



## STUDIO OCHENTA ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

### MIJA (ENGLISH) – 02: TATIKA

[00:05] - Mija

Hi I'm Mija. Mija means my daughter in Spanish. And this podcast is about my family: those alive, those long gone, and those still dreaming. Now here's what you need to know about Tatika. She's loud. She loves deeply, and forgives always, and she is very brave. That Tatika is my mother. So here goes. Ten minutes to tell her story.

[00:39] - Mija

Tatika is one of three children born to Yita, hairdresser and Titi, journalist. She has an older brother Memo and a younger sister, Melita.

[00:51] - Mija

Growing up, Tatika and her sister Melita were always together.

[00:54] - Mija

The two beauties of the neighborhood, young suitors often came to the house to spend time chatting over cafe con leche, with Yita's supervision of course. They were inseparable and hardly ever argued. But. Once when they were teenagers, they went out for ice cream. And out of nowhere, Melita decided to slap Tatika right across the face.

[01:16] - Mija

They hadn't had an argument or anything before. It was just a feeling she'd had.

[01:22] - Mija

When it happened, they stood there in silence for a few seconds then they burst out laughing.

[01:27] - Mija

To this day, both sisters swear there was something in the air, the sun had been shining. Life was calm and beautiful. It needed a bit of excitement.

[01:46] - Mija

Now you might have guessed that Tatika has an affinity for music. In fact, Tatika was a tuna. Now a tuna is not a fish in Colombia.

[01:54] - Mija

It's something entirely different.

[02:10] - Mija

Imagine a woman, wearing a pair of high waisted pants, with a bright red Cumberbund, a white ruffled high collared shirt, and a grand cape covered in ribbons and pins. Tuna is basically a university club. Everyone sings and plays one of the following: a tambourine, a mandolin, guitars, bass, Viola etc. And they go on tour, performing in competitions. Once you're a tuna, you're always a tuna, and you carry that music with you always.

[02:48] - Mija

When she graduated, Tatika became a secretary in a law office.

[02:52] - Mija

In this life, she was a musician and a career woman. Now I know what you're thinking. Why would she leave. I've asked her a few times, and the answer always changes: I wanted to see the world, I wanted to live away from home, I wanted independence.

[03:08] - Mija

The truth is it was a mix of a lot of things: you see Tatika, a smart, beautiful, young woman hadn't gotten married yet and in Colombia, back then if you weren't married, then you couldn't leave your parents house and there was something in Tatika that made her feel like she was worth more than that, more than waiting around to find love to start her life. Plus, she'd been fairly unlucky until then though she'd had many suitors it never worked out because she was cursed.

[03:41] - Mija

Someone had put a curse on her to keep her from finding love. She didn't really believe in all that, but her best friend told her that maybe all her bad luck was bad juju and convinced her to see a bruja. The Bruja told her that checking was simple: take an egg and rub it all over your body and put it under your bed and go to sleep for the night. In the morning, take it and break it over the toilet. If you're cursed, the yolk will be black. Then we'll see what we can do.

[04:13] - Mija

So she went home that night, took an egg from the kitchen, and did the ritual. Tatika swears to this day that the yolk was black like the night. She returned the next day and asked for a cure. That's a pretty bad one you've got. The bruja said. I believe an ex of yours has placed a curse on you so you'll never marry or have children.

[04:35] - Mija

"Bathe in rose water tonight and pray to La Virgen. It'll help, maybe." Some time passed and Tatika grew listless. She longed for independence, to build her own life with or without a husband. And so she decided that it was time to take her destiny into her own hands and convinced her boss to recommend her for a visa to go to New York. Maybe this adventure would help her find what she was missing in her life. I often think about what that day was like, the day she said goodbye to her whole family. The day she left to create her new life in America.

[05:06] - Mija

Yiita wakes up early to make her favorite breakfast: Arepas con Chocolate caliente. Tatika wakes up determined. The sadness of leaving won't hit her just yet. Not now. Now she's buzzing with excitement. She's going to Nueva York! She gets dressed quickly and double checks her suitcases. She looks at herself in the mirror and fixes her hair. She thinks, the next time I look at myself I will be in America.

[05:40] - Mija

She sits down to breakfast and make small talk with her mother about the weather and flight details. As for Titi, well, he was against this adventure from the start, so he reads the paper drinks his coffee and says nothing.

[05:55] - Mija

Her brother and sister have already left home. Melita married young and now lives in her own house with her husband and kids. Memo too has found someone and has moved in with her. She is the last to leave the nest. As she eats, she thinks happily, it's about time. The whole family comes to see her off at the airport. She's nervous about missing her flight with all the goodbyes, so she hugs everyone quickly and hurries off. It is only when she gets to her seat that she starts to tear up.

[06:31] - Mija

She tries not to cry, but the warm salty tears stream down her cheeks as she looks out over the wing. She sees her home: the beautiful mountainous city of Bogota.

[06:40] - Mija

She closes her eyes and sleep comes quickly. When she wakes up.

[06:49] - Mija

It is dark. She looks out the window and sees the lights of the city. Those impossible eternal lights of New York. She feels hopeful scared and excited all at once.

[07:03] - Mija

They land.

[07:07] - Mija

She enters the terminal, passes through immigration, and finds her suitcase. When she leaves, no one is there to greet her or help her with the life she has packed, carried thousands of miles to bring here. She steps outside in the cold and flags down a taxi and goes to her friend's apartment in Jackson Heights.

[07:34] - Mija

And, despite the trains rumbling overhead, she hears Spanish on the street, and all at once, she gets this feeling of : this is home.

[07:51] - Mija

New York is an impossible city as she would soon find. But those first few days she felt like she could do anything. She was free to be herself. Entire.

[08:07] - Mija

Now close your eyes and picture New York. What do you see?

[08:13] - Mija

Skyscrapers. Yellow cabs. Loads of people walking down the street en masse. Hotdog vendors. Wall Street. Central Park. The Met Museum. Times Square.

[08:20] - Mija

Most people don't see Queens. With its globe in Flushing Meadow Park, people skateboarding or bike riding around it. Queens Boulevard, with its malls where kids hang out after school.

[08:36] - Mija

The bodegas that are open 24/7 for anything you'd ever need.

[08:40] - Mija

The immigrant communities that keep the city going.

[08:44] - Mija

This is Tatika's New York. It's the park where she taught me how to ride a bike. The malls where she'd buy Christmas presents for Mano and me. The bodega where she'd buy lottery tickets. The working-class people that were her neighbors, friends and colleagues.

[09:00] - Mija

This was her America. It's been over 30 years now. The adventure lasted longer than she imagined, but it's been a great ride. Her first job involved sewing labels onto Jean jackets. And she was good at her job.

[09:16] - Mija

So good that her bosses promoted her to work as a manager at the head office on Forty second Street. And she learned English by watching American television. But she kept her culture close to her heart. Never missed a Colombian Day Parade and made it at for breakfast every morning without fail.

[09:38] - Mija

She became a U.S. citizen. The curse lifted. She married and had two children and she spoke Spanish to them, filling their lives with music.

[09:50] - Mija

When tragedy struck the city ,Tatika's family asked her if she would come back home. She said no.

[00:09:59.090] - Mija

This is my home. I am American.

**FINAL DEL EPISODIO**