

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,920
Okay, hello, my name is Brianna Darof and today I

2
00:00:05,920 --> 00:00:12,620
am here with Digna Alvarez and I'll be asking her

3
00:00:12,620 --> 00:00:18,540
a few questions about her life. Okay, so first one

4
00:00:18,540 --> 00:00:22,560
is, how was your life before the revolution of

5
00:00:22,560 --> 00:00:29,480
1959 and Fidel Castro? It was beautiful, I was a

6
00:00:29,480 --> 00:00:37,040
child, very nice child, who I was studying, I was

7
00:00:37,040 --> 00:00:39,440
fine,

8
00:00:40,320 --> 00:00:46,800
beautiful, beautiful childhood. Any memories from

9
00:00:46,800 --> 00:00:49,640
your childhood that you're especially fond of that

10
00:00:49,640 --> 00:00:58,220
resonates with you? I was in school, I was in

11
00:00:58,220 --> 00:01:04,340
Catholic school, Fidel came to Cuba, all of the

12
00:01:04,340 --> 00:01:07,520
school was closed and I went to public school.

13
00:01:07,780 --> 00:01:14,280
That was a very bad time for me. So the shame for

14
00:01:14,280 --> 00:01:17,900
Catholic school, private school to the public

15
00:01:17,900 --> 00:01:21,640
school was not good? He closed all the Catholic

16
00:01:21,640 --> 00:01:24,560
schools. Why did he close the Catholic schools? He didn't

17
00:01:24,560 --> 00:01:29,080
want the Catholic religion to... They keep the

18
00:01:29,080 --> 00:01:33,840
church open and you can go to the church but not

19

00:01:33,840 --> 00:01:36,080
the schools. School is for the public school.

20

00:01:39,180 --> 00:01:43,000
Okay, the second question, how did you meet your

21

00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:51,460
husband? When I was 18 years, I was studying in an

22

00:01:51,460 --> 00:01:59,260
accounting institute in another town. I had to go

23

00:01:59,260 --> 00:02:05,840
to an institute. I went to the bus every day to go

24

00:02:05,840 --> 00:02:08,740
to the school but I had to walk in from the

25

00:02:08,740 --> 00:02:14,080
station bus to the institute. He was working in

26

00:02:14,080 --> 00:02:19,440
one company in between, that's how I met him. So you

27

00:02:19,440 --> 00:02:23,640
ran into him? No, he went outside and [whistles]... So he called

28

00:02:23,740 --> 00:02:29,940
you down. That's why you

29

00:02:29,940 --> 00:02:37,880
know, to get my attention. And follow me driving

30

00:02:37,880 --> 00:02:42,720
a motorcycle. Follow me to the bus station and

31

00:02:42,720 --> 00:02:46,640
back and forth every day. Oh, [in Spanish] halagada, halagada.

32

00:02:46,640 --> 00:02:50,860
That's how it started.

33

00:02:53,880 --> 00:02:57,280
The next follow-up question I have is, did you

34

00:02:57,280 --> 00:03:01,100
know he was an opposition activist involved with

35

00:03:01,100 --> 00:03:04,760
the Bay of Pigs fighters? Did you know that he was

36

00:03:04,760 --> 00:03:08,680
involved with the Bay of Pigs fighters? What do

37

00:03:08,680 --> 00:03:16,920

you call in Spanish? The revolution? Yeah, but the

38

00:03:16,920 --> 00:03:20,660

next Bay of Pigs...

39

00:03:23,760 --> 00:03:27,360

Conspiracy against the government. Against the

40

00:03:27,360 --> 00:03:33,160

government. You want to put down the government. I

41

00:03:33,160 --> 00:03:36,780

found that when we were...

42

00:03:40,020 --> 00:03:44,080

[in spanish] Comprometido,. He was in

43

00:03:44,080 --> 00:03:47,700

engagement, you know? And he had to leave in Cuba

44

00:03:47,700 --> 00:03:51,760

because he was involved against the government.

45

00:03:51,760 --> 00:03:55,520

And when you met him, did you know right away or

46

00:03:55,520 --> 00:03:59,260

how long after? No, after, after. A while after?

47

00:03:59,600 --> 00:04:04,680

Not really. A while, maybe one year after. I found

48

00:04:04,680 --> 00:04:08,040

out. You have to leave and you have to leave.

49

00:04:09,380 --> 00:04:13,360

That's why he left before me. Right. But we signed

50

00:04:13,360 --> 00:04:16,180

a paper before he left. We signed a paper, you

51

00:04:16,180 --> 00:04:19,860

know, the Married papers. And that's why he can ask me

52

00:04:19,860 --> 00:04:21,140

to come into United States.

53

00:04:25,360 --> 00:04:29,120

The next question. How was your experience as the

54

00:04:29,120 --> 00:04:33,840

fiancé of the activist of the revolution a few

55
00:04:33,840 --> 00:04:37,480
years after the Invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis
56
00:04:37,480 --> 00:04:40,300
Yeah. What's difficult, you know,
57
00:04:40,380 --> 00:04:46,040
because we make... When I was 18 years, we get
58
00:04:46,040 --> 00:04:50,300
into United States when I was 24. That time was
59
00:04:50,300 --> 00:04:56,540
very... You know, a part from him was difficult. You
60
00:04:56,540 --> 00:05:01,380
know, because in last year you feel very... You
61
00:05:01,380 --> 00:05:03,960
know, it's your best time of your life. And you
62
00:05:03,960 --> 00:05:07,640
lost all that step of your life. It's not easy.
63
00:05:08,240 --> 00:05:12,920
Right. Because he was... How the country... It's
64
00:05:12,920 --> 00:05:17,140
not easy. It wasn't easy. Sometimes I was thinking
65
00:05:17,140 --> 00:05:17,840
to break.
66
00:05:20,540 --> 00:05:24,860
Well, you stayed together. Yeah. Okay, I have another
67
00:05:24,860 --> 00:05:27,620
question like that. When your fiance proposed,
68
00:05:28,080 --> 00:05:30,820
were you worried about the impact on you or your
69
00:05:30,820 --> 00:05:33,900
family, on your future family? Oh yeah. Because I
70
00:05:33,900 --> 00:05:38,820
had to leave my mother behind me. Yes. And how was
71
00:05:38,820 --> 00:05:43,540
that? Like how did you tell them? Yeah. I was...
72
00:05:43,540 --> 00:05:47,300
My mother said to me, I'm happy you leave this

73

00:05:47,300 --> 00:05:49,780
country because that country is no future for the
74

00:05:49,780 --> 00:05:53,920
young person. It's okay, but I want to live in
75

00:05:53,920 --> 00:05:57,180
this country because my life was all here. Right.
76

00:05:58,160 --> 00:06:01,000
And that was... An other step. That was so very
77

00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:05,020
difficult for me. Very, very. Yes. Because it was
78

00:06:05,020 --> 00:06:10,400
between my culture and... I never know what I'm
79

00:06:10,400 --> 00:06:13,520
going to find out, you know? Because my
80

00:06:13,520 --> 00:06:16,520
relationship with him was only for one year. It's
81

00:06:16,520 --> 00:06:21,900
not time to find out how we work together. It was
82

00:06:21,900 --> 00:06:26,200
so... Believe me. I don't know, it was my step-on
83

00:06:26,200 --> 00:06:29,260
-up. It was very difficult. Yeah.
84

00:06:33,780 --> 00:06:36,660
How did you feel when your husband had to leave
85

00:06:36,660 --> 00:06:38,520
Cuba? I mean, you kind of talked about this back.
86

00:06:38,840 --> 00:06:42,140
To leave Cuba and exile for Spain four days after
87

00:06:42,140 --> 00:06:46,580
getting married and you had no celebration. You
88

00:06:46,580 --> 00:06:49,640
know, in my age, that's something you can't
89

00:06:49,640 --> 00:06:53,420
expect. Because when you get met and when you get
90

00:06:53,420 --> 00:06:56,780
engaged, when you think about your wedding day and

91
00:06:56,780 --> 00:06:58,880
your dreams,
92
00:07:00,320 --> 00:07:05,420
since you are 15, 16 years, you think about your
93
00:07:05,420 --> 00:07:08,560
future, your wedding day, you know? Big day.
94
00:07:10,320 --> 00:07:12,420
That's... Believe me, it was very difficult.
95
00:07:15,360 --> 00:07:18,240
You know, the situation, my country situation
96
00:07:18,240 --> 00:07:22,160
was... was no good. And you had to put in one
97
00:07:22,160 --> 00:07:26,800
balance. You know? Your life, future, your future,
98
00:07:26,980 --> 00:07:30,740
your life, and your actual life.
99
00:07:33,640 --> 00:07:37,260
I believe it was difficult.
100
00:07:38,760 --> 00:07:43,520
Very difficult. So, when you left, did you ever
101
00:07:43,520 --> 00:07:45,540
think, since you said it was difficult, did you
102
00:07:45,540 --> 00:07:49,120
think you would see him ever again? When he left
103
00:07:49,120 --> 00:07:51,640
and it's been years? We're keeping on touch by
104
00:07:51,640 --> 00:08:01,840
phone calls, by letters. You know? We never lost
105
00:08:01,840 --> 00:08:04,900
the touch. He called me every week, every week.
106
00:08:05,500 --> 00:08:13,500
They sent letters every... You know? I was... He
107
00:08:13,500 --> 00:08:17,480
was... You know, I feel that he went to waiting
108
00:08:17,480 --> 00:08:21,080
for me. I was... And that was reality. He was

109
00:08:21,080 --> 00:08:25,800
waiting for me. He didn't meet anybody. Because he
110
00:08:25,800 --> 00:08:29,720
left you and he started working and saving money,
111
00:08:30,260 --> 00:08:33,540
thinking to bring me to United States, to start
112
00:08:33,540 --> 00:08:40,080
the family. You know? I was 18, 19, 20, 21 years.
113
00:08:42,020 --> 00:08:45,420
It's your best life. The best time of your life.
114
00:08:45,600 --> 00:08:49,140
Okay, you are understand now. You are now in that
115
00:08:49,140 --> 00:08:55,140
step of your life, you know? You know how I mean.
116
00:08:56,660 --> 00:09:03,140
Okay. Okay. Soon after your husband left, you were
117
00:09:03,140 --> 00:09:06,800
placed on a work camp for three years. You
118
00:09:06,800 --> 00:09:10,560
explained before. What was your source of strength
119
00:09:10,560 --> 00:09:16,060
during those years? Working on that camp. For a
120
00:09:16,060 --> 00:09:21,380
camp you got. Some other... Everything was bad.
121
00:09:21,900 --> 00:09:24,640
Everything was very bad for me. You know? Since
122
00:09:24,640 --> 00:09:29,580
you left, you know? Leaving me in Cuba, Married
123
00:09:29,580 --> 00:09:33,520
only by papers. And you know, the people
124
00:09:33,520 --> 00:09:36,800
go, "oh, you're Married and your husband left
125
00:09:36,980 --> 00:09:40,980
you." Ah, the boy, yeah. And then went to the camp
126
00:09:40,980 --> 00:09:46,680
to work in, you know, to... The best work is very,

127
00:09:46,680 --> 00:09:52,620
very bad. Very bad. I feel lonely, you know?
128
00:09:53,120 --> 00:09:56,720
Lonely. Right. And you made some friends you said
129
00:09:56,720 --> 00:10:00,700
too. Right. Like, you had some friends. And the
130
00:10:00,700 --> 00:10:04,720
camp? Yeah. My friend from this school, you know,
131
00:10:04,800 --> 00:10:09,820
all my co... The people that were in this school
132
00:10:09,820 --> 00:10:14,100
with me, I was visiting different houses, you
133
00:10:14,100 --> 00:10:20,300
know, like cards. It's not... No. You have to keep
134
00:10:20,300 --> 00:10:22,720
you know, very low because you are Married.
135
00:10:25,680 --> 00:10:28,780
It's... Something is not normal. It's not normal
136
00:10:28,780 --> 00:10:32,660
situation. For one, go out of the 20 years, 19, 20
137
00:10:32,660 --> 00:10:37,160
years, not normal. That's why no... No party, no
138
00:10:37,160 --> 00:10:40,760
bars, no dancing, no... No dancing.
139
00:10:44,480 --> 00:10:47,560
You feel... Widow, you know what is... Widow
140
00:10:47,560 --> 00:10:54,300
that's how you feel widow.
141
00:10:54,300 --> 00:10:58,600
Okay, I'm gonna pause it...
142
00:11:00,380 --> 00:11:11,220
But the camp... Okay. Hold on. So... When you're
143
00:11:11,220 --> 00:11:15,960
working in the camp... Uh-huh. Did you expect...
144
00:11:17,940 --> 00:11:21,840
To be there for... The three years? No, I was

145
00:11:21,840 --> 00:11:26,360
there only two years. After I put all my papers on
146
00:11:26,360 --> 00:11:32,860
the embassy, I had to wait for my... The time I
147
00:11:32,860 --> 00:11:36,100
can leave in the country. That's why I was only
148
00:11:36,100 --> 00:11:38,660
two years, not three years. Because the first year
149
00:11:38,660 --> 00:11:42,280
I had to fix all the papers and go to the embassy
150
00:11:42,280 --> 00:11:46,400
and request, you know, the permission of
151
00:11:46,400 --> 00:11:49,180
everything. Yeah. It's only two years, but it was bad
152
00:11:49,180 --> 00:11:53,620
Two years, yeah. Because the first year I
153
00:11:53,620 --> 00:12:00,080
was just preparing all my papers. Yeah. I was...
154
00:12:00,080 --> 00:12:05,600
You know, believe me. My... My... Time between
155
00:12:05,600 --> 00:12:09,700
18... 19, because the first... When I was
156
00:12:09,700 --> 00:12:17,540
making... 19 and 23...
157
00:12:17,540 --> 00:12:20,620
I came to United States. It was Very
158
00:12:20,620 --> 00:12:26,200
bad. Especially because I had to take the
159
00:12:26,200 --> 00:12:29,340
decision, you know, to take the decision to leave
160
00:12:29,340 --> 00:12:33,980
the country. I'm... Go to another country.
161
00:12:35,440 --> 00:12:38,780
I'm... No, speaking English, no, you know. Or
162
00:12:38,780 --> 00:12:45,820
leaving behind Cuba. You have... I

163
00:12:45,820 --> 00:12:53,560
have a... Sorry. That's so good, yeah. Do you want
164
00:12:53,560 --> 00:12:57,580
water too? I have a pump here. I did this morning.
165
00:12:58,620 --> 00:13:01,340
I wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning because I
166
00:13:01,340 --> 00:13:04,600
was coughing. I never used to do it in the day.
167
00:13:04,760 --> 00:13:08,120
Now I'm starting. Maybe I have to do before I go
168
00:13:08,120 --> 00:13:10,980
to the back. The fun too, you have fun too? Yeah,
169
00:13:10,980 --> 00:13:17,140
yeah, yeah. Yeah. That's because the allergy, you
170
00:13:17,140 --> 00:13:20,500
know, the allergy going to you. Yeah. The ones.
171
00:13:27,740 --> 00:13:30,600
Did you expect it to be that one? Like the two
172
00:13:30,600 --> 00:13:33,340
hours? I don't know. The two years. Did you expect
173
00:13:33,340 --> 00:13:36,980
it to be two years? Yeah, because I was meeting
174
00:13:36,980 --> 00:13:42,020
people that have been waiting for the... To leave
175
00:13:42,020 --> 00:13:46,620
in the country. And that was the waiting time. Two
176
00:13:46,620 --> 00:13:52,060
or three years. Two years. Yeah, I expect that. I
177
00:13:52,060 --> 00:13:54,380
never expect I have to go to working on the
178
00:13:54,380 --> 00:13:56,720
camp. I was thinking maybe I can work in some
179
00:13:56,720 --> 00:14:00,460
office or something until like, Maybe the last
180
00:14:00,460 --> 00:14:03,960
year, you know? All of the... They don't allow me

181
00:14:03,960 --> 00:14:08,220
to work in any work. Did everybody that was
182
00:14:08,220 --> 00:14:11,460
trying... that were trying to leave the country. Did
183
00:14:11,460 --> 00:14:14,980
everyone have to go into this work camp? No. So
184
00:14:14,980 --> 00:14:18,140
these are different places. Right. It was like a
185
00:14:18,140 --> 00:14:22,420
punishment, kind of. Yeah. Yeah. The main thing is
186
00:14:22,420 --> 00:14:26,040
going into different work than women. But the only
187
00:14:26,040 --> 00:14:28,180
woman that's taking home is the woman that has
188
00:14:28,180 --> 00:14:32,080
Small kids. Yes. If they are having kids, they
189
00:14:32,080 --> 00:14:35,060
have to stay at home. For some time at home, you
190
00:14:35,060 --> 00:14:37,480
have to work in with the coffee. You know the
191
00:14:37,480 --> 00:14:40,300
coffee? To clean the coffee at home. They bring
192
00:14:40,300 --> 00:14:43,100
all the coffee to your house. And you have to
193
00:14:43,100 --> 00:14:47,200
clean, you know? All the beans. The beans, the
194
00:14:47,200 --> 00:14:50,820
coffee beans. Yes. They have to clean out the
195
00:14:50,820 --> 00:14:55,020
little stone or the something that's coming with
196
00:14:55,020 --> 00:15:02,820
the... The... Yeah. When they take out the beans
197
00:15:02,820 --> 00:15:04,060
from the...
198
00:15:06,780 --> 00:15:12,860
Ah, the... So yeah. The... The... The bean is

199
00:15:12,860 --> 00:15:17,100
coming inside the... How does it say? [in spanish] Cascara.
200
00:15:18,800 --> 00:15:26,820
Cascara. De los beans. No, no.
201
00:15:29,220 --> 00:15:33,680
The... The nuts. You know the peanuts have the...
202
00:15:34,440 --> 00:15:36,120
The... The... The shell the...
203
00:15:36,120 --> 00:15:37,400
204
00:15:37,400 --> 00:15:41,480
So, time when they take off the shell, it's
205
00:15:41,480 --> 00:15:44,640
something pieces still, and you have to clean.
206
00:15:45,780 --> 00:15:48,940
That's the... The woman do... The woman with...
207
00:15:48,940 --> 00:15:51,100
the kids. They do at home. They bring all
208
00:15:51,100 --> 00:15:54,580
these big
209
00:15:54,580 --> 00:15:59,620
containers and they have to clean the coffee for
210
00:15:59,620 --> 00:16:01,800
the dog. They pay, you know they pay to the
211
00:16:01,800 --> 00:16:04,820
people, they stay at home. How is the pay though?
212
00:16:04,820 --> 00:16:08,340
Nothing. Nothing.
213
00:16:12,200 --> 00:16:16,780
And they have families and children. In my case they don't allow me
214
00:16:16,780 --> 00:16:20,080
to do because I never have a kid. That's how I
215
00:16:20,080 --> 00:16:23,540
had to wait till they come. And do they go around and
216
00:16:23,540 --> 00:16:26,140
check you and like check what you're doing. Yeah,
217

00:16:26,400 --> 00:16:30,040
they check me every day, you know. I didn't do
218

00:16:30,040 --> 00:16:33,700
anything. You did the put my beat. What did you do
219

00:16:33,700 --> 00:16:43,060
again? I had to remove the weeds for the vegetable
220

00:16:43,060 --> 00:16:47,960
and the plant vegetable and you had to clean all
221

00:16:47,960 --> 00:16:52,740
the weed. The sun in Cuba is very strong,
222

00:16:52,740 --> 00:16:58,400
very hard, very hot. That's what you play this.
223

00:16:59,560 --> 00:17:02,960
Oh, you have your big hate, oh yeah, my [in spanish] pame-la.
224

00:17:06,200 --> 00:17:10,680
Yeah, a long leaf. Well now I have a problem with
225

00:17:10,680 --> 00:17:15,200
my skin because you know, the semara. You're used
226

00:17:15,200 --> 00:17:19,700
to years. You cover yourself. Yeah.
227

00:17:25,740 --> 00:17:29,760
I had another question about how you and your husband
228

00:17:29,760 --> 00:17:33,400
kept connection and you said. Yeah, we were
229

00:17:33,400 --> 00:17:36,400
connected all the time. Yeah, by phone and by the
230

00:17:36,400 --> 00:17:39,540
letters. She said like, oh, we have like one so
231

00:17:39,540 --> 00:17:44,140
week or so. Yeah, every week, it got me every
232

00:17:44,140 --> 00:17:47,520
two weeks because you know the calls. Years ago,
233

00:17:47,600 --> 00:17:51,360
50 years ago was, you know, communication was
234

00:17:51,360 --> 00:17:56,100
difficult, you know. Yeah. But we can talk to my

235
00:17:56,100 --> 00:18:00,920
phone. I had to work from my house to the station,
236
00:18:01,360 --> 00:18:06,600
the phone station and they connect the lines to
237
00:18:06,600 --> 00:18:09,860
talk. Not in my house. I can't talk in my house. I
238
00:18:09,860 --> 00:18:13,200
had to go to the telephone station to talk to him.
239
00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:16,940
Especially we call from outside the country.
240
00:18:17,060 --> 00:18:23,040
Right. Yeah, it was very, you can't imagine. Yeah.
241
00:18:24,900 --> 00:18:29,360
You know, and the wire and the old phone,
242
00:18:29,360 --> 00:18:35,640
have to do with it. And then that's to communicate it.
243
00:18:35,660 --> 00:18:36,160
Yeah.
244
00:18:40,480 --> 00:18:44,500
Now, it's talk about leaving Cuba. So how was the
245
00:18:44,500 --> 00:18:46,760
process of leaving Cuba and meeting your husband
246
00:18:46,760 --> 00:18:51,220
in Spain? How did it happen? What was the process?
247
00:18:51,500 --> 00:18:58,340
Like how did you finally get papers? Proved. I
248
00:18:58,340 --> 00:19:00,600
don't know. I don't understand. No, I don't
249
00:19:00,600 --> 00:19:04,720
understand the question. So how was it leaving
250
00:19:04,720 --> 00:19:10,380
Cuba to go to Spain? Like when you met your
251
00:19:10,380 --> 00:19:13,360
husband in Spain, back in Spain, after the few
252
00:19:13,360 --> 00:19:19,480
years. Yeah, no, but I know he, I come meeting in

253

00:19:19,480 --> 00:19:23,300

Spain because he left Spain before me. Before,
254

00:19:23,600 --> 00:19:26,920

because he left Spain to United States before I
255

00:19:26,920 --> 00:19:31,180

left Cuba to Spain. I'm meet him in United States.
256

00:19:32,720 --> 00:19:37,060

When I flew from Cuba to Spain, he wasn't there.
257

00:19:37,300 --> 00:19:40,200

He was in United States. Fixed all the
258

00:19:40,200 --> 00:19:43,940

documentation for me to get my visa, my approval,
259

00:19:44,600 --> 00:19:46,660

my residence. When I came to United States, I have
260

00:19:46,660 --> 00:19:50,440

a resident on the airport. I come in with the
261

00:19:50,440 --> 00:19:53,740

resident already. I didn't have to wait for
262

00:19:53,740 --> 00:19:57,220

resident. When I stepped into United States, my
263

00:19:57,220 --> 00:20:05,540

resident was gone. Yeah. My work's permission was
264

00:20:05,540 --> 00:20:08,240

done. Everything was okay. I had to wait five
265

00:20:08,240 --> 00:20:13,460

years to be a citizen. American citizen. That I
266

00:20:13,460 --> 00:20:16,900

had to wait five years. After five years, I was a
267

00:20:16,900 --> 00:20:19,620

American citizen. And you had to take a test,
268

00:20:19,860 --> 00:20:24,340

probably, yes. How is that? Five years, I was
269

00:20:24,340 --> 00:20:29,240

the... I learned all the questions, you know? It
270

00:20:29,240 --> 00:20:33,300

was easy questions. Who was the first President of the US?

271
00:20:33,300 --> 00:20:36,480
And you started studying all the
272
00:20:36,480 --> 00:20:42,860
questions, you know? Yeah. Yeah. I passed. I
273
00:20:42,860 --> 00:20:48,720
passed. That's good. Of course, yeah. So when you
274
00:20:48,720 --> 00:20:52,880
left Cuba, you went to Spain. Yeah, he was already
275
00:20:52,880 --> 00:20:55,240
in United States. When was he in Spain for? He was in
276
00:20:55,240 --> 00:20:57,520
Spain for 18 months. And you were in Spain?
277
00:20:57,520 --> 00:21:01,340
I was three months until he fixed all
278
00:21:01,340 --> 00:21:05,240
the papers on United States. What did you do in
279
00:21:05,240 --> 00:21:10,800
those two months? Nothing. No, I was tourist, you
280
00:21:10,800 --> 00:21:15,760
know? Living with her cousin. Her cousin. I was
281
00:21:15,760 --> 00:21:19,460
Looking at Madrid, was nice. So exploring
282
00:21:19,460 --> 00:21:22,940
Like a vacation kind of. And for the first time
283
00:21:22,940 --> 00:21:27,020
I was driving into the metro. I never saw a metro
284
00:21:27,020 --> 00:21:32,240
in Cuba. It was an experience, you know? That's...
285
00:21:32,240 --> 00:21:35,740
It was okay. That three months was okay. Yeah.
286
00:21:36,420 --> 00:21:39,560
Finally, something happened. Something...
287
00:21:39,560 --> 00:21:42,980
Something really... Not for me. Because when I
288
00:21:42,980 --> 00:21:46,720
left Cuba, it was so difficult. Even my mother, my

289
00:21:46,720 --> 00:21:50,060
father, already passed when I left Cuba. He
290
00:21:50,060 --> 00:21:50,400
passed...
291
00:21:53,800 --> 00:21:57,200
The... He passed in February. I left Cuba in
292
00:21:57,200 --> 00:22:00,160
August. It was so difficult for me. Leaving my mother
293
00:22:00,160 --> 00:22:06,240
behind. Very bad. Very bad. Oh, yeah. Very... Very
294
00:22:06,240 --> 00:22:12,000
tough. Did you have siblings too? No, my father
295
00:22:12,000 --> 00:22:16,020
passed a year before. Before I... I get in my...
296
00:22:16,020 --> 00:22:20,300
One year before. But it was so tough. Because my
297
00:22:20,300 --> 00:22:22,860
mother it was so hard to leave her.
298
00:22:27,840 --> 00:22:30,160
Something I can't remember. I don't want to
299
00:22:30,160 --> 00:22:36,920
remember. Did you have siblings too? No. No, my
300
00:22:36,920 --> 00:22:37,880
siblings... No, my siblings weren't living with me...
301
00:22:37,880 --> 00:22:42,060
I was the only child.
302
00:22:42,060 --> 00:22:49,160
303
00:22:49,160 --> 00:22:56,580
That's nice. Yes. So Spain was a good time. Yes.
304
00:22:56,600 --> 00:23:00,720
That's why when I came to Spain, everything was
305
00:23:00,720 --> 00:23:05,040
different for me. I never saw the metro. It was my
306
00:23:05,040 --> 00:23:09,420
first time I flew in airplane. I never went into
307

00:23:09,420 --> 00:23:13,020
plane before. You know, something new for me. something
308

00:23:13,020 --> 00:23:17,360
Exciting. Exciting. Yes. Yeah.
309

00:23:21,480 --> 00:23:24,140
What encouraged you and your husband to leave
310

00:23:24,140 --> 00:23:28,440
Spain and move to the United States? Why in the
311

00:23:28,440 --> 00:23:35,860
United States? OK. I told him when I told you when
312

00:23:35,860 --> 00:23:40,140
I was in Spain, he was on United States because he
313

00:23:40,140 --> 00:23:43,580
has her sister here in United States. And that's
314

00:23:43,580 --> 00:23:46,340
why he moved. She was here first.
315

00:23:46,540 --> 00:23:48,860
Yes. He was the first that come to United States.
316

00:23:49,480 --> 00:23:53,720
And then he request him. And then the father and
317

00:23:53,720 --> 00:23:56,580
the mother was in Cuba, they request to United
318

00:23:56,580 --> 00:24:03,380
States before me, his father and his mother. But I
319

00:24:03,380 --> 00:24:05,860
love Spain. He lived in Spain. The life in Spain
320

00:24:05,860 --> 00:24:10,940
was beautiful. If I didn't meet him where I came
321

00:24:10,940 --> 00:24:15,900
from Cuba to Spain. I never left Spain. But he was
322

00:24:15,900 --> 00:24:18,920
in United States. So I had to left Spain. It was
323

00:24:18,920 --> 00:24:22,340
so very, very nice living in Spain. So you want to
324

00:24:22,340 --> 00:24:25,720
have left Spain if you need to? Oh, yes. Yes. Oh,
325

00:24:25,940 --> 00:24:32,080
yes. The life, you know, is life quality. Life
326

00:24:32,080 --> 00:24:36,500
quality. If family going to the weekend, every
327

00:24:36,500 --> 00:24:39,600
weekend going all the different, completely
328

00:24:39,600 --> 00:24:42,700
different. Did you like the food? The food. The
329

00:24:42,700 --> 00:24:46,720
[in spanish] pallella. Oh, yeah. The same food that Cuba has. The
330

00:24:46,720 --> 00:24:50,560
same language. Everything. So he was in United
331

00:24:50,560 --> 00:24:56,920
States. We can go back. Yeah. Yeah. Here is a bit
332

00:24:56,920 --> 00:24:59,300
different. The life here is completely different.
333

00:24:59,460 --> 00:25:01,780
Now it's Spain and Cuba, completely. It's another
334

00:25:01,780 --> 00:25:07,440
side. I was staying in Spain now. Oh, yeah. After
335

00:25:07,440 --> 00:25:13,080
being here. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I was so impressed
336

00:25:13,080 --> 00:25:17,420
when I came to United States. We were impressed. I
337

00:25:17,420 --> 00:25:22,440
was. Oh, I was so impressed. You were
338

00:25:22,440 --> 00:25:25,020
impressed with the United States. Yes. I can't.
339

00:25:25,020 --> 00:25:27,520
No, we were okay. But when I came to America,
340

00:25:27,980 --> 00:25:32,200
because I came here on November. And all the three
341

00:25:32,200 --> 00:25:36,940
was like now. Right. No leaf. No, sun. In Cuba,
342

00:25:37,040 --> 00:25:41,680
you can see that. Because Cuba is leaving left.
343

00:25:42,100 --> 00:25:45,420
The leaving is come down for the new coming again.
344

00:25:45,600 --> 00:25:49,640
And you can see. Right. Here when I saw you, all
345

00:25:49,640 --> 00:25:55,220
that sky, you know, the color of the sky and the
346

00:25:55,220 --> 00:26:02,340
leaf. Very sad. Mm-hmm. I feel sad. The
347

00:26:02,340 --> 00:26:07,320
seasons like you said are changing. November is
348

00:26:07,320 --> 00:26:12,340
not nice month, you know? From that time to today,
349

00:26:12,860 --> 00:26:18,040
for me, November is bad month, always. Because I
350

00:26:18,040 --> 00:26:21,140
think I didn't remember that. The impression I
351

00:26:21,140 --> 00:26:24,120
have when I came to United States, I never forgot.
352

00:26:25,040 --> 00:26:29,360
That's why I feel, the November is very sad. Very
353

00:26:29,360 --> 00:26:32,700
sad month. I don't know. I don't like November. I
354

00:26:32,700 --> 00:26:35,880
Associate it yeah. I don't like November.
355

00:26:47,560 --> 00:26:50,960
How was your arrival and the process of getting
356

00:26:50,960 --> 00:26:52,320
settled in New Jersey?
357

00:26:56,420 --> 00:26:58,960
Because he was in New Jersey. He was living in New
358

00:26:58,960 --> 00:27:05,860
Jersey. I came through, he picked up me on the air
359

00:27:05,860 --> 00:27:08,760
for, and he was living in New Jersey.
360

00:27:12,400 --> 00:27:16,160
That's why I live in here all the time. I never
361

00:27:16,160 --> 00:27:21,240
went into another state. You can't prove direct
362

00:27:21,240 --> 00:27:22,620
Spain to New Jersey.
363

00:27:27,360 --> 00:27:32,660
When you arrived, it was a difficult process, like
364

00:27:32,660 --> 00:27:37,080
finding a house. No, he had a apartment already.
365

00:27:37,940 --> 00:27:41,260
He came before me, he had a apartment already.
366

00:27:41,880 --> 00:27:48,320
Then he started working right away. It was the new
367

00:27:48,320 --> 00:27:52,660
life for me. Because we never, it's like getting
368

00:27:52,660 --> 00:27:57,040
married, right this same day. And start a new
369

00:27:57,040 --> 00:28:03,840
life. Working, working for your family, to buy
370

00:28:03,840 --> 00:28:09,900
houses. It's not easy, it wasn't too difficult for
371

00:28:09,900 --> 00:28:14,520
me. The only thing I didn't like was the November
372

00:28:14,520 --> 00:28:16,800
month plus the snow.
373

00:28:20,400 --> 00:28:21,900
I didn't like snow.
374

00:28:25,740 --> 00:28:29,940
I feel with the snow you feel lonely. You don't
375

00:28:29,940 --> 00:28:34,520
feel free because you can go outside, you feel you
376

00:28:34,520 --> 00:28:37,460
know. Trapped, you had asked you were trapped.
377

00:28:38,740 --> 00:28:48,540
That was difficult. I was going to
378

00:28:48,540 --> 00:28:50,340
ask what aspects were specially challenging?
379

00:28:51,620 --> 00:28:54,680
Everything was new for me. Everything was new for
380
00:28:54,680 --> 00:29:02,860
me. Starting new life, you know, the
381
00:29:02,860 --> 00:29:10,000
house you had to be. I never was, I had in Cuba. I
382
00:29:10,000 --> 00:29:13,260
lived with my mother that I have some people cleaning
383
00:29:13,260 --> 00:29:17,100
the house and do the laundry. When I came to the
384
00:29:17,100 --> 00:29:19,340
USA, I had to take care for every single house.
385
00:29:19,340 --> 00:29:22,960
It was something new for me. Everything was new
386
00:29:22,960 --> 00:29:28,080
for me. The care for the house. Everything was
387
00:29:28,080 --> 00:29:28,920
new for me.
388
00:29:31,660 --> 00:29:38,680
Completely different. Instead, new step. I close
389
00:29:38,680 --> 00:29:42,000
one chapter. I open another chapter of my life.
390
00:29:42,640 --> 00:29:47,700
That's why I finish one and start the other one.
391
00:29:47,700 --> 00:29:51,160
That was I feel that's the time when I came to the
392
00:29:51,160 --> 00:29:57,260
United States. You left behind your first step in
393
00:29:57,260 --> 00:30:01,280
your life and start the second step in your life.
394
00:30:01,960 --> 00:30:07,440
You know? It's a line between. It was completely
395
00:30:07,440 --> 00:30:13,680
different. In my case it was two sizes.
396
00:30:16,760 --> 00:30:21,540
In my case. Did your mom, was she able to come
397

00:30:21,540 --> 00:30:25,640
And visit? No, I went to Cuba to see her. No, she
398

00:30:25,640 --> 00:30:29,580
never came here. I went to Cuba when they opened
399

00:30:29,580 --> 00:30:32,580
it for me. When I left Cuba, it was closed for
400

00:30:32,580 --> 00:30:35,380
visit. The people that left Cuba, they can't go
401

00:30:35,380 --> 00:30:44,040
back. I left Cuba in '71. They opened it
402

00:30:44,040 --> 00:30:47,660
in '79. That's why I come back to Cuba to see my
403

00:30:47,660 --> 00:30:50,560
mother. It's in '79 because they opened it too.
404

00:30:51,160 --> 00:30:54,040
People that left Cuba, they can come back to visit
405

00:30:54,040 --> 00:30:58,740
it for one week. One week. I went. I went. '79.
406

00:30:59,100 --> 00:30:59,900
That's not a lot.
407

00:31:03,280 --> 00:31:10,560
One week per year. You left your family
408

00:31:10,560 --> 00:31:18,100
behind. I was difficult too. Because you had to go
409

00:31:18,100 --> 00:31:26,200
through that pain second time. You know? You left
410

00:31:26,200 --> 00:31:29,440
again your family and your mother and your house.
411

00:31:29,960 --> 00:31:35,140
When you was raised. It was very tough.
412

00:31:38,040 --> 00:31:42,920
How was learning Spanish? Learning English. Oh,
413

00:31:43,120 --> 00:31:49,180
that's. In the culture change. That was very bad
414

00:31:49,180 --> 00:31:54,420
because when I started working was a factory.
415

00:31:55,960 --> 00:32:00,520
Nobody speak it. I was speaking spanish in factory. And
416
00:32:00,520 --> 00:32:05,100
then I
417
00:32:05,100 --> 00:32:11,180
have my kids. And after that I was thinking I had
418
00:32:11,180 --> 00:32:14,040
to leave in the factory. I was in the factory for 18
419
00:32:14,040 --> 00:32:17,300
years. I had to find out the way to leave in the
420
00:32:17,300 --> 00:32:21,140
factory. I can't start working on factory. As I
421
00:32:21,140 --> 00:32:24,780
was, I was able to get to the Union County College
422
00:32:24,780 --> 00:32:29,320
to learn English. Yes, I was able to learn
423
00:32:29,320 --> 00:32:31,600
English.
424
00:32:33,640 --> 00:32:38,660
I started at level 3 because I had some English
425
00:32:38,660 --> 00:32:46,100
from Cuba. And then I went to level 6. Wow. Theres 9 levels. When I
426
00:32:46,100 --> 00:32:52,220
get to level 6, I can understand you. I can't go
427
00:32:52,220 --> 00:32:57,980
anymore. And then I went to
428
00:32:57,980 --> 00:33:05,160
the school. And then I got taught Data entry course. I
429
00:33:05,160 --> 00:33:10,100
got my 75 for Data entry. That's like moved from
430
00:33:10,100 --> 00:33:15,640
the factory to one office. With my Data entry
431
00:33:15,640 --> 00:33:20,240
certified and later English. And when you went to
432
00:33:20,240 --> 00:33:23,440
school in Cuba for the accounting, did you ever
433

00:33:23,440 --> 00:33:25,980
use that here? Did you ever do a accounting work
434

00:33:25,980 --> 00:33:30,020
here? No. Why is that? Because I had to go to
435

00:33:30,020 --> 00:33:36,260
college again to get the equivalence.
436

00:33:36,480 --> 00:33:39,820
I don't know what it is to say. The valid, you
437

00:33:39,820 --> 00:33:44,080
know? You need more English to do that. It doesn't
438

00:33:44,080 --> 00:33:47,000
transfer. The number are the same or you know, all
439

00:33:47,000 --> 00:33:53,920
the means and the different systems. You know?
440

00:33:54,240 --> 00:33:56,400
It's not the same thing I learned here because
441

00:33:56,400 --> 00:33:59,540
Cuba was different than here.
442

00:34:02,220 --> 00:34:08,320
No. That's why I got my Data entry. And then I got
443

00:34:08,320 --> 00:34:13,580
some... What is the other one I did? Did you get
444

00:34:13,580 --> 00:34:15,120
English too?
445

00:34:18,200 --> 00:34:21,760
I learned something about the import, export
446

00:34:21,760 --> 00:34:24,680
documentation. I did some documentation course
447

00:34:24,680 --> 00:34:28,460
too. And as I was working on export documentation.
448

00:34:29,820 --> 00:34:32,860
Yeah? Yeah. That's helping me. That was your
449

00:34:32,860 --> 00:34:36,260
Second job, right? You did all that? Yeah. Yes.
450

00:34:37,100 --> 00:34:40,320
Yeah. That's why I moved from the company. Yeah.
451

00:34:40,660 --> 00:34:46,000
The company I got it for Data entry. Then I was in an
452

00:34:46,000 --> 00:34:55,500
export company. Okay. That's why I left
453

00:34:55,500 --> 00:35:00,100
the factory finally. As long as you have? Yeah. I
454

00:35:00,100 --> 00:35:03,840
was there for eight years, nine years, '90 company
455

00:35:03,840 --> 00:35:08,540
close. They moved to my other company. And the
456

00:35:08,540 --> 00:35:11,980
company closed the account. Not the company. The
457

00:35:11,980 --> 00:35:16,740
account I was working. They lay me off and then
458

00:35:16,740 --> 00:35:21,540
start looking again for jobs. Went to the board of
459

00:35:21,540 --> 00:35:24,420
education, you know? Elisabeth School. Yeah.
460

00:35:24,780 --> 00:35:32,500
Different job. Fortino. Yeah? Okay. The last
461

00:35:32,500 --> 00:35:37,060
question. What advice do you give to current
462

00:35:37,060 --> 00:35:40,100
immigrants facing challenges in the United States?
463

00:35:41,260 --> 00:35:45,120
How do you? What advice, like what message do you
464

00:35:45,120 --> 00:35:50,140
give to immigrants facing challenges in the United
465

00:35:50,140 --> 00:35:50,700
States?
466

00:35:55,520 --> 00:36:00,120
How you, what I don't know, I wouldn't face change
467

00:36:00,120 --> 00:36:03,540
in a nice thing. And what would you tell the
468

00:36:03,540 --> 00:36:06,860
immigrants here that came from another country?
469

00:36:07,460 --> 00:36:11,040
What would you tell them here? Like what advice
470

00:36:11,040 --> 00:36:12,940
would you give them if they're facing challenges?
471

00:36:13,560 --> 00:36:18,700
My first advice, they try to learn English because
472

00:36:18,700 --> 00:36:22,440
I wait long time to learn the English. And
473

00:36:22,440 --> 00:36:28,000
remember always, English is the first language in
474

00:36:28,000 --> 00:36:31,400
this country. You didn't know English, you cant do
475

00:36:31,400 --> 00:36:35,140
anything good in this country. That's my first advice.
476

00:36:36,060 --> 00:36:40,020
Learn the English because that's the first
477

00:36:40,020 --> 00:36:43,920
language for this country. You know, because when
478

00:36:43,920 --> 00:36:48,780
you're talking in Spanish to everybody, you drop
479

00:36:48,780 --> 00:36:53,940
and you say, I don't need it. It's not true. If
480

00:36:53,940 --> 00:36:58,980
you don't know English, you can go anywhere. No,
481

00:36:59,220 --> 00:37:02,760
you can't. The same as you open one company for
482

00:37:02,760 --> 00:37:07,660
yourself, you need English. You know? That's my
483

00:37:07,660 --> 00:37:12,420
first advice. You have to learn it because that
484

00:37:12,420 --> 00:37:18,940
was my big mistake. For the best year of my life,
485

00:37:19,100 --> 00:37:23,780
I lost in one factory. That's my experience in
486

00:37:23,780 --> 00:37:26,500
this country. It was so difficult.
487

00:37:28,620 --> 00:37:32,340
When I learned English, my best year passed
488

00:37:32,340 --> 00:37:39,980
already. I was 50 when I learned. And that's no
489

00:37:39,980 --> 00:37:46,820
good. Yeah, try to do right away, you know? As
490

00:37:46,820 --> 00:37:51,980
soon as you can, learn the English. Remember when
491

00:37:51,980 --> 00:37:55,880
I came to United States, the program for people
492

00:37:55,880 --> 00:38:00,000
that said, for Spanish people was very seldom, no
493

00:38:00,000 --> 00:38:03,860
program. Then they opened some program at night at
494

00:38:03,860 --> 00:38:07,800
the Catholic College, you know? But before, when I
495

00:38:07,800 --> 00:38:11,500
came, it was difficult to learn English. Spanish to
496

00:38:11,500 --> 00:38:14,340
English. So they didn't start then,
497

00:38:14,460 --> 00:38:18,200
Till later. Yes, after they, when more people
498

00:38:18,200 --> 00:38:21,100
come, more people come, they start doing that
499

00:38:21,100 --> 00:38:25,100
program for the English second language. No,
500

00:38:25,200 --> 00:38:29,700
right. I'm glad I started in the other one. It
501

00:38:29,700 --> 00:38:35,200
took so long. And then I started one Cuban person,
502

00:38:35,340 --> 00:38:39,480
they opening one, Academy for Cuban people to learn
503

00:38:39,480 --> 00:38:42,780
English. That was a Cuban person, it was a broad
504

00:38:42,780 --> 00:38:46,940
street. I started on this academy. And then the
505

00:38:46,940 --> 00:38:50,420
Union County had this program and then I stepped
506
00:38:50,420 --> 00:38:59,140
to... That's why I started. It was... I learned
507
00:38:59,140 --> 00:39:02,280
English before, when I came to United States,
508
00:39:02,780 --> 00:39:06,180
maybe my level was different.
509
00:39:09,960 --> 00:39:15,140
Okay. Those were all my questions. Okay. That was
510
00:39:15,140 --> 00:39:18,480
a great interview. Thank you. That was a great
511
00:39:18,480 --> 00:39:22,400
interview. Thank you for allowing me. Thank you
512
00:39:22,400 --> 00:39:27,620
for all this wonderful candy!