



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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The 3 New Amigos – What's the Difference?

RUBEN DIAZ January 22, 2015

What You Should Know

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You should know that during the 2015 State of the State Address and the presentation of the Executive Budget for New York State, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced his intentions to visit Mexico accompanied with Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. The Governor made this pronouncement with great fanfare and excitement, using a giant screen to show the three of them wearing Mexican hats with the caption: The 3 Amigos.

It is important for you to know that when I saw that image of Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, I reacted; making gestures that drew the Governor's attention. Governor Andrew Cuomo responded by saying: These 3 Amigos are different than previous ones.

I thought to myself, "Mr. Governor, different than what?"

You should know, my dear reader, that the history of the 3 Amigos goes back to 2009 when I joined with former Senators Karl Kruger and Pedro Espada to form an alliance in the State Senate to demand change so the State Senate could vote on bills that would help all communities. During that year, Karl Kruger, Pedro Espada and I all bought Mexican hats and called ourselves the 3 Amigos. Everyone in New York politics knows the history of the 3 Amigos and everyone knows how we all ended up.

Senator Pedro Espada was arrested, judged and found guilty of corruption, and is now serving a sentence in a federal penitentiary and is not expected to come out for another four years. There is a similar situation for Karl Kruger. He, too, was arrested, judged and found guilty of corruption, and is serving a sentence in a federal penitentiary.

I am the only one of the 3 Amigos who is, politically speaking, alive.

Now, our beloved Governor has created another version of the 3 Amigos, saying they are different than the previous ones. It was clear to many that the Governor was trying to publicly take a punch at me.

What you should know is that the Governor forgot to say is how he, himself, is under investigation by U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara. Governor Andrew Cuomo has already spent over \$130,000 on a prominent white collar criminal defense attorney to represent him and the scandal that surrounds the Governor's anti-corruption commission. It remains to be seen how this will end.

On the other hand, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver has been arrested today, January 22, 2015, on federal corruption charges, by the same U.S. Attorney who is investigating Governor Andrew Cuomo. While the nature of the charges have not been released as of the time I write this, the investigation began in March, 2014 - right after Governor Andrew Cuomo shut down

his Moreland Commission. The tabloids say it has to do with undocumented payments he received from a law firm, and rumors say it has to do with fraud.

You should know that where I come from in Puerto Rico, there is an old saying: With these thunders, who could sleep?

And so, my dear reader, there is something ironic about Governor Andrew Cuomo's obvious attempt to publicly try to take a punch at me about New York's original 3 Amigos - Pedro Espada, Karl Kruger and myself - and say that the new version of the 3 Amigos will be different than the 3 Amigos of the past.

I am obliged to publicly share my response to him: "Excuse me, Mr. Governor. Different in what way? If, along with the thunders I am hearing, we continue to read the newspapers and listen to what everyone is talking about, there is a great possibility that Mr. Silver will be keeping company with Karl Kruger and Pedro Espada and eating the same food and dressing in the same colored clothing."

Ladies and gentlemen, as far as these 3 New Amigos goes: What's the difference?

This is State Senator Rev Rubén Díaz and this is what you should know.