal graduated High School, Carlo Gambino offered him an opportunity that I guess most people would have jumped on, NOT SAL! Part of his family worked at the highest level of both the Gambino and Bonanno families. They were part of his world when Sal was a kid and young man, because of circumstance, NOT choice!

When Sal turned down Carlo Gambino’s offer his life was on its course.

His father taught him as long as he can remember. His dad had NOT had an easy time in his life. He had to leave high school to go to work at the ripe old age of 12. His father died and he had to pick up the slack! He worked hard, he made custom furniture, he loved his family, protected us all and NEVER backed down from any crisis life threw at him, ever!

Sal tried to follow his lead as any child should do. He and his mother taught him and his siblings where there is love, give greater love, respect others and be decent to people. How Sal’s Entry In Publishing Started

His introduction into magazine publishing was thru a bartender who worked at Jimmy’s Bar and Grill in Bensonhurst. His brother was an editor for several Men’s Magazines, you know— pres! Crime stories and a few skin books. Sal did illustrations for them.

Years later Sal became corporate Art Director of Billboard Publications where he met his ex-wife, who to this day is the Awards Director of the Latin Grammys. Once he became part of the Entertainment World, Music and Film, his life took a major upturn.

Sal went on to become the designer of the Grammy Awards program publication (13 years), American Music Awards (7 years), CMA Awards (7 years) and Gold—en Globe Awards (17 years) and on, as needed. Sal created graphic work for Mr. Sinatra, Michael Jackson, and other well-known individuals, and got to know some of them on a personal level as well as a business level.

Remember, Sal choose his life’s course, and his education, be it ONLY a high school diploma, put him in a position to do well in life, and as his father would say, “If you HAVE TO WORK all your life it better be something you damn well like to do. Otherwise you’re going to be a lousy human being.”

It doesn’t matter what color your skin is, what your religion is, what your heritage is, YOU have to decide what YOU want from life!

Sal had to deal with a great deal of prejudice while he was a kid, being an American of Italian/Sicilian heritage. Check the history books.

He believes that RESPECT is much more important than love. You choose respect.

Love is an emotion which takes control of you. What do you think would have happened to him, if he’d taken Carlo Gambino’s offer, would he have become a millionaire? Would he be dead already? Sal did what he loved to do and is still at it, and still pissin’ some people off.

HOLLYWOOD—Cristiano Ronaldo has become the first soccer player in history to become a billionaire during his career. According to Forbes, the Juventus star made $105 million before tax in the last year, making his total worth over the $1 billion mark. Just goes to show you money can’t buy health. He has enough money to buy his own private jet, which normally goes from $2 million to $100 million.

I’m sure he can certainly afford his own jet, since to maintain it costs about a million a year, including hangar and operating costs. He also boasts a number of sponsorships and business ventures. He ranked sixth, according to Forbes in the top celebrities in 2019. He was behind Messis in fourth, Kanye West, Ed Sheeran, Kylie Jenner and Taylor Swift who took the top spot. One of his most significant sponsorships deal is with Nike, which was renewed around the same time he extended his last Madrid contract. He has endorsements with Armani, Tag Heuer, Egyptian Steel, Herbalife, Italia Independent, Cleas, PokerStars and Castrol just to name a few.

Besides representing brands, Ronaldo has created his own around the CR7 image. In addition, Ronaldo has two hotels—named Pestana CR7— in Portugal, one in the capital Lisbon, and the other one in Funchal, his hometown on the island of Madeira. Pestana CR7— is also scheduled to open in New York in 2020. The 78,069-square-foot, features 177 super charming rooms in Times Square.

The soccer superstar tested positive for COVID-19, the Portuguese federation said on October 13. The federation said Ronaldo was doing well and had no symptoms and in isolation. The published report did not specify when he tested positive. Ronaldo played in the 0-0 draw at France in the Nations League on October 11. Ronaldo was dropped from the country’s Nations league match against Sweden on Wednesday. The federation said Ronaldo’s result prompted another round of tests for the rest of the Portugal squad. It said everyone else in the team tested negative. The squad which played on October 14 won 3-0. He is among many players who have tested positive for COVID-19, including his teammate Rugani and many more.

The 35-year-old Juventus forward will miss matches which include a Serie A clash with Crotone and a Champions League group game against Dynamo Kyiv. Now, despite surging cases of COVID-19 across the globe, many soccer players have left their clubs to play international games. Ronaldo has scored three league goals in two games for Juventus so far this season. He also has scored twice as Portugal defeated Sweden 2-0 in the Nations league last month.

With his first goal against Sweden, Ronaldo became the second player ever to reach the milestone of 100 international goals. He is now eight goals behind the all-time international record of 109 set by Iranian Ali Daei. Earlier this year, Ronaldo flew back to Madeira when coronavirus cases started to rise across Europe and soccer was suspended. He helped the Italian team Juventus lift the Serie A title following the league’s resumption.

Ronaldo has added movie star to his resume. One of his films was titled “Ronaldo,” which gives us a little insight into what makes him a phenomenal soccer player. Excuse me, a superstar soccer player, hounded by fans and the press. I first met Ronaldo, when I was asked to cover the Portuguese national team back in 2014.

My daughter Kelly Olszuk also appeared in the film as a “photographer,” when she also assisted me in covering the Portuguese National team. The film premiere was held on November 9, 2015 in both in London and New York City. While some people adore him, others dislike him. One thing is for sure, you can’t please everyone. When you achieve his level of greatness, I personally think he doesn’t care. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Rise’s Scoop: Latino superstar, Nelson Sierra, has recently released his latest single “No lo Besos,” you can stream it on Spotify.