ST. MARTIN'S PRESS
ST. MARTIN'S PUBLISHING GROUP

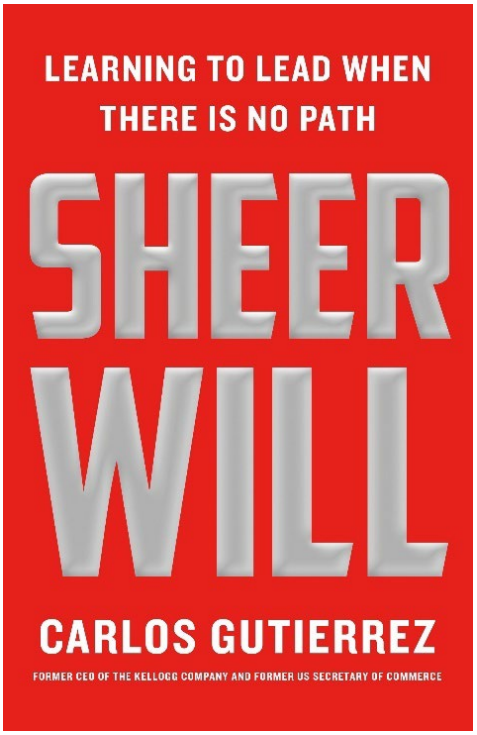
Cave Henricks
Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLICITY CONTACTS:
Sarah Falter, Publicity Director
sarah@cavehenricks.com

Gabrielle Gantz, Associate Director of Publicity
gabrielle.gantz@stmartins.com

THE UNCONVENTIONAL AND INSPIRING STORY OF A TRAILBLAZER'S RISE TO INTERNATIONAL PROMINENCE:



SHEER WILL

Learning to Lead When There Is No Path

By former Secretary of Commerce & Kellogg's CEO, Carlos Gutierrez

"Carlos Gutierrez has lived a model American success story—fleeing Castro's Cuba to the United States as a young child and working his way to the position of CEO of Kellogg's, culminating in the US Cabinet as a secretary of commerce. His autobiography is a testament to a welcoming America."
—Michael Chertoff, former US secretary of Homeland Security

"The youngest chief executive in Kellogg's history [shares] why trust is the hardest currency in leadership…a book about the improbability of the journey, the doubts along the way, and the things that were sacrificed to make it happen. Candid about both what the condition cost him and what it gave him: hyperfocus, interpersonal intuition, a high tolerance for risk." **—Thought Economics**

Carlos Gutierrez has been an influential figure in business and politics for over 35 years, but his route to global leadership was far from the well-worn path of the Ivy League M.B.A.

In fact, he never graduated from college and began his life in America without knowing a word of English. When he was only six years old, his family fled the Cuban revolution with almost nothing, travelling to Miami and ultimately emigrating to Mexico.

In ***SHEER WILL*** **(St. Martin's Press; Oct 6, 2026)** Gutierrez shares how he began working for **Kellogg**'s selling cereal out of a van, and climbed the ranks until he became the **youngest CEO** in the company's hundred-year history. He went on to serve as **U.S. Secretary of Commerce** for the Bush administration and later held executive roles in nearly a dozen major companies.

Despite his humble beginnings and a lifelong struggle with untreated ADHD—**he was not diagnosed with the disorder until age 65**—he was able to overcome any challenge and reach incredible levels of success.

Gutierrez credits his considerable accomplishments to his relentless positivity and drive to be the best at anything he does. Above all, he holds a steadfast belief that any obstacle should be seen as an opportunity. His working-class background gave him more empathy and appreciation for sacrifice than most business leaders possess. ADHD, while significantly debilitating—particularly in a career track that rewards consistency and organizational skills—granted him a formidable talent for problem solving and creative thinking, as well as the ability to take bold action with little regard for the risk involved.

Packed with entertaining stories and practical advice, Gutierrez relates his complete journey from his ambitious youth to becoming the most unlikely leader in the history of the U.S. Cabinet, including:

- **How to earn trust before asking people to follow you:** when Gutierrez first tried to rally Kellogg de México's shop floor workers, he came armed with charts showing how badly the plant was underperforming. He later realized data alone would not move people who did not yet trust him. By returning without charts, acknowledging management's role, and continuing to show up, he began building the trust that helped fuel the turnaround.
- **Persuasion is about connection, not pressure:** as a young door-to-door magazine salesman, Gutierrez spent weeks making zero sales before realizing he was talking too fast and trying to close too quickly. Once he slowed down, practiced his pitch, focused on eye contact, cadence, and tone, he began succeeding because people respond when they feel understood, not pushed.
- **Say yes before you feel fully ready—but know when the job has changed:** when offered a major sales leadership role, Gutierrez immediately accepted despite having no management experience. His boss reminded him that his new job was no longer to sell, but to lead people. That shift, from individual performer to people-first leader, became a defining career lesson.
- **Use restlessness as a signal to grow:** Gutierrez writes candidly about ADHD, hyperfocus, and his lifelong need for challenge. After mastering magazine sales, boredom set in quickly, so he moved to Tampico to study his father's fruit-export business up close. For Gutierrez, boredom was not a dead end; it was a signal to find the next learning curve.

In today's rapidly shifting economic landscape, *SHEER WILL* is the inspiring story of ambition and courage in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. As Gutierrez writes in the book, "Artificial intelligence can do many things, but I don't believe it will ever replace the human drive to conquer challenges, seize opportunities, and deliver unanticipated outcomes. Those uniquely human attributes will remain the cornerstones of leadership and success, no matter what technology brings."

For readers drawn to inspiring memoirs from the worlds of business and politics, such as Bob Iger's *THE RIDE OF A LIFETIME* and Wes Moore's *THE WORK*, *SHEER WILL* offers a roadmap for anyone determined to matter, and willing to forge an uncommon path.

SHEER WILL: **Learning to Lead When There Is No Path by Carlos Gutierrez**
St. Martin's Press/Macmillan | On-Sale: Oct 6, 2026 | Price: $29.00 | Hardcover | Pgs: 304 | ISBN: 9781250381163

ABOUT: CARLOS GUTIERREZ was born in Havana, Cuba, and fled to the United States with his family after the Cuban Revolution. He became a US citizen in 1965. When he was twenty-one, he joined the Kellogg Company's Mexican subsidiary as a sales representative. Twenty-five years later, after assignments in Mexico, the US, Canada, and Australia, he became CEO of the Kellogg Company. In 2005, he was sworn in as US commerce secretary in the George W. Bush administration. Later, he was vice chairman of Citigroup and cochair of the Albright Stonebridge Group. In 2020, he cofounded Empath, a start-up that uses AI to infer employee skills in large companies. Today, he serves on the boards of Occidental Petroleum, MetLife, Boao Forum for Asia, Tent Partnership for Refugees, and thedream.us, is a partner in a food start-up in Mexico City, and a regular contributor on CNBC.



He and his wife, Edilia, have three children and four grandchildren and live in Washington, DC. To learn more, please visit www.sheerwillbook.com.

To request review copies of SHEER WILL or to schedule an interview with the author, please contact sarah@cavehenricks.com or gabrielle.gantz@stmartins.com.

PRAISE

"The timely and powerful uniquely American story of a Cuban immigrant who came to America as a young boy and rose to the top of corporate leadership and government service."
—Henry "Hank" Paulson, former US secretary of the Treasury

"Gutierrez hits all the grace notes with remembrances that grab and lessons for business leaders in shaping a career, making good decisions, and, most of all, inspiring trust. Anyone interested in the ladder to business success should read it eagerly." **—Glenn Hubbard, Russell L. Carson Professor of Economics and Finance at Columbia University, and former chair of the US Council of Economic Advisers**

"*Sheer Will* recounts the remarkable journey of Carlos, who rose from a door-to-door cereal salesman to CEO of an iconic US company and then to commerce secretary without a college degree. The story highlights the power of ambition and perseverance in overcoming many challenges. This book serves as an inspirational guide for achieving seemingly impossible goals."
—Vicki Hollub, former president and CEO of Occidental Petroleum

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

- How Gutierrez went from selling cereal out of a van at age 21 to becoming the youngest CEO in Kellogg's history without a college degree, an MBA, or a traditional path into corporate leadership. Whether Gutierrez believes that the American Dream is still alive in the current sociopolitical moment.
- What his turnaround of Kellogg de México taught him about trust: after walking into a 3 a.m. plant meeting armed with charts showing poor performance, he realized the numbers were not going to move people until management first owned its role in the problem and earned credibility.
- How Gutierrez learned to compete as the unconventional candidate, as a former salesperson without a college degree rising in a company where the new generation of executives increasingly came through marketing and more traditional business tracks.

- What the path to CEO looked like from the inside: board confidence, succession politics, executive rivalry, and the pressure to keep proving himself through results.
- What changed when Gutierrez moved from running a global company to serving in the Cabinet, including the differences in authority, incentives, timelines, accountability, and the role that perception plays.
- What being diagnosed with ADHD at 65 helped Gutierrez understand about his career in hindsight; from boredom and distractibility to hyperfocus, persuasion, interpersonal intuition, risk tolerance, and his constant drive toward the next challenge.

AUTHOR Q&A ON THE ECONOMY, CHINA, IMMIGRATION, CUBA AND MORE

Note: Gutierrez is available to speak to news-of-the-day.

1. **How do you assess the U.S. economy?** The U.S. economy has been incredibly resilient and has weathered a trade war and the war in Iran, so far. Consumer spending, around 70% of GDP, continues to fuel the economy. The reason is AI: almost 60% of U.S. households own stocks, and AI stocks have more than doubled in value over the past five years. Consumers are feeling wealthy. Any downturn in the stock market, not to mention a crash, would have a devastating impact on the economy, throwing the country into a recession.
2. **What concerns you most over the next 12–18 months: inflation, tariffs, federal debt, labor shortages, consumer confidence, or something else?** Data center buildout, demand for AI, inflation, further trade action, USMCA renewal, oil prices.
3. **What do you think Washington is getting right or wrong right now? If you could get policymakers focused on one economic issue right now, what would it be and why?** Policymakers don't know how to respond to the China threat and talk of regulating AI and limiting data centers has dominated the conversation. Yet, we are not talking about how to SUPPORT U.S. companies to compete with China. There will be a backlash due to the country being run by billionaires and the "K-shaped" economy. Regulations will follow a familiar anti-business line. This would be devastating.
4. **What are you hearing from CEOs/business leaders about the current environment?** Many businesses are thriving, but the uncertainty is worrying, especially around tariffs, relations with other countries, and immigration policy. I'm also hearing that AI will not be the strong productivity driver in the short term that many expected. This may slow the deployment of AI.
5. **How should the U.S. approach economic competition with China today?** We should engage with China, not decouple. We are not going to beat China through sanctions (some sanctions are necessary, but that can't be our core strategy). We will win by doubling down on our model: free enterprise, entrepreneurship, immigration. China will not change its economic model. We need to compete within our current reality and not spend our time debating how to change China.
6. **Where do you think tariffs are useful, and where can they backfire?** Some tariffs can be useful in the short term, but generally they end up doing more damage than good. Tariffs, if used, need to be targeted, surgical, and not "across the board." We haven't yet seen the full negative impact of tariffs.
7. **Should the goal be decoupling, de-risking, greater reciprocity, or something else?** NO. We compete and collaborate where possible.
8. **What do you see as America's biggest competitive advantage relative to China?** Our culture — individual accountability, entrepreneurship, decentralized, a country of immigrants. China is centralized, top-down, and has no immigration to speak of.
9. **How would you characterize your view of the current tariff debate?** Stale. Old. Unproven justification for tariffs. Most Americans are against them. The impact of price increases and shortages of materials has impacted how people think about tariffs. Small businesses have been hurt.
10. **What have policymakers learned (or failed to learn) from the backlash against globalization and free trade?** Globalization is good and necessary. No country can be an island and stay strong. The U.S. has benefited greatly from globalization. The challenge is to deal with issues and help stranded communities.

It's deceiving to look at national numbers only. The pain of globalization is felt in small communities. They should receive help, training, etc. But overall, globalization is good for us and the rest of the world.

11. **What should America prioritize producing domestically, versus continuing to source through global trade?** Sensitive high tech (high-end chips, etc.). New industries. We are not going to "bring back autos." We are not going to win with industries of the past.
12. **What do policymakers most misunderstand about Cuba today, and what do you believe our policy should be? What role should economic engagement play?** Cubans are not communists, they are nationalists. They will not go down without a fight. The reason they reject a market economy is to "keep out the Yankees." Keeping this sensitivity in mind is critical.
13. **If you were designing a realistic bipartisan immigration compromise today, what would it need to include?** Very similar to President Bush's immigration reform — legalization for those who are "well-behaved" and undocumented. No citizenship. They can work. More focus on skills. Strict enforcement.
14. **How do you balance stronger border enforcement with the legal immigration pathways you believe the economy needs?** No country needs to apologize for protecting its borders. We can have strong borders and commerce at the same time. A strong border without an effective model for immigration will create chaos in the economy and potentially increase illegal entries. Vacant jobs are a magnet for illegal immigration.