

# Dynasty

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Those incomparable, indefatigable (and sometimes incorrigible) Odios! Last month, when the U.S. Attorney's Office bagged then-Miami City Manager Cesar Odio on corruption charges, a groundswell of indignation rose from the community. The radio airwaves fairly crackled with outrage at the injustice. Defense fund machinery was quickly cranked up, with promises of hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal aid. But perhaps nowhere was the surge of support more in evidence than at Odio's initial court appearance, where he was surrounded by a phalanx of relatives.

They stood stoically while Odio angrily asserted his innocence. They collectively shouted down the questions of presumptuous reporters. "Don't believe everything you read!" roared Odio's brother Javier when someone asked Cesar whether he was wearing the \$4000 watch the FBI alleged he wanted to purchase with dirty money.

The message was clear: No matter how tough the days ahead might prove to be, those nearest and dearest to Odio would be there every step of the way to see him through.

We here at New Times have quite a soft spot in our journalistic hearts when it comes to family unity. Still, such a prodigious outpouring -- there must have been two dozen brothers, sisters, children, uncles, and in-laws at that courthouse! -- left us with just one question: Who in the heck are all these Odios? And if there's one thing that tickles us more than family values, it's an unanswered question. So, figuring that we'll all be seeing a lot of this uncommonly loyal bunch in the coming months, we set out to chart the Odio clan.

Setting a goal of tracking the entire Odio lineage would be unrealistic, for several reasons. For one thing, the family is huge. Amador Odio, Cesar's father, sired ten children. By the time he died in 1991, there were also twenty-eight grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren; the offspring are scattered across several states and foreign countries and carry a bewildering array of married names, maiden names, and (in a few instances) creative aliases.

In assembling this abridged list, we looked to obituaries and civil and criminal lawsuits, not to mention the final report of the Warren Commission. We talked to current and former city employees, as well as developers who did business with the city during Cesar Odio's nearly eleven-year reign as manager. Even considering the obstacles, the resulting family tree was so broadly limbed that for space reasons we pruned anyone we figured wouldn't be of interest to our readership. Three of Cesar's sisters and two of his children, for example, failed to make the cut. We did, however, try to make room for everyone whose adventures had done the Odio name proud -- and, of course, for those whose misadventures appeared to have afflicted the family tree with a touch of Dutch Elm disease.

So pay close attention, info junkies. You're holding in your hands the key to the most interesting political family to have hit the headlines in Miami in . . . oh, a year at the very least.

Before arriving in Miami in 1967, Cesar Odio's mother (1) Sara spent six years in a Cuban women's prison for her political activities. In a twist on house arrest, part of her sentence was served in her own home, which had been converted into a jail by Fidel Castro.

The family matriarch wields considerable power in the City of Miami. In an interview on WQBA-AM (1140) last year, Cesar Odio told host Marta Flores that his 82-year-old mother knows more about Miami than he does. That's probably not an exaggeration. Top city staffers have confided to us that Sara often called to monitor their work or lobby for a program her son wanted to implement; a developer told of seeking a zoning change and feeling compelled to leapfrog Cesar and plead for the variance directly with Sara. Such clout apparently came with perks: A former city staffer says she routinely used a city car to chauffeur Sara to the beauty parlor, the bank, and the drugstore -- on city time.

Joining Sara on the rolls of Cuban political prisoners was (2) Amador Odio, Sr., her late husband and Cesar's father. Amador ran what is popularly described as Cuba's most successful transportation company. He was also great friends with Carlos Prio Socarras, the allegedly corrupt leader who was overthrown by Fulgencio Batista. Soon after that 1952 coup, Amador escaped to Guatemala with Cesar. They returned to Cuba two years later, and Amador supported the early days of Castro's revolution. Doubtless his backing came to an end sometime before Castro sentenced him to 30 years in jail for his political activities.

With both parents incarcerated, the task of raising the family was left to (3) Cesar, who by then had fled to Miami. The eldest Odio offspring was busy enough, first helping to manage Maurice Ferre's family concrete empire, Maule Industries (which went bankrupt), and then founding his own company, Trans Florida Truck Lines (which also went bankrupt). Given access to public money when then-Miami Mayor Ferre had him hired as an assistant city manager in 1980, Cesar began moving into position to steer Miami toward what Police Chief Donald Warshaw now calls "the worst financial crisis in the city's 100-year history."

Declared interim city manager Merrett Stierheim weeks after Odio's forced retirement: Miami may be as much as \$68 million in debt. Declared Odio two days before the Justice Department charged him in the kickback conspiracy: "I am extremely proud of my seventeen years of public service."

Somewhat less proud of Cesar is (4) Julia I. Odio. Cesar's first wife divorced him in 1971, only to remarry him in 1978. She lost him again in 1981, when he left her. The couple raised three kids, the most distinguished of whom is (5) Cesar T. Odio. He is the head basketball coach at Barry University.

The ex-city manager's current wife is (6) Marian Prio Odio, a.k.a. Maria Antonieta Prio. She is the daughter of the aforementioned (7) Carlos Prio Socarras, who killed himself outside his Miami Beach home in 1977 at the age of 73. Among Prio's shenanigans while president of Cuba: He pardoned a wealthy Cuban businessman convicted of raping a nine-year-old girl, then appointed the man his civil secretary. A cranky young gadfly named Fidel Castro subsequently found deeds that revealed the businessman had transferred ownership of several estates to a corporation owned by Prio.

Carlos's brother (8) Antonio Prio Socarras also knew the taste of political intrigue: He was Cuba's treasury minister during the first year of his brother's rule. He might have been minister longer had it not been for pesky allegations that he stole between \$37 million and \$47 million in paper money that was earmarked for incineration. He died in Miami in 1990 at the age of 85.

The second-oldest of Amador Odio's five sons is Amador's namesake, (9) Amador Jr. To tell the two apart, Junior came to be known as Rocky. On some bad checks he was caught passing, Rocky also referred to himself as Luis Dabarganes, Luis Dobarganes, Amado Vina, and Alejo Odio.

Indeed, Rocky has compiled quite a rap sheet. Dade criminal court records show that he has been convicted on 25 felony counts of passing worthless checks (plus one misdemeanor count of same), nine counts of uttering a forged instrument, and two counts of forgery. Additionally, adjudication was withheld and credit granted for time served for a 1990 charge of cocaine possession, as it was on a 1976 charge of barbiturate sale and delivery. Rocky has twice been convicted of violating probation.

Convictions on seven of the forged-check counts came in 1978. That same year Rocky pleaded guilty to selling cocaine to undercover Miami cops in a 1976 deal that was initiated near Miami City Hall. According to court records, Rocky planned to sell the cop two kilos of uncut cocaine but, "because his brothers had let him down," sold only a half-gram from the stash of brother Javier. He told the officer to come back the next day for the major delivery, but the officer decided to arrest him and Javier immediately. In the paddy wagon after the bust, Rocky allegedly said "that if [the police] gave him and his brother a break, that he could really turn [them] on to some really heavy narcotic drugs -- pounds -- kilos." In 1990 Rocky pleaded no-contest after a police officer found a gram of cocaine in his jacket pocket. (More on Javier below.)

Rocky married (10) Lorraine Odette Odio (nee Lorraine O. Rubino) in September 1975. Lorraine was 18 at the time, Rocky had just turned 25. By the time Lorraine was 32, they had separated and she'd moved to Crossville, Tennessee, with their daughter. In a divorce petition filed in 1995, Lorraine accused Rocky of failing to

pay child support or alimony since the separation. (It is not known whether the petition was successful.)

Rocky's sometime partner in crime, as already noted, was his brother (11) Javier (a.k.a. Xavier Albaro Odio). Although nine months younger than Rocky, Javier rivals his mentor in criminal accomplishments. Dade court records reveal several arrests and convictions for cocaine possession and sale. Charges of narcotics possession and contributing to the delinquency of a minor in 1971 were dismissed, and Javier was given credit for time served for a 1976 misdemeanor charge of passing a worthless check. He did pay a civil penalty assessed in 1994 when the registration expired on his boat.

Javier was on probation stemming from a ten-year sentence for drug possession when he and Rocky were nailed in '76 selling cocaine to the Miami cops. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit a felony and to possession and sale of a controlled substance. His one-year sentence was a legal formality; his probation was revoked. Upon his release from state prison, he didn't go back to drug peddling. Instead he found rewarding work assisting private developers eager to do business with the City of Miami. For a fee, Javier helped shepherd zoning variances or construction plans through the bureaucracy. His brother the city manager assisted his rehabilitation by granting him generous access to city employees and departments.

But alas, the lure of illicit activity was too strong. Last October a Miami Beach police officer spotted Javier's car weaving through a residential street at 4:45 a.m. According to the incident report, when Javier was pulled over he shouted at the officer: "Call my brother!" The officer noted a "white streak of powder substance just below Odio's nose." Convicted and sentenced September 24 for drug possession, Javier hasn't stayed off the police blotter. As the FBI closed in on Cesar last month, Javier graciously diverted press attention with his latest arrest, by Miami police, for domestic violence after his girlfriend called 911 to report a "husband-wife dispute."

In stark contrast to Javier is (12) Frederick Odio. The fourth brother came this close to a clean rap sheet. Not quite close enough, though; on August 18 of this year, the 42-year-old was arrested for battery. According to the incident report on file at the Metro Dade Police Department, Frederick was at a South Dade Public workshop

METRO-Dade Police Department, Frederick was at a South Dade Publix, verbally criticizing his wife (13) Alma for spending too much money when he "became angry and punched [Alma] in the mouth, causing a small laceration in [her] upper lip." That wasn't Fred's first encounter with the law, though. In 1981, his ex-wife (14) Cynthia Odio (a.k.a. Cynthia Robin Zalis Garcia) had Frederick ordered into custody to force him to pay \$1620 in overdue child support. In 1984 she took him back to court to collect an overdue \$7301.10. (The outcome of the second suit is not known.)

Like father, like son. One of Frederick and Cynthia's two children, (15) Fred Jr. (a.k.a. Freddie), was sued in 1993 by (16) Kim Marie Hutson for \$31.27 per week in child support for their illegitimate daughter. (The outcome of that suit is not known.) Freddie was nineteen at the time the lawsuit was filed. He was eighteen in February 1992, when he was convicted of violating probation (for an unknown offense that isn't listed in the county's records) and carrying a concealed firearm (a felony).

Cesar's youngest brother (17) Jorge (a.k.a. George Carlos del Toro) seems to have stuck to the path blazed by brothers Javier and Rocky. In 1987, nine years after he was convicted of disorderly conduct, the Miami Herald reported that George had been arrested and charged with cocaine possession and conspiracy to distribute cocaine, having allegedly arranged an eight-kilo deal with a contact in Cleveland. Officers from the Drug Enforcement Administration nabbed George after they saw him "pass large sacks" from a source's car to the trunk of his silver 1983 Audi, which was parked in the lot of the city's Melreese Golf Course. George pleaded not guilty but was convicted of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and sentenced to five years in prison, with the stipulation that he serve at least six months.

In 1986 George separated from his wife, (18) Christine Louise Odio, after nearly five years of marriage. Christine petitioned the court for alimony and child support -- and a restraining order. A sympathetic Dade County judge forbade George's "harassing, assaulting, or beating" his wife. The couple has apparently reconciled; they now run a Subway sandwich shop in Minnesota.

Cesar's brothers aren't the only family members in the public eye. Some of his sisters have also made names for themselves. (19) Silvia Odio, second oldest of all the children, told the Warren Commission that "Leon Oswald" and two anti-Castro Cubans stopped by her Dallas apartment to brag that they were going to kill John F

Cesar's sister (20) Annie Laurie Mallo (a.k.a. Annie Odio Mallo) is the treasurer of Amigos de Corpus Christi Church in Miami. If she loves her brother deeply it's understandable: Cesar once gave the Amigos \$460 in city money from a discretionary fund despite rejecting similar requests from other churches on the grounds that "the City does not make donations to any church-related organizations."

Annie's husband collected much more than \$460 from the city during Cesar's tenure as manager. (21) Nelson Mallo, a well-known architect and a member of Cesar's Miami Rowing Club, won a contract to oversee the \$16 million renovation of the Orange Bowl. (His Coral Gables-based firm, Urban Architects, had turned in the low bid, and the city attorney ruled there was no conflict of interest.) More recently Mallo cashed in on a \$96,500 contract for the design of Northwestern Estates, a low-income housing project in Liberty City funded with city money. (Javier Odio thoughtfully introduced the project's developers to the city administration.)

The couple's seventeen-year-old son completes a Mallo public-money trifecta. Erik Mallo worked for a month at a \$5.50 per hour job in the Manuel Artime Theater on SW Eighth Street.

Last but not least, a space on the family tree must certainly be reserved for (23) Richard Sharpstein. Though not a blood relative, the 45-year-old Miami defense attorney has provided so much legal assistance to the Odios that he should be granted the status of honorary family member. Sharpstein represented Javier in the recent domestic violence and cocaine matters, George in his cocaine bust, Rocky in his latest drug bust, and Frederick in his child-support lawsuit.

In fact, by the time Cesar arrived in Sharpstein's office to challenge the corruption charges, the Odios were evidently running a tab: The attorney told reporters that he

took Cesar's case without even asking about money.

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The advertisement is a horizontal banner with a cyan and white halftone background. On the left is the 'CAP CITY' logo with 'FINE DINER and BAR' underneath. In the center is a close-up of a woman's face. To the right is a milkshake with whipped cream and a cherry. Text reads: 'WHOLE LOTTA Shakin' GOIN' ON' and 'MARTINIS, MILKSHAKES & MORE RESERVE YOUR TABLE ►'.

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