

Adela Fuchsberg
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Samuel (S): So first just how did your family end up in Cuba?

Adela (A): You want the American side first right?

S: Well I know the Jewish side also from Poland or Russia?

A: Right. From Russia. But are you interested? Do you like bubbly or no?

S: I'm interested. Actually I do like bubbly. That'd be great. Thank you.

A: You're going to say, "Oh my god I can't believe I got this book." Anybody who came to her funeral got one. Okay so, with the passing of my father in January, 1994 I've come to the oldest member of my branch of the family. What I remember is... So then the Russian part you don't need. You can read it but you'll know that.

S: I know it from my own family. Tsarist Russian, Jewish...

A: On January 6th, 1924 precisely the Russian Orthodox Christmas, Max and Nuna's first daughter, Rosalia, which was my mother, it was a miserable time of day... my mother caught the flu. That was there. My mother and her family where it came from, the Tsarists. She was very educated. Her parents were very educated.

S: What did they do in Russia?

A: My grandfather's family, and you'll get all of this, I think had cheese factories and my mother's family was very wealthy. They assimilated. All but she, my great grandmother.

S: Where in Russia?

A: I don't know exactly but I think somewhere in the pale but my grandmother was someplace else. Okay in September 1924, set off for the new world. The trip started by Drushka, which was a carriage. The most patient of persons. October 1924 the ship docked in Havana. So this is where we began. It was a national holiday and the anniversary of the 10-year war against Spain. The president Coolidge... You're going to get so much information, because she was brilliant. As a matter of fact these are her paintings.

S: She did this? Awesome.

A: Not that one. But okay next morning with the help of... Oh here. My mother had cut her long hair. She could not stand the heat and the family settled in with some help from kind, Cuban neighbors who of course didn't speak Russian. The next morning again with the help from HIAS, Max brought a suitcase full of socks and ties. HIAS was the Hebrew International Association or something like that. They helped poor immigrants.

S: Just in Cuba?

A: No.

S: It was all over the world?

A: All over the world. Yeah. Max brought a suitcase full of socks and ties and set off to peddle in the street. It was very hot. Max was wearing wool trousers. He was thirsty and hadn't sold anything so he sat down in an open café and bought a Coke. He was distracted by the foreign scene when a mean kid stole his thing.

S: So Max is your grandfather.

A: My grandfather. But he's in books already because he made a lot of money.

S: What was his last name?

A: Pinkus.

S: Oh Pinkus.

A: Max Pinkus and he spoke in the first person. Gave himself a lot of clout.

S: Yeah I feel like I've heard the name before maybe.

A: Yeah. You have. You know, in one of the Hebrew... the history of the Jewish people, they say that he donated a lot of money because he was showing off rather than he cared about the religion. Because they asked him to build a mikvah and he said, "I'll build an Olympic pool but I don't believe in a mikvah." So they quote him in one of the books. Okay. After some time, the two brothers bought a small country store near Havana. Regretted it. You'll see. So anyway, this is the story of how it all happened and I have the original advertising for the factory downstairs. I have a lot of interesting stories, which I will tell.

S: Awesome. I'm so excited. Thank you.

A: Okay. So this tells the whole story of how they started the business and this is just a story about when her grandparents, who lived here, came to Cuba. I'm just getting... It's very descriptive. Early childhood. Where she lived in Cuba, there was an American-Jewish family on the first floor. They had some sort of manufacturing business. The parents were hefty and the mother had red hair. They had two sons. I don't know if you want me... this is going to be a lot of information and its fun. Friends love reading it. Okay.

S: Okay. And you said you're going to give me a copy of this?

A: I'm going to give you a copy.

S: That's amazing. Wow.

A: You know she talks about everything. Her whole life in Cuba. There were Chinese neighbors.

S: Oh that's interesting. Wow.

A: So this is when they moved from one to the other. You know, moved around Cuba and the business as well. The textile factories. So I don't think you'll ever find anything like this. It should really be a book. Maybe you'll help me. Somebody told me it should be a book and some of her paintings should be in it. We have paintings of Cuba. Not all of them are here but I know where they are. Okay, so then they had... my grandfather built buildings, apartment buildings where they lived and she talks about all the different schools... of course we did not go to Jewish schools because they were not the best schools. Very early in our life in Cuba, my mother and a few other ladies founded an association of Hebrew people in Cuba. In 1950 she talks about... mother was always very elegant though she was not slim. It's true. I even have some of her clothes.

S: Your grandmother?

A: Yes. My grandfather was very vain. So her clothes were made in Spain or something like that. We used to go shopping going on the ferry to Miami. My mother and her friend and two friends and their daughters and we would take three or four rooms at what is now the Ritz Carlton. It used to be the Galeta Hotel. And then we'd go shopping spree. Shop, shop, shop. And then get on the ferry and go back to Cuba. It was very strange.

S: Was that a common thing? I mean did a lot of...

A: No. We were very wealthy for newly arrived... I mean my best friend- I did not go to Jewish school- my best friend Liz Bacardi family, Encino Gomez de Campo Bacardi. Everybody has a lot of names in Cuba. I'm not making this up. I'll also tell you the other things and so forth. But she talks about everything.

S: Did she write that poem?

A: No but I have a poem and I have it here and I'll give it to you. Do you speak Spanish?

S: Yeah.

A: Okay. Perfecto. Okay so you're going to get a copy of this and I hope that you'll quote her.

S: Yeah.

A: Maria Louisa was my uncle's nanny and then she happened to show up when I was going so she was my nanny from the day I was born. And my mother was very humble so a lot of this is very humble and she doesn't talk about anything but life. You know, she doesn't really talk about or give herself any... but if you walk in right

now... or how she got to the United States is at a very young age she went to Florida State College for Women because it was an all girl's school and it was the closest, best university which is now the University of Florida. Now it's co-ed but it was all girls then. But she went there, and she'll tell you, when she was 16 or 17 and of course she was in a sorority and so forth. She'll talk about that and she meets my dad, a New Yorker, because my mother was very talented and she sang for the soldiers and dad was stationed in Tallahassee.

S: Got it.

A: So she falls in love with him and her grandparents on her maternal side are in New York so she follows him.

S: And does she stay in New York for awhile?

A: She gets married at the Waldorf and she stays in New York and then she gets accepted to medical school and gets pregnant. And she decides there is no way she's washing clothes and in Cuba you have a lot of help. She wants to go home. So she tells...

S: So life was easier in Cuba in some ways?

A: There was no comparison. And her parents, you know, she wanted to be with her parents. So real estate ventures, there was another... my grandfather's best friend, I remember him, Max Leznick and she talks about him and I remember their home. You'll see about him but you'll find him in... and the real estate they owned. One of the reasons we had left Cuba in 1933 which I was not told at that time was the newly elected president Raymond Grau San Martin was not consulting anyone and led a campaign of Cuba for the Cubans. She'll talk about a lot of politics and she knew a lot of everything.

S: Was she, or your family, close to the Machado government or no? The one that Grau replaced?

A: No. I'll tell you my own things but here you'll find all the political from 1934 to 1948. She'll date it and whatever she did when she was writing this book, she made sure she had the proper dates. You know, she justified it.

S: She sounds like a pretty impressive woman.

A: You know, you never know. Its like when people say, you know, I don't hold a candle to her. It's just living with them. My dad was just the same way and they were madly in love. So leaving Cuba, I'm trying to see. It was not easy. My father was incarcerated because he was an American with American money in Cuba.

S: What year? In 1959-60?

A: I think it's '60 but you'll see. My uncle, my father's brother...

S: Is Meyer your father's name?

A: Yes. My father was a New Yorker of German decent. So here she'll talk a lot about Cuba. Now we're totally in Cuba and what she's doing here. I think some of this might be related. 1934-1940 in Cuba. I'm excited you called me because I like talking about this.

S: And I'm really excited about getting into this. This'll be great. Is this a second copy?

A: No I don't think so. There was a piece that was doubled. Okay cause it looks like it. The beach house, oh I don't know which beach house she's talking about but grandpa's beach house, I believe, Castro used for himself.

S: Afterwards?

A: Now. So this is... so you see 1940 that was Cuba but now it's Florida. And this is my mother in school. I have many more. I have so much stuff I have to find it. I put it somewhere else.

S: Wow. What school is that?

A: Buena...

S: Buena Vista?

A: No. I want to say Buena Vista. Maybe. But it's definitely Methodist. Methodist something.

S: Candler?

A: Which one?

S: Candler?

A: Maybe.

S: Is it in Havana or Marianao?

A: In Marianao. I think. What's your Spanish thing?

S: What do you mean?

A: Your parent's were Cuban?

S: No. I'm Jewish.

A: Jewish what?

S: From Poland.

A: So you love Cuba. Fascinated.

S: Yeah. I'm interested in it.

A: Okay. I really wrote this when I was young. I found it and hung it up not knowing that you were coming.

S: So, I'm sorry, real quick... this is... is this where Adela is today? So I've been here.

A: And when you walk in, there's a stone under glass. I have pictures of it.

S: So your grandfather built this?

A: Yes. And there is a book that I can find for you and I will if you hang out a little longer because everything is all over... but there is a book. He's all over that book. The Cuban book I also have. I got this. I was gifted this and I have some shots that I took that are prize photography that I hope you can use. Okay so this poem, lets read it. I haven't read it in a long time. This one I wrote. I wrote it and I sent it to my mother and my mother thought it was amazing. So lets see.

*Quando yo voy ir a Cuba,
yo quiero el café con leche tipico que siempre tomo
y pasar horas buscando herisos y peses de colores en un pomo.*

Do you understand me?

S: Yeah.

A: So what we would do when we were little, when I was little, I used to get rubber thongs and put them on my hands and snorkel and an heriso... Do you know you know what a heriso is?

S: No idea.

A: Oh what's the animal that has all the spikes?

S: Porcupine?

A: No. Underwater.

S: I don't know.

A: Urchin. Sea urchin. So we used to take the sea urchins and we'd bang them up with a rock, take the inside of the sea urchin is a white meat, put it in the bottom of our jars. You had to be really careful. The sea urchins are really prickly. I mean they stick on you like needles and it hurts like hell. And put it on the bottom of the water and it was multiple colorful fish and we'd watch them with our snorkels and as soon as they went into the mayonnaise jar, and as soon as they'd go in to eat we'd go down and we'd get them.

S: Wow.

A: And hours and hours. The most wonderful days and then we'd come home and we'd have to have a sea tank in order to keep them. So my mother would only let me keep a little and then I'd have to put them back. So that's what that was.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar a mi tata*

That's my nursemaid.

que recoja los centavos de cobre en una lata

So there was a lot of Santeria, which you know about that I'm sure.

S: Yeah yeah yeah.

A: Ok so she was Santeria so she would go to this place called la pontia, take me without asking permission and cobre, which is copper pennies, American copper pennies are something that they would offer in their séances. And I was part, I used to... she used to take me to these séances. You know, with all hooded people.

S: Everybody wearing white right?

A: No. Black.

S: Alright so the ones who are preparing for the priesthood are wearing white?

A: Yes. Okay so

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba
quiero encontrar a mi tata
que recojas los centavos de cobre en una lata*

In a can. And that's where they would put it in a can.

y entraban los frijoles negros bajo algodon que crecian en una lata.

So she used to take black beans and for them to sprout she would put them in a tin and cover them with white cotton, you know, like cotton that you'd use in like a doctor's office but cotton used to come in a roll from the pharmacy and she used to put them under and wet them and they'd sprout through the cotton.

S: And she'd do this in your house?

A: Yeah.

S: Wow that's amazing.

A: And she'd take them and then plant them outside. The black beans.

S: Wow. That's so cool.

A: It is cool.

Y siempre la quitaba a mi leche caliente la nata.

You know what nata is?

S: No.

A: Nata is... you always have like coffee and milk that's hot. That's what I drank every morning and in a tall glass like this. And on top of it would form like a film because hot milk surfaces and it forms a film. And that's called nata and she would take it off. So it's almost like a yogurt, that very top.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar el columpio en la terraza de mi abuela
donde acostaba mi carita en su brazo como almohada.*

So my grandparents had this huge, and its not there anymore because they took it apart. Part of is but they took... it was big black iron and with muelles, you know springs, and big pillows and it was maybe for four people and we would sit there and my grandmother, like you heard, was chubby so I would put my grandmother's arms... My grandchildren think I have grandmother arms. So I would put my face, you know, on her and she would tell me the stories on this columpio that they've taken apart for the iron to fix cars and so forth.

Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba...

Oh here it is,

y ella me contaba cuentos de "abuelito frio" y que todo lo que era de ella era mio.

And she would tell me stories, Russian tales.

S: Did she speak to you in Spanish or in Russian?

A: Spanish. But my mother and she, if they didn't want everybody to know, they would speak in Russian.

S: Was it Yiddish or was it Russian?

A: Russian. She was very educated.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar una Cuca Carmelina Canela
que mi abuelo a los cinco anos me enseno a montar a les contigo de abuela.*

So I had a horse and her name was Cuca Carmelina Canela and my grandfather taught me how to ride her.

S: Wow. That's so cool. Where did you do that?

A: My grandfather had farms. You'll read about him. He was a character.

*La palma que crecía en el medio de la casa y el **pimiento** que siempre en el calor nos abrasan.*

So my grandfather's beach house was distinguished by the fact that it had a palm tree growing through it. So he built it around it. So the terraces...

S: So was it a courtyard?

A: There was a courtyard underneath and then there were terraces and the palm tree grew through it. It was neat.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar al flamboyán que crecían en mi ventana
y María Louisa que me ponía las medias y zapatos en cama por la mañana.*

So when I return to Cuba, I want to see flamboyán is a tree and it has beautiful flowers and it was outside my window. And María Louisa was my nursemaid and she would put my shoes and socks on while I was still in bed.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar a la concinera haciendo chicharitas que antes de la cena me robaba con mis manitas.*

So the cooks would be cooking and do you know what chicharitas are? Little plantain chips. So I would go and get a whole bunch of plantain chips. Steal them.

S: I think it was okay. Yeah.

A: I don't know. My sister was chubby and she had very bad acne. So my father would monitor and make sure I didn't have all these things. One thing has nothing to do with the other.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar a los periquitos que mamá quería tanta a que hacía muchos queriditos*

My mother bred birds at home. So periquitos are parakeets.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar la hacera donde caminaba de calle 6 a calle 2 en Miramar
contando los cuadros que me separaban de me abá.*

So we lived on 6th street and my grandparents lived on 2nd street and so I used to count the blocks and it seemed so far away and now I walked it and...

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar a Pepito mi primer novio, mi primer besito.*

S: Oh man. Wow. It's getting scandalous.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar al panadero que contaba pan de gloria y me lo daba por poquito
dinero.*

So a man used to come with a glass case on top of his head and it was just like a song. He would say, "pan de gloria." Like really, you would hear, everybody would run down and you would buy, you know, the... anyways.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar al eladero y disfrutar el coco glace que empensarlo...*

So you know coco glace, there was an ice cream man who would come and he would have half coconuts with coconut ice cream and half oranges full of orange ice cream and that's all he sold, that one, and it was all amazing. This was all freshly made in those days.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar el caramelo donde despues de el concierto de probarte fuimos a
contrar huevos de chocolate.*

So Carmelo was a restaurant. You've heard about this?

S: Yeah yeah yeah.

A: And that's where, I mean, it was really fancy and you would go there and they had chocolate eggs. Perugina eggs actually. They were from Italy and when I went to Cuba five years ago, it was very interesting because in the bus we had a passenger say, "Ah. El Carmelo." And there was no Carmelo.

*Cuando yo voy ir a Cuba,
quiero encontrar a mi familia con miendo en El Sitio*

El Sitio was a restaurant.

con todo los amigos y el sonido de los pollos y los pollitos.

So anyway.

S: This is so great. This is so interesting because it's like what's important to you. You know, it's like the moments and you're remembering childhood and these things stand out in beautiful ways. I actually think... will I be able to get a copy of this? Is that okay?

A: Yeah of course. I'm happy you want it.

S: Yeah. It's very useful.

A: It's very tasty, you know.

S: And it's the memories of a child in some ways like we were talking about on the phone.

A: Well maybe it will be helpful because what I want to do is I want to make a play.

S: Are you a writer?

A: Yeah, of sorts. I mean, if you grow up in a foreign country and you go to a really good school, you have a really good command of the English language versus Americans.

S: Do you prefer to write in Spanish or do you write in English and Spanish?

A: English mostly. Yeah. Of course. I came here as a little girl.

S: Yeah. I can imagine. I do think that this is Buena Vista though.

A: I don't know. It's not Buena Vista but it is Methodista. It is a Methodist school. That I know. I have so many pictures. I'm going to get them for you. Here's the debutantes and their names.

S: Wow.

A: Isn't that cool?

S: From where is this?

A: Cuba.

S: But what...?

A: I don't know but I think they're all Jewish though. It sounds like it right?

S: I didn't read the names yet.

A: But they're not Gonzalez. These are... it's the coming out party of the debutantes. But I have a lot more stuff. You'll talk to my husband and I'll get it.

S: Where in Cuba did you live? Where was your main home?

A: Calle 6, numero 68, Miramar, Havana Cuba.

S: Miramar?

A: And my grandparents lived on Calle 2.

S: Right and in Miramar as well. And then where was your favorite place in Cuba? Like when you think back was it a country club, was it a grandfather's house or where...?

A: My grandfather's house was in Santa Maria del Mar. Are you familiar with that beach? Where was my favorite place? The beach. We belonged to a Casino de Portivo. Have you heard of that one? We lived across the street.

S: That was mostly Cuban right?

A: Yeah. And the other one was Copa Cabana Yacht Club. That was more American. Remember I fluctuated between like my grandparent's group was really the Russian. There was a distinction between Polish and Russians.

S: Really?

A: Yeah they were prejudice. The Russian Jews considered themselves superior.

S: Well unless the German Jews were around and then we all were... Then we allied right?

A: Well yeah. That's true all over the world. So you know, my family was very proud that we were Russian German because my father was German.

S: One side of my grandparents, it was an intermarriage between a German Jew and a Polish Jew ended up together and they had a funeral for my great grandmother I think on my dad's side because she married a German Jew and that was such a betrayal.

A: Oh really? Oh they sat shiva for her?

S: Yeah. They... she was dead to the family. And it's interesting in her diary entries later on she talks about how the 1940s when we're all the same to somebody else.

A: That's so interesting. So my day consisted of getting up in the morning, having Maria Louisa put on my shoes and socks so I could sleep a little longer. This is prior to the revolution.

S: So this is 1950s?

A: Yeah. 1950s. Then, you know, everything would be done for me. My hair was brushed. It was put in bows. I wore white linen uniforms to school. I went to a very different school. I went to a school, which was very high end, all girls school. Not Ruston. I went to Ruston in 4th grade only.

S: Was that George?

A: St. George's? No. It was called Arts and Languages, Artes y Idiomas, Artes with a plural and Idiomas. Are you interested in the Jews of Cuba or in Cuba?

S: I mean there seems to be some overlap between... and very distinct as well between the Americans, British, Canadians and the Jews but it seems there's a Venn diagram going on and I'm trying to understand it.

A: But we were an exception because mother was an intellectual snob. That was her only snobbery. Nothing else. As a matter of fact she never wore a necklace and a pin cause she said that she's not a Christmas tree. So she was very much not in favor of displaying any wealth but then again they were very wealthy for the standard of Jews in Cuba. Then, so I wake up and they'd help me and I'd go to the dining room and there was a tall glass of café con leche and I inadvertently spilt it all over my starch white uniform. This is my memory and I had to go change. It was like drama that I had to change and that the bus was coming to get me and if not they had to call Chevarria, grandpa's chauffeur to come to get me because I was going to be late. Okay. Drama. Then I would go to school and I know there were a lot of stray cats and my mother was scared of cats so I became scared of cats. So waiting downstairs...

S: This is at Artes y Idiomas?

A: No outside the home, getting picked up to go to school. Then I went to school and I think the beginning of the school day was in Spanish and we had to stand behind chairs and wait until the teacher came in and say, "Buenos dias senorita Marquez." And she goes, "Buenos dias, senoritas." And then we would have to sit down. Very formal. All girls. Catholic base but really non-sectarian. Then there's recess... no not recess, then you go home for lunch, even Vedado to Miramar. So often I went to my grandmother's house and swam, you know, and we did not have a pool. Then get redressed, go back to school till much later. The afternoon consisted of English and French.

S: In English?

A: English in English.

S: But you said the morning was taught in Spanish. Was the afternoon taught in English?

A: Taught exclusively in English and French as a foreign language. So it was a bilingual school with French as a foreign language.

S: Got it. Yes. I'm with you. So do you speak French fluently now?

A: If I'm in Paris for a week I can. I understand it perfectly and I speak it roughly. I speak it like it was taught like a foreign language. But anything you get taught when you're really young... I mean my mother spoke 5, 6, 7 languages.

S: Was that the third language, would you say, of Cuba?

A: What French? It was definitely in the high intellectual levels and in the best schools it was taught as the foreign language. I think Ruston also taught French as a foreign language.

S: I actually interviewed somebody who lives three blocks down. Sanjenis.

A: Who?

S: Sanjenis. He went to Ruston and he lives...

A: How old?

S: He's probably early 70s. Michael Sanjenis.

A: I'd love to invite him over.

S: Yeah he's very close. There are people in this neighborhood, which is ironic because I was there yesterday.

A: I can put you together with some other people.

S: That'd be great.

A: Does he have similar memories to me?

S: Yeah. He was a little older I think. He left in... he was a junior in '59. A junior in high school.

A: I was in 4th grade. I wouldn't have known him then. And then Alicia Alonso the prima ballerina of Cuba who's still alive and I'll show you, I have pictures of her five years ago. I was in a black and white film with her. So our exercise in Artes and Idiomas every day was to dance with Alicia Alonso or Soya Alonso. Her sister was our everyday teacher. And there was a competition so Monday to Friday and Friday whomever was the best in class took home a pink sash. So that was like an important thing and my favorite... when you ask me my favorite place and where I want to be, all the places are in the poem.

S: Yeah.

A: I mean if I could, I would be either horseback riding or snorkeling with the rubber thing trying to get those little fish or sneaking a kiss from Pepito or something like that, who wasn't Jewish so we had to be all hiding you know? I couldn't have a non-Jewish boyfriend.

S: Mr. Pinkus might get mad about this.

A: Actually I would love for you to put this in. I want to tell my granddaughters and my daughter-in-law won't let me. He took me to one of his farms. I was definitely his favorite granddaughter because I adored him. And he took a hog, a big ugly grey hog from the farm and he put it next to my seven year old face and he said, "See this thing?" He was snorting and he was filthy and he wasn't a cute little pink pig and he said, "This is not for you and if you ever kiss somebody who is not Jewish, this is what you're kissing."

S: Oh man. Wow.

A: And I really never did. I never kissed a non-Jew. I would do somersaults but it was very impressive. He said, "Do you understand? You're Max Pinkus's granddaughter. You are never to kiss this." So that was...

S: Do you think that was a common thing at that time?

A: I think it's common today in the Jewish community. I mean I have one daughter in law who converted because my mother said... and my mother was very smart and she was alive and she said, "I am so happy that you are in love but I can't go to your wedding because if you marry out it's not a celebration. I will always welcome you and Meghan into my home and I will always love you but it is not a celebration." So she converted. That was a pretty smart thing to say. Not, "Get out of here. I'm going to kill you."

S: Right. Or have a funeral for you.

A: Right.

S: Yeah and where were your grandfather's... were they sugar farms or what sort of land?

A: Oh textile factories. Oh the farms? He also owned a lot of land that was going to be the Biltmore Country Club and in that area and I think they're still empty. And I have all the Cuban deeds. I have everything. I have a whole box that if you're really writing and heavy duty, then I will give them to you. I will lend them to you.

S: Yeah that would be really impressive. I think I could frame it in really interesting ways.

A: I mean this may be a prize-winning book you're writing.

S: I hope so. Maybe I'll get a job. It's hard to get an academic job these days but this is a cool project and I'm really excited and people are enthusiastic to share these stories with me.

A: Well it's somewhere that... I don't know why I was so attached to it. But I knew, even from the landing 50 years later and I knew exactly where I was. Scary. I knew where El Carmelo was. I went to get off the bus. I know there was just... I had a little trouble adjusting when I first came.

S: Sure. When you came to the United States?

A: Yeah.

S: How did that happen? What year was that?

A: 1959.

S: So right away.

A: Well I went to camp, summer camp, with my American cousins.

S: Got it. In the New York area?

A: New Yorkers. Yeah. But I went to camp with them and like any other year we went to camp in the United States. I couldn't believe I got to camp and they're unpacking my trunk and there are silver trays, silver candlesticks, cutlery.

S: So your parents knew this was happening?

A: I mean, embroidered tablecloths, embroidered bed spreads, everything was coming out and I was like... and that's the beginning where I knew I wasn't coming and the effect was really interesting cause that summer in camp, I slept walked. And where did they find me? I was in North Carolina. That's where the Jews went and we went to a camp in Camp Osceola in Hendersonville and it's near where you go to school.

S: Yeah it's near Ashville in the mountains.

A: Have you gone to Slippery Rock? Or something like that. Sliding Rock. You have to go to Sliding Rock. And the Howe Caverns. But anyway.

S: No not yet. Next time.

A: Once I... and the camp was pretty hilly and far. Probably if I go now it's not that far, but I would sleep walk to the lake and get in a canoe. So they knew. They didn't know what to do but they would check. Whoever was up on night patrol would make sure I was okay. I would sleep walk wanting to go home.

S: So it was a traumatic experience in that way.

A: Yeah.

S: It felt like a loss.

A: Oh and then I felt like we were really poor that we were living in an apartment in Florida. Not for long but from camp.

S: In Miami?

A: In Miami, not really. That was only like a week stay and then my parents rented a house at 4810 University Drive. So this was in Coral Gables and we were definitely the... not only were we Cuban but when they found out we were Jewish. So the first day of school in Coral Gables, I go with a Cuban kind of dress and with earrings and none of the little girls were dressed like that and I was very shameful. So I went home and I said, "I'm not going to school. No more earrings." So my mother would have me sleep with them so the holes wouldn't close cause in Cuba, your ears get

pierced when you're born. And I really tried to guard the sun because I get tan and I didn't want to be colored. I wanted to have pale skin.

S: Yeah so ideas about race...

A: And I didn't need braces and I only wanted so I would put milk wire in my teeth. I thought I looked so pretty with milk wire in my teeth. I wanted braces and I wanted glasses. So I would take plain sunglasses and pop them out and put them on and I thought that was it. I still don't wear glasses and I still didn't need braces.

S: My mom has told me similar stories about wanting braces when she was growing up and she used to... she was like really upset because it was a cool thing I guess.

A: And I would say, "I can't bite properly" so they would take me to an orthodontist and they would say, "She doesn't need braces." So yeah. I wanted to assimilate very badly. My mother would speak Spanish to me in a grocery store and I would run. I would walk away from her and say, "Don't speak to me in Spanish." And of course I was very proud that I had an American father. But I told you in Cuba during the revolution they were asking everybody. Everybody would ask each other. It was really crazy times. They would ask you, "Are you pro-Castro? Are you for Batista?" And I was told to say that I was for Eisenhower. I didn't know who he was. All my friends in this school had inside... a little undergarment that you wear under the uniform. Inside they had pinned about ten saints and I had one Jewish star and they had ten saints. Why did they have ten saints protecting them and I had one little star. But there was anti-Semitism.

S: There was. What does that look like in Cuba in the 1950s?

A: So I'll tell you two episodes. The first episode was I went to Mariana and Elena Encino Gomez del Campo Bacardi, to their birthday party. It was in a grand, grand, grand mansion and I went with my tata, not with my mother. I remember being very proud that under the influence of my American cousins I was wearing Peds. Do you know what those are? No, cause that's dated. Peds are little stockings that you put on. They clip. It's almost like a half tennis sock but made out of stocking and then you put it in your dress shoe. Okay? And that's what the American girls were wearing.

S: Right.

A: And I thought it was cool and I remember sitting at the birthday party table and the mothers were very, very fancy. Everyone was very fancy in these groups. And everyone was sitting there and I heard one mother talking and laughing, "Look at that little Jew. They don't put socks on her." You know, little white socks. And I couldn't believe it. And of course my mom wasn't there. And I stuck my feet under my chair so tightly for them not to see it, like lifting them. And I remember not getting up to play cause I didn't want them to look at my feet. But they said, "Look at that little Jew girl. She's not wearing socks."

S: And was this one of the Bacardis who said this?

A: At her birthday party. There were two sisters and they were a year apart but they were in the same grade. They were in my grade.

S: And did they go to your school?

A: Yes.

S: So they went to Artes...

A: Y Idiomas. But they didn't invite everybody to spend the weekend and I had been invited.

S: Where was this? Was this in Havana?

A: Their birthday party was at their grandparents' house, the Bacardis, and that was in Havana in Miramar. But their home was what seemed far away, I'm not sure the area but it was like a big farm. A big beautiful farm. They had porches all the way around and a beautiful swimming pool and I thought their mother was really beautiful. Their mother was really thin and she did a beautiful dive into the pool and they had a real big beautiful dollhouse that was almost like real. You know, with real rooms and lights and so forth and rugs. They had a really special dollhouse. I was little. What impressed me was dollhouses.

S: What impresses me is that you remember all of this.

A: I tell you I knew even the landing. I can tell you everything. But I have very visual... I think space, I am spacey, but space is my best intelligence, like space, color, that's what I remember best.

S: Now would there be other Americans, were there other Americans at like a Bacardi party? Or was that dominated by Cubans? What did that party look like?

A: The party looked like...

S: I'm trying to imagine the upper crust in Cuba, are they associating with other Cubans mostly?

A: Yes. And mostly Catholic or Protestant.

S: So there were Protestants, Catholics?

A: Yes. That mix went very well. As long as you were... definitely my sister and I were the only Jews in school.

S: And your sister is older than you?

A: Yes.

S: How much older than you?

A: Four. What really happened was that they wanted to switch Marsha to Ruston and they tried to get me into Ruston. My mother says its because I wasn't listening to their... I do remember some of it or maybe it was the story that I remembered that my mother tells me but I was not accepted. So then I was accepted in 4th grade.

S: Wow. Okay. So your sister went to Ruston throughout?

A: No. She went to Artes y Idiomas and then they did not transfer her until I got accepted. Or maybe she did. She maybe went there a little before me.

S: Okay so you spent one year at Ruston? Is that right?

A: Yeah.

S: And do you remember that at all?

A: Yeah. I'll compare and contrast them.

S: Yeah go ahead.

A: You want to know about Ruston?

S: A little bit. Yeah.

A: Okay so Ruston was a very modern building as opposed to Artes y Idiomas was a big old mansion. I have some pictures from five years ago but Ruston Academy you've seen.

S: Yeah.

A: Okay. And so they had outside halls and I think you, maybe not in fourth grade, maybe there were specialty teachers as in Margo Perrera. Margo Perrera, this synonym to Artes y Idiomas because it was a very well known teacher and principal. There were more sports at Ruston. It was co-ed at Ruston.

S: Was that fun? Was that an exciting thing when you were in fourth grade?

A: Yeah. I had a boyfriend at Ruston.

S: This was Pepito?

A: No Pepito was a neighbor. He went to La Sal, a real Catholic school. But he's the neighborhood guy who, show and tell in secret. The first kiss. Actually this, don't put this in your book but I remember he showed me and I showed him and he told me that Catholic boys penises stood up when they showed them to girls.

S: Wow. He was an innovator.

A: It was a long time. It really was a very long time until I saw a Jewish boy because I was older and I was private and more shameful, not shameful but it's different than when you're really little. And when I first saw a Jewish boy I thought, "This is

ridiculous. Jewish boys..." But anyway, Ruston versus... I think Ruston was more... It was English and Spanish but you didn't wear uniforms as well.

S: Now when you socialized with people outside of school...

A: And I had more American friends.

S: So did you speak in English when you were at Ruston more? With your friends?

A: I spoke English fluently because I went to camp in the United States since I was six and I traveled to the United States often because dad was American.

S: They spoke to each other in English?

A: They spoke to each other in both. But dad, I mean obviously he was fluent in Spanish but he had an American accent.

S: So when you spoke to your parents, what language did you speak when you were in Cuba?

A: Both.

S: Got it. Wow. And your sister as well?

A: Yeah. But with the household help you obviously speak in Spanish. With the neighborhood children I spoke in Spanish. Then I'd come home from school and then I'd change. You have a merienda, an afternoon snack. And then I played a lot in the street, which was not unsupervised, but the nursemaids would take you down. There would be a few of them sitting and chatting to each other. Then we played kickball. A lot of kickball, a lot of softball. I mean I really liked playing ball but I played ball in dresses often. I'm trying to think because I remember wanting to get dressed up for Pepito. I wonder what happened to him, Pepito Vasquez. Who knows? Anyway, that being said, then I'd go upstairs and do homework and I had tutors. I had a piano lesson.

S: Was that common to have tutors?

A: I had a Hebrew tutor. He was about your age.

S: Wow. So do you speak Hebrew as well?

A: Now. When I was little. Do I speak Hebrew? No. I would want to talk to him about everything under the sun rather than learn Hebrew. I was not a student at that time. I mean, I have two masters today but it's interesting.

S: Where did you end up going to school?

A: College? Syracuse and Columbia.

S: For your masters. And what are your masters in?

A: Education. I have a masters in education and I have a second masters in supervision as a school district administrator.

S: Did you work at schools?

A: Yeah.

S: In the city or where?

A: In Nassau County. I ran the program for bilingual ESL programs in the county. But I taught second grade, I taught junior high school Spanish, I taught high school Spanish. Through the years.

S: My mom went to TC too actually.

A: She's a teacher?

S: My mom went to TC, Columbia, for graduate school.

A: Did she? It's a great school. I mean, I started off at Mills, which was an all girls' school, also in uniform. Not in uniform. Skirts and pearls. But then I transferred to Syracuse when I got married. My parents were pretty strict with me in terms of like I couldn't go visit or something for Homecoming.

S: When did you guys move up to New York?

A: We moved to New York as soon as dad came out of jail.

S: How long was he in jail for?

A: Very short. But that's documented or mother has it documented but I remember it was hysteria and it was all over the television that Meyer Fuchsberg went. My father's brother was the chief judge of the court of appeals for the state of New York. It's a very high position and he's very close with Eisenhower. Their mother died. This was before the embargo. So I think my father was in jail for just a week or two and then his mother died and Eisenhower influenced the Cuban government that he would return my father but that he should come up for the funeral and the embargo went down and that was it.

S: Wow so this was perfect timing?

A: Yes. I mean, she has it more documented.

S: Why was he in prison? Do you remember?

A: Yeah. Well I have a vision of a couple of things that happened. My parents had a study in the house and it was also grey and there was a big desk and my uncle Seymore- my father had two brothers- had taken a cruise specifically to stop in Cuba to refuel. This is already during the revolution. And I remember my father and uncle rolling American money, putting it in cigarettes. No it wasn't stolen money. It was

our money. And then they had a sealer to seal the little silver or gold thing and then putting it back in the carton. They were doing this meticulously. Taking out the tobacco, putting in money, putting it back in packs and sealing it up. And I was told never to tell anybody.

S: Well you broke that rule. Is it okay if I use that?

A: Of course. But that's for an example. I also remember when once I came to the United States and my mother was wearing a new watch. I said, "What an ugly watch" because big go go watches were in style and she was wearing a gold Rolex. But I thought it was disgusting. But these were things that they were... my father was liquidating whatever in whichever way to get it out. So he had a... the story is he had a suitcase of money and Dominga the cook reported him. She was white and communist. A big white woman with big hair, very strict. You couldn't take an extra banana. You couldn't take a platano from her frying pan.

S: And did you grow up with her? She was somebody who worked with you your whole life?

A: Not all my life. The only one who was there all my life was Maria Louisa and my grandparents.

S: Was that strange after the revolution to see a rise in hostility towards people with money or people with ties to the United States? Other people I've talked to have said they thought they were a part of this community and then all of a sudden we felt like outsiders in our own home.

A: In Cuba? No. I left too young. Too soon. I do remember being outside my grandparent's house at the beach and the revolution was over. They came down from the Sierra Maestra and in trucks. Guajiros, making a lot of noise. And Santa Maria del Mar was a private beach, gated, and they tore down the gates and they came down and I remember them... I was playing squash, they had a squash board and I was playing squash outside with one of my boy cousins and Castro came up and said, "Does Max Pinkus live here?" And my grandfather came out and he said something and, you know, we're all just listening and he said, "Max, why do you need more than one home and why do you need more than one refrigerator?" That was like indelible in my mind and why do you need more than one car and so forth and so on. That's an indelible moment.

S: So this must've been January of '59?

A: Well I left in the summer of '59. I left for camp the summer of '59. So this was the beginning. Yeah you're right. January.

S: Did your grandfather have a relationship with the Batista government at all?

A: He hated the Batista government. Of course. They thought he was a crook and they thought he was, you know, pro gambling and his methods of... you know, he was a thief.

S: And violent.

A: Violent.

S: Do you remember seeing the violence at all or no?

A: No but I told you I met Meyer Lansky.

S: Right.

A: You want that story?

S: I would love that story. Yeah.

A: So Meyer Lansky goes to... there are two synagogues that I'm very familiar with. One is El Patronato, which seemed like a huge space but it wasn't. Which was my grandfather's corner stone. The other one was an American-Jewish congregation. My mother had a beautiful voice. She sang with the chorus. So we were very involved and my father, being an American and a Jew was very involved as well. I don't know if he had a position but it doesn't matter. But he obviously was a prominent member. I went to Sunday school there.

S: At the American temple?

A: At the American temple. But the other one was a lot more posh because it was built as a synagogue, El Patronato. This was Vedado in an old building but, you know, they took the old building and they made it into a synagogue.

S: Right. The American one you're talking about?

A: American. And so Meyer Lansky went, I wasn't there but this is the story that I remember. Meyer Lansky went and he wanted to say Shuva for Yom Kippur and he wanted to be a member and they wouldn't let him. So my father must've been part of the deciding factor there and he was voted down and he said, "That's ridiculous. Any Jew, even if he is a murderer, a criminal, who wants to say he's sorry should be able to go into a synagogue." So even though he wasn't allowed to be a member, my father said, "but I am a good standing member, can I bring him as my guest?" So my father invited him. So the next thing I know, he came to my house for dinner. Then they went to Kol Nidre service and I knew his name was Meyer because my father's name was Meyer and that's why it's easy for me to remember. And I knew...

S: How old was he at that point?

A: If I was about 7...

S: Right cause he was big in the teens.

A: So we're talking about 60 years ago. How old was he?

S: Meyer Lansky, I'm trying to think. He must be in his late sixties, early seventies.

A: Well that's not so old. Think about sixty years ago.

S: Wow. That's interesting. That's so cool.

A: So the next visit he came to Cuba, he brought the doll of the moment in America was called Patty Playpal and it was a life size doll. So he came with life size dolls.

S: And he gave them to you guys?

A: To me and my sister.

S: Wow. Do you remember your family talking about him afterwards or no? No.

A: I don't think my mother was very pleased. A murderer. He was a murderer. Patty Playpal. Well he definitely had grey hair, but he had hair. I don't know.

S: I'm always just so surprised that he's still alive because I watched... because I knew he was involved in Cuba in the '30s and I got very into the show Boardwalk Empire. Did you watch that one?

A: No but I heard about it.

S: It was on HBO. And he's in that one. I mean the actor.

A: He's handsome. Tall and thin.

S: I don't remember. In the show he's tall and thin but that could be nonsense.

A: Well anyway, this is the eyes of a little person.

S: What did your family, when they talked about Batista, and I know there was some celebration of him leaving, what was the sentiment surrounding this?

A: I'll tell you another story. I lived here. We had Venetian blinds. On this corner was Batista's daughter's house and I played with the granddaughters.

S: Wow.

A: So Maria Louisa, my tata, was very flirtatious with the militiamen. I saw that house being burned in effigy. I saw it through the venetian blinds. The next morning, it was ransacked, obviously. And Maria Louisa took me in cause she was flirting with... you know, they all had guns. I'll tell you something quite fun and interesting to you, but I remember going in there and at the bottom of the stairs on the landing was a cup, like a gold cup, like a trophy and it was being shined. You know, it was really shiny. Everything was upside down and I don't know why we walked through part of it and a very prominent American toy that we all wanted were Juju beads. Do you remember them?

S: No but I've heard of them.

A: They would pop one into the other and you made necklaces and bracelets and she had lavender ones and I remember that I had never seen lavender ones before and I remember playing with her lavender beads and they were strewn. And I said, "Her lavender Jujus, she forgot them!" And the militiaman says, "Take them." And I said, "No. They don't belong to me." And I wouldn't take them. And I said, "Why didn't she take them?" And he said, "They left in the middle of the night."

S: Wow.

A: So they must've... they made exodus to Spain that I know later on as I grew up. But one thing that me and my friends in the neighborhood collected were shells. You've heard this before?

S: No. I mean, I've heard of collecting...

A: We collected the shells from the bullets. They're made of brass and we would shine them and we would put them in size order. So if you were missing a certain size, you'd trade them. It was crazy for children to do this but I collected them. I was so proud. And there is something that if you ever get your hands on... you know how you collect baseball cards when you were little? We collected postalitas de la revolucion in gum. It came in the same way as baseball cards. And I had the full album and there were pages and you had to paste them in.

S: Wow.

A: You know, so they were numbered. That must be worth a million dollars if somebody has it. If you could ever get a hold of El Album de Postalitas de la Revolucion... I mean I dream of where is it? Because I really pride myself on I had it, my sister and I together, we really had it filled. Because that's all you wanted, was to buy more gum. Like you wanted Dimaggio you know?

S: Yeah. That's insane.

A: That is an album that is priceless.

S: Cause it was probably only in circulation a few months? They were getting rid of gum basically at the end of the... wow. Do you remember things changing around you in '59?

A: Oooo. And how. First of all, another indelible memory was, of course we had a television set, not everybody did, and we're watching Castro coming down from the Sierra, going to the palacio and speaking to an enormous amount of people. I'm sure this is documented. I'm sure you've seen a film of this. If not, you should. And, a dove, my family is sitting around our television and this white dove comes and sits on his shoulder and I said, "He must've trained that bird for so long for that bird to come." Because we had birds. Bird of peace. And if you see it, think about it. What were they thinking? Of course, he fooled everybody at the beginning because we

needed a change from the criminal Batista. Anything associated with Batista, we were told to stay far away from as children. You know, anything. He was cruel. I mean, I grew up thinking that he was not a good man.

S: When did your grandfather leave?

A: He stayed a little longer than we did but then my... I had four cousins and they were drugged because my boy cousin who comes after me in age, they were all Castro... and I have found that communism immediately starts brainwashing children. So they were all militia, military fatigues. They were wearing fatigues and they started to say, "I'm not listening to you," to my parents, "I only need to listen to Castro." And they were at attention. I believe the story I was told is that they were told they were going to a puppet show and they drugged them and put them on a plane.

S: Wow. To bring them back?

A: Yeah but we were Jews. We were smart. We had money. We knew to get out but they also stayed a little longer and then they lived pretty impoverished, you know, nobody really... my grandfather did the best he could. He had investments in the United States. That was very helpful. I don't remember but I think I read somewhere that my father came, that he had about... some of it was in New York in the stock exchange. We had a lot of land that was left.

S: Yeah. Some of the other Jews that I've talked to have said their parents, especially this is 15 years after the fall of Hitler, saw that and it scared them.

A: They were scared of somebody rationing, of telling someone why do you need two refrigerators. I think that was... As a little girl it was scary for me, somebody saying that. But they looked barbaric coming in trucks and all messy.

S: Sure. Having lived in the mountains for three months. What were your family, maybe your grandfather, are there stories about their lives in Cuba so I can get maybe more of a feel of what they were doing there, what their day to day sort of...

A: You're going to read it.

S: Okay so that's going to be documented for me? Okay. So what should I have asked you that I haven't asked you yet?

A: I mean I hope you get the flavor of it. The birthday parties were mammoth. They were beautiful. They were big. I think I myself didn't know where I belonged. I don't think it was fair of my parents to do that because I was a Jew but I was American. I went to Catholic school. I was here, I was there, who was I really? It wasn't like, you know... I didn't like that I thought I had a black mother and a white mother.

S: Yeah. Right. Maria Louisa. Was she as involved in your life as...? I mean she was the one who did the day-to-day stuff?

A: Yeah I probably spent more time with Maria Louisa than I did with my mother. My mother took me to... I mean my grandparents and my parents were very cultured so I went... I also took flamenco dancing so, you know, I was very involved in the arts and I guess in sports.

S: Was that because of your mother's interest in art?

A: Yeah I took one art class in Cuba in some art school and went there too. Yeah. But yeah. My mother was just very intellectually cultural.

S: Did Maria Louisa come back with you guys?

A: No.

S: Do you know what happened to her?

A: I think she went back to Sagua la Grande-that's where she was from- and eventually died. But remember she was my uncle's, my mother's brother's nanny. So she was old by the time she got me. So she was old when we left her. But you understand, I had a nanny, my sister had a nanny.

S: So separate nannies. Did they live in the house with you?

A: They lived in the house with us and...

S: Did the cooks live in the house with you?

A: I was going to tell you I'm not sure whether the cook and the laundress... and the laundress was mean.

S: So there were four people who lived...?

A: Four people for sure. The laundress, the nannies and the cook. I don't know. I'm not sure who cleaned. I think everybody did some cleaning.

S: What was your grandfather's reputation? What was he doing, how did Cubans look at him? How did he imagine his role in Cuba?

A: My grandfather was a very prominent member of the Jewish congregation. And you'll see in this book that if I find it you're welcome to borrow it, his name and his picture are all over the place for sure. My grandmother was... do you know Hebrew at all? A little?

S: I got bar mitzvah'd but yeah.

A: Okay was an Eshet Chayil, which was a woman of valor. Do you know? She was very intelligent, very cultured and very submissive to my grandfather as well but she was very philanthropic and according to Jewish custom, when you don't tell anybody about your philanthropic endeavors, that is the biggest mitzvah. So, you know, there is stuff written about her and I have it here in Yiddish and she was that

person. So when she died in Miami, its like everybody under the sun came and we didn't expect such a big turnout and that's because, you know, her reputation. She gave a lot of money to the poor and she was president of a lot of the organizations that were formulated and helped. But she didn't only help Jews. She helped a lot of people.

S: Got it. What type of endeavors?

A: She helped orphans and she helped unmarried pregnant women with medicines and... when I was little my grandmother gave me foreign coins and I remember, this is so crazy, from the upper terrace throwing coins into the street hoping the poor would find them. There was a man that used to walk around Miramar and if you write it a lot of people are going to know this, El Caballero de Paris. Do you believe what I remember?

S: I'm very impressed. I know nothing from 4th grade.

A: El Caballero de Paris would be a man dress in, it seemed like a black cloak and a hat.

S: Paris? Like Paris?

A: Yeah. Paris. That's what they called him. And he would come looking for money and a lot of people were a little scared of him but I remember my grandmother, because I would be with her, my grandmother giving him money. Listen he could've been a Hasidic Jew for all I knew at that point but I remember El Caballero de Paris and my grandmother would get some money and go to the terrace where that big swing was that I was telling you about. Then I remember my grandmother's friends coming to play Canasta.

S: What were they like? Were they Cuban? Jewish?

A: Jewish. And you know, it would be a very elegant Canasta game.

S: Were you very close with your grandmother?

A: Yes. With my grandparents cause I didn't like camp. They didn't have warm milk. So after that, I used to spend the summer. My parents would travel. My mother was the oldest daughter or they'd be buying textiles or things all over the world or factory things. My sister would go to camp and I didn't want to so I stayed and rode horses all over. I had a great childhood because of my grandparents.

S: Did your mother work at all?

A: She worked in the factory. She was the designer of the children's line.

S: In your grandfather's factory?

A: Well my father came to Cuba and in a very short period of time my grandfather took it over. My grandfather used to be very flamboyant and my father was a very

humble, brilliant New Yorker who was brought up in the depression. So he was totally the opposite and my flamboyant grandfather thought he was brilliant so he started to quiet down and not be flamboyant.

S: So your father influenced him?

A: Yeah.

S: When did your parents pass away?

A: My mother I think it will be 6 or 7 years. They both died at 86. I have a few years left. These are my parents in Cuba in my grandfather's kitchen.

S: Oh they love each other. That's so adorable.

A: She was really madly in love.

S: You look like your mother.

A: Yeah, something like that. She was natural blonde, straight hair, and big green eyes.

S: Were their social circles more diverse or was it mostly Jewish also?

A: I would say mostly Jewish.

S: So you would say the center of your social world was...

A: Not mine because they sent me to Arts and Languages and also Ruston Academy was very diverse.

S: Was that strange?

A: I was very proud to have American friends. Yeah.

S: Why?

A: I spoke English with them. I don't know. I think my mother always thought that being American was like the way to be. Well remember she didn't want to have anything to do with the Cubans. She didn't stay in Miami. She went to Coral Gables and Coral Gables was really, you know... I remember being invited to go to the Riviera Country Club and the parents really loving me and the next thing I knew they would say, "Would your family like to come Easter Sunday? We'll go to church first." And I would say, "No but I'm Jewish." I never got invited again. So the anti-Semitism. That was in Cuba. I'm talking about anti-Semitism in Cuba. The other one was Betty Mutson, Mutson's granddaughter that discovered the North Pole comes to Cuba in second grade and comes and invades me at Artes y Idiomas.

S: Fades you?

A: Invades my life and I'm there since kindergarten and she invades my life because she divides my class, which was I think it was two classrooms or three classrooms, you know, the grade. She divides the grade by calling me a dirty Jew and I'm the only Jew and I didn't realize half the kids knew that I was a Jew and sided with her, with her thoughts and her ideas. So I have a real head fight, you know, scratching and biting and pulling hair, a real crazy fight with her in the yard. She's calling me a dirty Jew. You want to hear something weird? I saw her on... what's the name of the program? The Antique Road Show? I saw her on the Antique Road Show. I have to find her. Something from her grandfather the explorer. I freaked out and she looks like an old, fat, ugly woman.

S: So you win. There you go.

A: But I want to get in touch with her at some point. So she comes and what happens, I get put in a tower of this mansion and I get put in one tower and she gets put in the other and, you know, I should not scratch, I should not hit. I had to write a whole essay and everything but it wasn't fair because she attacked me. After that, my friendships changed.

S: Is that part of the reason you went to Ruston?

A: No. Maybe. I'm not sure. They just wanted me to have a better education.

S: Is that why you were in the country clubs that you were in? I mean you didn't mention the Biltmore. Were you in the Biltmore?

A: No.

S: Was that about Judaism?

A: No. If any family that was Jewish was getting in, we were getting in. We weren't at the Havana Yacht Club. We were at the Copa Cabana Yacht Club. That was an American base. That's why.

S: Yeah. I mean, I know that Batista, because he was part black probably, initially was rejected from the Biltmore.

A: Oh really?

S: Then he said, "Alright, I'm going to build a road through the Biltmore unless you let me in."

A: I also have another club that I frequented that friends had cabanas was the El Nacional, the hotel had cabanas so I swam there. Then again, I would swim in any ocean or any swimming pool that I could find.

S: Wow. This has been really helpful. I have to go at 2:30 so I'm a little worried about time.

A: Okay I want to find stuff.

S: Also I could come back to the city on Monday too. I don't know what your schedule is.

A: You mean to pick up stuff?

S: To sit with you again.

A: Do you have more questions? Ask me.

S: You've answered... we've been playing around a lot of things and I think after I read some of these documents of your grandfather's it's going to raise a lot of questions.

A: Also we have a film of him putting the stone of El Patronato and there are horses and flags.

S: Did he belong to that temple or the American temple or both?

A: I don't think he belonged to the American temple. I have so much information for you. I'm so sorry.

S: So how do you want me to handle this information?

A: How did it go with the other man? Did he remember a lot of the same things?

S: Well he was 17. So he remembers...

A: I remember that every night they would roll up the rugs in preparation of us having to do exodus from our home.

S: In preparation of what?

A: In preparation to run. I don't know if this is in order but I'll give you this and then I'll exchange you for one that's all put together.

S: You said it was weird having a black and a white mother. Were all of the servants black?

A: No. The one that squealed was white and this version does not have pictures. I want to show you pictures.

S: I still have a lot of time. Like 2:15/2:30 I have to go.