

S1 Karolina Grisales Dominguez.mp4

Speaker1: I was 18 years old when I graduated from high school in July 1997. And a couple of months later, my brother Andrés Felipe graduated as a visual artist. At 21, Andrés Felipe, whom I affectionately called Pipe, was the third of my four siblings. We were a large family of seven people, where I was the youngest daughter, the spoiled of all the boys in the house, and Pipe was the artist who loved to paint. He painted with tempera, with watercolors, with oils and sometimes the house had a particular smell of turpentine and all his shirts had a peculiar paint stain, which did not make my mother very happy. Three years apart. Pipe was the one who accompanied me everywhere I went. He would wait for me at the end of classes and with the money he earned as a private painting teacher, we would go to a store where he would buy me posters of my favorite band, often the one I was a fan of for most of my adolescence. I had my room papered with posters of Ricky Martin, Andy, Ashley, Alexis Abel and Ricky Lopez. Thanks to the sponsorship of my dad and my brothers. Pipe and I almost always hung out together, with the same friends, with cousins or simply when we were at home I would see him painting in his studio. There we had coffee and talked about everything. One day, in the middle of a conversation, Pipe noticed that Mom was a little sad because it was coming up to the first anniversary of my grandfather's death and she felt that Christmas without her father would not be the same.

Speaker1: My brother hugged her and said, "Don't worry, Mom, I'll take care of getting the whole family together. And I saw them hugging, but the truth is that I didn't believe in that promise because our family is too big and summoning them was not going to be an easy task. By the end of the year. Pipe, whom my grandfather in life affectionately called Gusano de queso, because since he was a little boy he was skinny and pale-skinned, so much so that he seemed anorexic to me, he was a very active young man. I remember he had a venture where he worked with his group of best friends, the magneticians, handcrafting a thousand little cardboard houses for nativity scenes. And I remember that it was a marathon two-week journey with long, cold nights, lots of coffee and the occasional scalpel cut. Although he was very active, on December 5, Pipe had to stop because he felt severe abdominal pain and when he went to a private alternative medicine doctor, he was told that it was gastritis. So my brother came home with gastritis medicine. But on Candlelight Day my brother felt that sharp pain in his abdomen again and fell unconscious in the middle of the hallway.

Speaker1: A hallway that looked more like an art gallery with its works on display. Dad immediately ran off with him to the hospital and I stayed at home not quite understanding what was going on. At the hospital the doctors could not find an answer despite all the tests. They only found out what was wrong when they operated on him and discovered that his abdominal pain was due to a congenital intestinal hernia. Something that for a teenager like me, just graduated from high school, was too much information. And it was only much later that I realized that the hernia was located in a knot between the large intestine and the small intestine, something impossible to see with X-rays. My pee-pee brother, the rich worm, was not a very good eater and now I understood why. Congenital intestinal hernia is a complex diagnosis and its symptoms can be confused with gastritis pain or anorexia. After the surgery, my brother was hospitalized for two weeks and to recover he had to follow a strict liquid diet. During this time I was able to visit him only once and when I saw him, he was paler than usual. I sat on the edge of the bed and took his hand, which was freezing cold, while he, somewhat disoriented in time, asked me about the Christmas novenas and I answered that we were already on the third day. Since Pipa was already in the process of recovery, it was not necessary for someone to stay with him, so my parents only accompanied her during visiting hours.

Speaker1: My brother had not eaten anything solid for several days. And you know how a man gets when he is hungry. They neither hear, nor see, nor understand. So one day, being alone, feeling a little better, he took advantage when the nurse passed by with the food cart and she, without checking the medical history to know what kind of treatment My brother had, handed him a chicken soup with rice. The rice and all the food contained in the soup damaged the surgery and Pipe had to enter the operating room for a second time. This second procedure consisted of cutting the part of the intestine affected by the chicken soup and since the large intestine did not match the small intestine, my brother was in intensive care. On December 24, 1997, the clock stopped at 14:00 in the afternoon. My parents were not at home. They were on their way to the hospital. One of my brothers hung up the phone, but didn't say anything to me. I only heard minutes later the screams of rage from my siblings because a cousin had called to say that Pipe had died of peritonitis. At that moment I felt an emptiness in my stomach. I had just had my nails painted and carelessly took the most recent

photograph I had of my brother Pipe. A photo in which he was on the couch with his legs bent and showing his palms wide open.

Speaker1: I could only see her smile, her eyebrows, her bushy eyebrows and her straight brown hair. I took the photo and crumpled it completely against my chest, so hard that the polish stuck to the paper and the smell of fresh nails mixed with the salty taste of tears running down my face. That was his last photograph. It had been an intense few days. Finally, Pipe kept his mother's promise and brought the whole family together for Christmas. I expected to wake up from that nightmare with a dry throat, pale skin and sweat on my hands. And then I started to remember every second and every detail of what I had done right or wrong in my house in the last 30 days. And although I now think that errors in patient care can be anything from a bad prescription to an oversight in the review of medical records. I think the first risk is in the late consultation. Think that your own life is in your hands and today the risk of suffering from a silent disease such as congenital hernia is higher. So having a timely diagnosis does not take time away. A preventive medical checkup to take care of you should come first.