

Kay Torpey
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Kay (K): So what I'm wondering, if you're interested, I don't know if you do interviews by phone or how you do it. This picture was taken at The American Club in 1960 or '61. These people are my parents and their very best friends. Everybody here is dead except for these two women.

Samuel (S): Those two women are still around.

K: They are still alive as far as I know. I was last in contact with them in 2014 when my father died. This one was married to an executive, can't remember the company now, but she knows a lot. And this one is the one who has kept a lot of stuff from Cuba.

S: Wow. Where do they live?

K: I don't know if she's back in Florida or where but this one lives in Texas and she is married to a professor. She got divorced from her husband here who's dead but she's married to a professor in Texas. You may want to talk to them.

S: Yeah. What are their names?

K: This one's name is Jane Wilson and this one is Joyce Miller.

S: I'm actually going to be in Miami. I got a grant from CHC, the Cuban Heritage Collection. So is she in...

K: I can find out because this man, named Mel Brown who is in this picture right here, I refreshed my memory with his obit here and he supplied the dairies in Cuba with dairy processing equipment. I'm in contact with his daughter. His daughter lives right outside of Minneapolis. She might be someone you want to talk to but she is in contact with both of these women. Her name is Cathy Brown Crescioni.

S: I'm actually going to be in Minneapolis in three weeks.

K: You are? You should probably try to talk to this woman.

S: That's her right there?

K: Cathy Brown is her name. Cathy Brown Crescioni and I have her telephone number and I can give that to you. She is more in contact with both of these women than I am. I've been in email contact with them but not for the last two years. I'm pretty sure they're still alive.

S: I'm sorry. How do you spell the last name? Crescioni.

K: C-r-e-s-c-i-o-n-i. Crescioni. To me it sounds Italian but I think the guy is from Puerto Rico. When her... These Brown's were my parents' best friends. When we all

got out of Cuba, they ended up with us in New Jersey and then they moved to Panama because the father wanted to stay in Latin America. But they have... she, Cathy, will remember a lot from Cuba. Her father went to Ruston in the 1920s because her father's people had business interests in Cuba back in the 1920s and '30s and also '40s. So Cathy would be a good person for you to interview and if you could get these two women, these two older women.

S: Yeah. Anything that you can send my way. Like honestly, this memoir of your father's is going to be really, really helpful. I can't tell you enough.

K: I'm glad. So you need to ask me questions that I can respond to.

S: I'm happy to. Also where did you get this from?

K: Joyce Miller... Joe, this is Sam.

S: Pleasure to meet you.

K: Guess where he was born?

S: I was born in Philadelphia. Good guess.

K: Usually when I ask him stuff like that it means it's a Philadelphia person.

S: On UPenn's campus. My mom was a professor there and we lived in graduate dorm housing for the first six months. How about you?

Joe: I was born in Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Germantown High School.

S: I was just there the other day. I was doing some interviews in Pennsylvania. That's where I interviewed Richard Skilton.

K: He lives up there?

S: He's right outside King of Prussia. So you're a Philadelphia sports fan?

K: Oh god yeah.

S: It's a tough time for us right now.

K: It's important to him. Yeah. Joe, do you remember the lady in Cuba, not Jane Wilson but Joyce Miller? Her husband worked for...?

Joe: Arthur Anderson in South America.

K: Was it Anderson? I don't know. I can't remember.

Joe: It was Arthur Anderson.

K: Oh it was? That's a really big company right?

Joe: It was yeah.

K: Maybe it was. I'm not sure. But you should talk to...

Joe: He was a partner in Arthur Anderson.

K: Was it Arthur Anderson?

Joe: Yeah Kay. It's an accounting firm.

K: Yeah it's a huge accounting firm.

Joe: Right.

K: Anyway, the woman would know a lot. Anyway, where I got this from was Jane Wilson in Texas sent it to me. She said... she was talking about how sad it was to leave Cuba and everything else like that so she sent me this and this is the woman that I think you need to interview. She and her husband are into preserving the past okay?

S: Yeah if you have any contact on her that'd be great.

K: Yeah I don't know. I will... I don't know. I guess this was her telephone number at the time but this was a while back.

S: Well I'll give it a try. And it's okay if I use your name.

K: Yeah. But I will get you the information on her. Cathy Brown will have it.

S: Yeah. Wonderful. I'd like to talk to you as well. So tell me a significant place in Cuba that you remember. Tell me about a happy place for you.

K: The most significant thing for me in Cuba is that I had horses so I rode everyday.

S: In Havana?

K: We lived right... when I got my horses we were in Marianao, which is called Reparto Biltmore. I had a horse that you would just put him in anybody's open field, you know, just like across from our house. So I went horseback riding every day when I came home from school and all day on Saturday. So that was a main focus. Around the corner from us was a family named Godinis. He was a Cuban married to an American and they had three sons and a daughter and those sons had horses. So we would just go together.

S: Wow. Where would you keep the horses?

K: Just right across the street in our open field or in an open field right behind our house.

S: What happened to the horses when you left? Do you know?

K: The first horse, named Niña, we took her out to the Godinis's. The Godinises were a family that had considerable property and that horse and her foal went out to one

of their fincas, out there. It's called Catalina. Then, I got a second horse name Caridad, which is Charity and we took her and my father had to sell her at the point we left. So she didn't get the luxury of going out to the farm. So they're long since deceased but they were a very big deal for me. So that's what I did.

S: Yeah. Did you do those country clubs and things like that as well?

K: My parents belonged to the Biltmore Country Club. Did Richard Skilton talk about that at all?

S: I read it in your father's piece.

K: The Biltmore was an incredible place. I'm sure it was run by Cubans and not Americans. It was far above my parents' social standing. In other words, when we moved to Cuba, you're artificially up in a different social standing than you would be in the United States because you suddenly have your children in a private school and you're going to a place like the Biltmore Yacht and Country Club, you're playing golf, your children like me are being taught to ride a horse by a man in the Cuban army. You know, it's a different life. You have a maid living in your house.

S: Did you guys have help that lived in the house?

K: Oh yes. Yeah. We had two that were memorable. In fact, when I went back to Cuba in 2000 it was only to see Delles really. But I had to go with an organized tour and we were in Havana and I was able to go and see her, which was a major big deal because the women lived in our house. So you're living in a way that is not the way you would live in the United States. So it's an incredible thing to go to something like the Biltmore. It was just a beautiful place and it had swimming pools and just a beautiful beach and you could go snorkeling and all kinds of yachts and horseback riding and golfing. We used to go there Friday nights as kids and roller skate there because it was all the terraza flooring and it was just a different life. A life you can't even imagine. It was cool. I mean, what kid has horses like that?

S: Right outside of the city too. Yeah.

K: Right. We were just right outside and my father commuted into downtown Havana every day when he worked for the Ward Line or the United Fruit Company. It was kind of interesting.

S: Do you think, like people like Mr. Brown, do you think that's why they... because what I'm noticing is that a lot of people after they were forced to leave Cuba took jobs in other Latin American countries. Was it this social standing that came with being an ex patriot or was it...?

K: I think it just becomes what you're accustomed to because quite frankly when we came back to the United States and we went to Philadelphia and we were put in the Philadelphia public schools my sister and I were like "What is this? We don't recognize this. We don't know anything about this." And it's very isolating because

you don't belong there. You're not part of that. The other kids don't really understand you. In fact, I remember after we left Philadelphia and we moved to Princeton, which is where my mother is from, my sister was put into the public school and the public school contacted my mother to say there was something wrong with my sister because she couldn't relate to the other people there. And in fact, this is interesting because my sister was second grade I guess, she had a black teacher and the teacher said, "She's too clingy on me. What's going on?" My mother said, "That's because she's used to being around black people. And you're black and she recognizes you and she can't relate to these other people." You can't relate. It's a very difficult adjustment. So people came to the United States, like the Browns, for a short period of time and then he said, "I can't do this. I have to go back to what I recognize." So they went to Panama. In our case because my father was in the steamship business, he ended up in New York and he traveled extensively everywhere but we were stuck in the states. So I think it has to do with two things: that you're used to living in a particular way but also you feel isolated from your community. I mean, think about it. We were kids. I didn't see any of those kids, my friends, for a long, long time. I didn't see them.

S: Were you 14?

K: I was 13. So I didn't get to see any of my friends anymore. My parents kept in contact with their friends, you know, with these people in this picture. But for me and my sister, we didn't see our friends anymore. It was only after I got out of college that I started reconnecting with people and that was one of the big things about the Bakers and bringing Ruston back together in Miami that I got to see kids and be in contact with kids- and I say kids even though we're in our sixties- that I hadn't seen in years. I remain in contact with the Browns and their daughters throughout my whole life. And she's my oldest friend, Cathy, I met her when I was three and she was one in our apartment in Cuba. But its really tough leaving your whole life like that. And most people didn't even get anything out. We at least got our furniture and stuff out. Most people had to leave everything behind and go to another place and its just difficult. It's very difficult. So I think that's why so many people went back to, lets say, Central America or even in the West Indies on the islands because, you know, Puerto Rico in particular, because you couldn't adjust in the United States. Its very difficult that adjustment.

S: So you came down when you were three? Is that right?

K: Right. So I was born when my father was a freshman at MIT, graduated from there, got that job in Cuba, so we arrived there when I was about three and a half.

S: So really your first home was...

K: That's the only home I ever knew. That's why I say when I was three we moved into these apartments in Havana and the apartment across from us was occupied by the Browns and their daughter was one year old and that's my oldest memory.

S: How did you identify? Did you ever feel Cuban or were you always American?

K: I do not think that that was really in anybody's brain as a kid that young because you're associating with the other children who may be American or Cuban and it's just the way life is. Because these Godinises, where Mr. Godinis was married to Mrs. Godinis who was from Pittsburgh, that couple may still be living, they lived around the corner from us and to get around there you're just walking down the street. Children were out more on the street so you're interacting with the people out there so most of the time you're speaking Spanish. So it's just the way it is. It's just life there. The Ruston Academy had, I would say, it seems to me, as many Cuban kids as Anglo types and half the day, at least, was conducted in Spanish.

S: What grade were you?

K: 7th.

S: So you didn't go to the high school program?

K: No. Chris Baker is... you're going to talk to him tomorrow?

S: Today actually.

K: Ok. I think he actually graduated from high school there but I was just a kid. I got as far as 7th grade but I started... In Cuba you had kindergarten, pre-primary, and then first grade and then first grade through 6th and 7th grade. So most of the people that I knew came there very young or were born there and it's just the way life was. It wasn't a separation in our minds. I didn't think anything about being an American actually. I just lived there.

S: Were you aware of the political situation in the '50s?

K: Yes. Absolutely because my parents gave me a diary in 1959 and the first entry on January 1st was "Our president left." I didn't say the president of the Cuban people, I said our president.

S: And before that did you ever feel the revolution around you or no?

K: Yes because the Godinises, who lived around the corner, he would have a monthly, or I should say weekly meeting with his family and the meeting that he missed is when after the revolution so revolutionary types came in and arrested part of his family. So you're like right in the middle of stuff like that. Also at school, they talked about it a lot. There was the 26th of July movement and I can't remember the colors of that but you had to stay away from things like that. That was a revolutionary movement. So yes, we knew about that type of thing and I can remember hiding in the walk-in closet in our house with my mother, my sister, and Delles our maid, because there were people running down the street with weapons. That type of stuff. So yes, all that stuff was going on so you had to know to stay out of it.

S: Now other than these neighbors, what was your social network like?

K: My social network was females, girls my own age. I'm not in contact with them anymore. One of them was... Let me ask you this. Is Chris Baker going to give you a listing of people who are on the Ruston list?

S: He already has.

K: He already has. If there is one on there named Marcus, a guy named Marcus.

S: Marcus what?

K: Marcus is their last name. You may want to contact him. His sister Carol Marcus was a very good friend of mine. They were Jewish people who had lived in Cuba a long time and had businesses there. I was in contact with Carol Marcus until about 10 or so years ago. I don't know what happened to her. I contacted her brother but he wouldn't give me any information. But he and she have an incredible perspective, for you, of business people. Because I remember my father saying that Mr. Marcus used to ship stuff in on those ships that my father was dealing with- I don't know if it was the Ward line or United Fruit Company- because they had businesses there. And Carole Marcus, her parents... oh what was the name? The National Hotel. That hotel that sits high up in Havana? Her parents had a cabana there at the pool so we used to go there on Saturday or Sunday. So you imagine, we urchins sitting there with her parents being waited on hand and foot at this gorgeous pool at that hotel that her parents had. It was like phenomenal. Where would you experience that? I mean, it was incredible. You know, you're just sitting there, running around the pool, jumping in the pool and there's all kinds of wait staff and they had this thing where whatever you wanted they brought it and you just signed for it like we were some big deal or something. It's like a fairytale life. But that's the Marcuses. But I remember she told me that her father had gone down there and gotten in business as an importer or stuff and then her mother came down there from New York on a trip and met her father and they fell in love and got married. So Carol and her brother were born in Cuba. I remember going to their house and they had what you would call today a townhouse but it was tall and high and they had multiple domestic help in that place. We were living a charmed life.

S: Was there... was it about class? Was it about English got you, or being an American in Cuba got you certain benefits?

K: It was about the fact that there was a structure there that for whatever amount of money you earned there you could afford to live in a style that you couldn't possibly afford to live in in the United States. And you were also in company of people who were really interesting because they were working in all of these various different businesses and we were their kids. And it was just very interesting and it was neat.

S: Do you think that there was... cause I find it interesting how a lot of people who I've interviewed have reflected that after the revolution that they began to feel senses of anti-Americanism surrounding them. Did you ever feel that before? After?

K: Are you saying that when they returned to the states that they felt that people...

S: No in Cuba.

K: Oh in Cuba. Yes absolutely. In Cuba, it depended who you were dealing with because in our home in Cuba Delles was our... you know they called her la criada, the maid, she became ill for a bit and had to leave and we got another one and that lady said she would denounce my parents. Well you get denounced to the Cuban revolutionary government and you're in big trouble. So yes. We had to get rid of her. She had to leave. Then Delles came back and stayed with us until we left. So yes, because the revolutionary movement of Fidel Castro to me was more of a peasant movement. It wasn't a student movement. There were many revolutionary movements in Cuba. Fidel's was just one of them and his was not really a classic, communist proletariat movement. It was more of a lower class of people who felt very disenfranchised. So when he took over and they were nationalizing things and so forth there was a sense that the Americans had come in and taken from people what was rightly theirs. Depending on your social class. I mean, all the rich Cubans were getting out or hoping that they wouldn't lose everything that they had but in the end when everything is nationalized you need to leave. But I think people that had nothing felt that they were finally going to get justice and that justice should entail Americans leaving and forfeiting their property.

S: What was your family's reaction to the revolution initially?

K: January 1st, like I told you I wrote in my diary "Our president left." It was total shock. It was total shock that he would go. But he did. He left. Then in the first week or so it was watching television and they were documenting Fidel's movement toward Havana and everyone was so excited. We as children thought that everything would be okay and that life would go on. However, my father told me that he never believed that things would go back to the way they were because he believed that Fidel was not someone who could be bought off and that he was very serious and that he wanted to bring justice and equality to the people. And we as children didn't understand any of those things and so my father wanted his company to move him to another location, let's say in Latin America, but they said everything will be fine. The United Fruit Company's position was he just needs to make some noise and then we'll settle with him and everything will be fine. But my father told me years later that his position was everything is not going to be fine and that this man is totally serious. I think it was only made worse when Fidel Castro came to the United States and he was not seen by the president. I guess it was president Eisenhower did not see him. He went on up and went to the United Nations and I don't think he was received in a manner he felt he should be received. And when he went back to Cuba he was even more determined to change Cuba into a place where everyone was equal and had an equal opportunity. And of course I didn't realize any of that.

S: Were you tracing these events?

K: At the time we knew about them. I remember knowing about those things. Yes. I knew about those things. Now what I will say is that in school people started

disappearing and I don't mean disappearing into the Castro thing but leaving Cuba because people were concerned from the beginning. People were concerned about how do we get our money out. You can't get your property out, your land, your real estate. For we as children, I don't think I understood the gravity of the situation and that we weren't going to be there a whole lot longer because there would be no job so we were going to have to leave. So we were there until March of 1960 so it was a year and three months. My father said, "Hey it's not going to work out. We've got to leave." So his company wouldn't move him so he quit that company and we left.

S: The United Fruit Company.

K: Yeah. He quit and we packed. It was kind of interesting because we packed everything and he took it down and they left it on the piers at the United Fruit Company piers because my father knew a guy that was in charge of all the laborers down there who I think he was also in the movement of the communist social party. And I remember my father telling me that the established communist social party, which would've been like proletariat in Havana, did not approve of Castro because it wasn't what they called a real communist paradigm because he was bringing in all of these people from way out in the other end of the island and so my father used to talk to this man and I can't remember his name right now but it's probably in my father's paper, yeah. That is the man that got all of our stuff out for us. And my father said that he had a good relationship with that guy and kind of understood where they were coming from from their view of the communist party. But one of the reasons like you see these end tables and that cocktail table, that coffee table? Those were made in Cuba.

S: Wow.

K: Those were our coffee tables and end tables in Cuba.

S: You've kept them in really good shape.

K: They're Cuban mahogany. They were made in some guy's backyard. But that's the kind of stuff we got out. Most people, you couldn't get anything out but you. When you left you could take a suitcase and I think \$1,000 and I think that's it. And you could leave if you got permission. You had to get permission from the revolutionary government to leave. I still have mine. I kept it.

S: Do you? Do you have it with you right now?

K: No but I probably have it downstairs and I can show it to you.

S: Sure that'd be cool.

K: You've never seen a permission to leave a communist country?

S: No. Thank you.

K: So there was one for each of us that tells you that you can leave. The national police. Special permission to leave. That's our address in Reparto Biltmore.

S: Wow.

K: Without that you cannot leave the country.

S: How did you get out? Did you fly out?

K: Yeah. We flew to Miami. Most of the stuff I've taken out of here but I have in here... we flew to Miami and then we flew to Philadelphia. Nobody knew we were coming.

S: Did you know you were leaving?

K: Yes because my father had everything packed. Yeah we flew to Miami on Pan American and then to Philadelphia on National Airlines and we walked out of that, got a taxi and went to my grandmother's in Philadelphia. That's how I ended up in the Philadelphia public school system which was a shock to the system.

S: What high school did you go to?

K: I went to Princeton High School.

S: Oh okay.

K: I graduated from Princeton High School. That's Cuba. That's the American Club.

S: Wow. I thought the American Club was mostly for businessman lunches. Is that right?

K: Yeah. Or social stuff. You know. This is the hair from my horses.

S: Which one is you?

K: This is me. That's a little bit of my sister. You know what this is? This is May Day at the Mother's Club. This is the Mother's Club Directory. It had all the people going to the Mother's Club and here are all the children with their date of birth.

S: Wow. I haven't seen this.

K: I got this out when I knew you were coming. This is a very big deal. This is from May Day.

S: Yeah Stephanie Braxton gave that to me. Was she in your class?

K: She may have been. I don't know. In the United States you did not celebrate May Day because the communists sort of took that over as their main thing. Let me put this in here. But that lists all the kids.

S: Did your sister go to Ruston as well?

K: Yeah. She got to first grade. This is our backyard. This is my horse. This is my horse in the backyard. This is my horse after she gave birth to a foal. Just there. It's just at your house. 1958. This is really a good one. This is the '58-59 edition. Do you have the '58-59 edition?

S: I have it scanned. Yeah. How do you have all of this? You just kept it?

K: Yeah. This one is better than the '59 edition because this has the people before people started leaving and of course it lists...

S: Who does it say is in government?

K: You'll have to look and see.

S: Oh it says Batista.

K: But it lists everybody, you know, and who they worked for, what clubs they belonged to.

S: The '60 is online.

K: Yeah. This one is better cause we're not in the '60 but we're in this one and this one does the whole island.

S: They have a copy at Duke University and I scanned the whole thing.

K: I got the real thing.

S: That's cooler. This Firestone thing wasn't a part of it either.

K: Well you've got to know who your sponsor is. And that's all... I'm sure I did that when I was a kid. At any rate...

S: What did you do professionally?

K: I worked for the federal government for the federal judiciary as a... I ended my career in the federal judiciary at the administrative office of the United States Court and I provided support for the judicial conferences of the United States because federal courts are life appointments so they don't govern themselves by a top down structure. They govern themselves by a committee structure. So I provided a secretariat function to the committee on automation and technology. So even though I'm not a techie, my job responsibility was to allow the techies to communicate with the committee and with the people on the hill. So it was kind of an interesting job because it was part of automating the courts nationwide, federal courts who were very much ahead of most other things on getting automated. So I did that in the end. But interestingly enough when I graduated from college with a degree in sociology.

S: From what school?

K: American School. I liked that sociology/anthropology type stuff. The only job I could get was as a D.C. police officer.

S: Wow. Did you?

K: Yeah. You're talking 1969.

S: Wow. That was a moment.

K: Yeah. And they were paying \$8,000 a year. Can you imagine? But they wanted women to investigate battered and abused women, which is what I did most of the time but I also saw a bunch of... you know all the student protests and all of this from a different point of view. From a police side. So anyway, that was kind of interesting. So I'm retired from the federal government. Happily retired. But anyway, I went from the police department to the treasury department and then I went to the federal courts. During that I left the federal court and went to the justice department for two years and then went back to the federal courts and retired from there. So it was always in some form of the justice system and a lot of it was from a technology point of view but there was some times when I was out there enforcing the law. But anyway, my heart was really in sociology and anthropology but back then you really needed a PhD, as you should have today, and I didn't have any money and I needed a job. So anyhow, I didn't spend my time on what I would've liked. But anyway the Cuba experience for me as a kid, it was a great life.

S: How do you use your Spanish today?

K: I don't.

S: Never?

K: Well, if guys come to work in the house, yeah. Yeah I get to talk to them.

S: How is your Spanish today?

K: I'm no longer... I used to be bilingual, now I'm not even fluent cause I don't have anybody to talk to. But its kind of interesting because if I talk to folks who come here... If you need to take the call, take it.

S: No no. I just need to make sure it's still recording. Sorry.

K: But at any rate, what happens is that because we were there as children it still resonates in your brain. You can actually dream in Spanish.

S: You do?

K: Yeah you can. It happens. It's very odd. It's odd. And also, here's an interesting thing that happened. We went a few years ago with our church to Israel.

S: Which church?

K: It's a Presbyterian church. We weren't Catholics, we were Presbyterians attending an English speaking Methodist church in Cuba.

S: In Vedado?

K: In Havana.

S: In Vedado?

K: In Vedado. Yeah. And it's still there today. But I went with this group from the Presbyterian church to Israel and in Jerusalem I'm sitting in the hotel lobby, just because I like to observe things and I'm just sitting there and about six people came and sat around me and they're speaking to each other in Spanish. And I'm just sitting there and sitting there and it suddenly dawned on me that this is the clearest Spanish I've heard in 30 years. And I was sitting there listening to them and I thought, "Self, are you just going to sit here and not say anything?" So I opened my mouth and I asked them in Spanish, "Where are you people from?" and they said, "Oh we're Jews from Panama but we're really Cubans." And I thought, "Oh my God." They said, "We're here to have two of the kids Bar Mitzvahed." So we started talking and I said that's where I'm from. And of course then they wanted to know where I lived in comparison to where they lived and all of that. So it's always somehow present. That's what I'm telling you. And a Cuban accent, if it's sort of an educated accent, it resonates and so I had a good time there. And I thought, "Gee. I've traveled all the way from Northern Virginia and I'm sitting in a hotel lobby in Jerusalem and I'm running into Cubans."

S: Yeah. It's interesting going through the directory there. There actually is a group of Ruston Alum who have ended up in Israel fulltime. Because I think actually the only place where if you were Cuban you could take as much luggage as you wanted was Israel if you were Jewish.

K: Really?

S: For some reason Castro made an exception for Jews, which is interesting. You don't seem to... and this is interesting and correct me if I'm wrong Kay but there doesn't seem to be a bitterness.

K: From me? No. If you want bitterness talk to Cathy Brown. There is...

S: Why is that though?

K: Well, I don't know other than I'll put it this way. My parents did not own a home there okay? So when we left, we weren't leaving any real estate. You know?

S: So there wasn't as much to lose?

K: We don't have any claims in the International Court of Claim. No, I don't have any bitterness. Maybe it's sort of... how do you describe it? It's sort of like it could've

been different but it wasn't? It's sort of a sense of loss but it's not a sense of bitterness at all.

S: Why do you think it happened? How do you understand the revolution?

K: I understand the revolution as people who felt disenfranchised in their own country wanting to seize it back and seizing it back in a manner that wasn't in my best interests. But I can understand it because the influence of Americans in Cuba was huge. You know. For all I know they may have run the telephone company and the TV company and the newspapers and everything else like that. So folks living there, particularly if you lived on a sugar plantation may have felt that they were being taken advantage of by foreign interests. That's what I believe. You know my father always told me that there was a good emerging middle class in Cuba that did not feel disenfranchised and certainly wealthy people didn't feel disenfranchised but there was a lower class that probably did and that's what this revolution was about in my opinion.

S: Was that something that you came to afterwards or while you were going through the process of...

K: Here's the thing, leaving Cuba was a tremendous shock. Coming back the United States was a tremendous shock so it takes you years to get over that. So once you're getting over that, you're going through school. So by the time I finally started looking at these things I was in college and I think that perhaps maybe that is why I majored in sociology because it has a lot to do with how people interact in groups and what motivates people and things like that. And I'm also the product of seeing women want their rights and African Americans wanting their rights so I'm also thinking well maybe these Cubans wanted their rights. So I can see it from their perspective even though it didn't work out the way I thought my life was going to work out. Because I often say to my husband, "Hey if it hadn't been for Fidel Castro we wouldn't be married today." We would never have come back here. Ever. So I would've had a totally different life. But I'm not living that life or regretting that life, I'm living the life I have. So I kind of understand why what happened happened. I've also done a lot of reading about it. You know like I read things that Fidel, like his famous Moncada speech before he got shipped off to jail and all that kind of stuff. So I understand where he was coming from. It wasn't necessarily good for me but my parents in terms of money and property, real estate, didn't lose anything because my father said that he was actually paid in an American bank. So we didn't lose any cash and we didn't lose a house.

S: So that was liquid? It was a U.S. bank that was in Cuba?

K: No it was a U.S. bank that was in New Jersey and he would just have money wire transferred down. I believe that's how they transferred it. I don't know. But he said he was actually paid at the first national bank in Princeton, New Jersey, which is where my mother was from because my father was a very savvy guy actually, for those days. And he got around and he was talking to people on the piers down there

so he knew that stuff was not going well so he took steps to keep his money elsewhere.

S: How did he learn Spanish?

K: Just at work. At work. And he spoke Spanish reasonably well having to do with his work but he was not fluent by any means.

S: Just in the memoir that he wrote, it said that the Americans had to be executives or something like that.

K: Yes. In other words, you could not get a permanent residency in Cuba unless you occupied a job that made you an executive in that country because naturally they wanted Cubans to occupy the other jobs. So my father was the traffic manager but he then had, let's say the position of treasurer of the company but he was really the traffic manager. You know, managing the traffic that was going to be shipped in and shipped out. That's why he was dealing with people like Carol Marcus's father who was shipping in all kinds of stuff and shipping out. So it was shipping in and out of Havana. United Fruit Company also had big shipping operations at the other end of the island from the sugarcane operations and all kinds of...

S: Continue. I apologize.

K: All I can tell you is that I am not upset really about anything that happened in Cuba because it just happened.

S: Did your father or other members of the American colony, because it's interesting that this is your reflection right? In some ways this economy operated for foreign capital right?

K: A lot of it. I think so.

S: So was there a sense of responsibility toward the Cuban people that corporate interests or individuals who worked for these corporations held at the time?

K: I can't answer that other than to say if you... I don't know that it extended to the lower classes but it certainly extended to people that had money. In other words, the people who lived beside us, the Nuñeses, were all involved with TV and radio type stuff so yeah they were an upper class. So yes, if you're at that same level, yes. You don't want problems and you want to get along with people and they're interacting because the businesses are interacting together but the lower you get the less you have concern about lower classes of people and Cuba had different social classes, down to a peasant class, campesinos. And I don't think people cared much about them. I can't say for sure but I don't think so.

S: Did your father manage Cubans?

K: Yes.

S: How did he communicate with them initially?

K: In English and Spanish because anybody they would hire would have the ability to speak some English. He had two assistants that he worked with and they would go around and together with these two guys who spoke English and Spanish to deal with people who wanted to ship things in and out. Down on the piers, most of those people spoke less English, mostly Spanish and that's where my father really learned to speak Spanish was down at the piers. And, you know, for people like me we were out on the street a lot, either with bicycles in the early days or on horses and you can get pretty far on a horse. You can get really out in the country and those people only speak Spanish and they're living totally differently from anything that I would see at home. So you can see the way people are living and when you're dealing with people in a different social class from yourself you can relate to them after awhile.

S: What was your experience with Cuban poverty? Or what was your understanding of it at the time?

K: You don't really think about it. You just don't think about it. We had our staff in the house, the maids, they were all black people. They were either Cuban blacks or blacks from the islands. My mother was the type of person who would visit them in their homes. They would live with us but they had their own homes and you just went and visited and so it just seemed... it just was the way it was. We just went there. I can remember going with Delles into downtown Havana into a complete Cuban black culture and I'd never seen anything like it before and you're just there and it's fine. We weren't afraid of it. We weren't sad for it. It's just that different people live in different ways. And my mother particularly and even my father to some extent exposed us to all kinds of people without judgment which is kind of pretty neat because they would just let you go with them.

S: Was that a common experience in the American colony or do you think your parents were somewhat unique in that?

K: I think my parents were somewhat unique in that but I don't know.

S: What was the culture surrounding ideas about maybe race or maybe nationality and American exceptionalism? Were those ideas circulating in the American colony in ways that you can remember? I'm asking... you were 12. I understand.

K: In some ways I have to say yes because the DAR, the Daughters of the American Revolution, had a presence there and I was a stubborn child okay? And the DAR had a contest on American history and we were supposed to memorize all these answers to all these different questions about American history. Well, me being an incorrigible kid who just wanted to ride her horse because I was a terrible tomboy, I did not want to participate in this. So I can tell you that every time I went to where they asked me a question to win this contest, I either gave them a wrong answer or no answer. But they were very interested in children learning American history and I was totally resistant to it. I was resistant to a lot of stuff. I also was urged by my mother to join- the Girl Scouts had a thing called Brownies back then- to join that

and I wouldn't do that either. I wanted to be free to go get on my horse with the Godinis kids and go out into the country and see life. I wasn't interested in participating in American cultural things that had been transported to Cuba. What can I tell you? I was a tough kid to deal with. That's what my mother says.

S: Well I mean and also your appreciation of more local cultural forms was...

K: Because that's what I was used to and they would accept you. If you're just hanging out there with your horse and you arrive in this small little town and all the Cuban people are there and you talk to them and it's fine and you have fun and I didn't like to be supervised in, let's say, something like the Brownies. So I kind of shied away from stuff like that. Now I liked going to the National Hotel with the Marcuses and being waited on and I liked going to the Biltmore Yacht and Country Club and being taught to ride by the coronel, whatever type of colonel he was I can't remember. They used to call him Tito. He taught me how to ride and I used to love to run around and do stuff without supervision. So anyhow, that's the kind of kid I was.

S: And I guess in some ways that culture was freer to do that.

K: Yes. You could just like... and my parents allowed it. So I can't say for the other kids what their parents were like and how much they engaged with American things. I remember mostly that the history and geography were taught in Ruston, it was the history and geography of Cuba and they were very clear. I remember as a child being taught that when the Spanish came to Cuba, you had a choice if you were one of the indigenous people to convert or die and thus there are no indigenous people in Cuba anymore. That's why they brought in black slaves later because they killed them all off in the name of Christianity. Well I could take that in and didn't think it was right. You know the famous Indian Chief Hatüey? That they had Hatüey beer? They burned him at the stake. I mean think about that. We're being taught that when we're little. So that sounds like injustice to me. So if you were really listening you'd say, "Wow. That doesn't sound too good." And so, you know, there was some amount of injustice that carried through when you have Americans coming in and establishing all kinds of business and a lot of Cuban welfare was connected to those American businesses and then there were a lot of people that were disenfranchised by it.

S: What was your relationship with U.S. tourists? Were they on your periphery?

K: Absolutely none. None.

S: But like at the National for instance.

K: No because there's not going to be any U.S. tourists that are going to be at that pool with the Cabana. I can tell you that. They may have been inside that hotel but they weren't sitting out in that pool.

S: Was there a... within the American colony... because I'm trying to figure out where the lines were drawn because a lot of the people I interviewed will tell me about brothels and gambling things their parents did.

K: Oh that kind of stuff. Remember again that I'm 13 and below. So the only tourists I'm seeing are my relatives who are coming down there. So when my relatives would come down there my parents might take them to Sans Soucie or the Tropicana or stuff like that. I was only going to, let's say, a place called Rancho Luna, which was an eating place. But quite frankly my father told me that the mob interests from the United States were very actively functioning in Cuba and yes, if you were a tourist you could get involved with prostitution and gambling.

S: So you were aware of that then?

K: I would say I was not aware of that until later. Now I don't know if by later I mean as we were leaving Cuba because when Castro came in, he shut all that down. So maybe I was... but it would've only been talking, people talking, that I might've heard things like that. But I don't think I was fully aware of those types of things when I was a kid because I wasn't going to those types of places.

S: Who were some of your really close friends in Cuba?

K: Well Cathy Brown was my best friend and I really do think you should talk to her.

S: Where does she live?

K: She's right outside of Minneapolis.

S: Oh that's right. Great.

K: And Carol Marcus was my other best friend. There was a kid named Jane Potts and I don't know if Potts is on his list.

S: Potts are on my list. Yeah I have their contact if you want it.

K: You do?

S: Yeah.

K: Did you talk to Jane Potts or her sister?

S: She's on my list of interviews. Was her sister Claire?

K: Yes. Their father, interestingly enough, I remember, you'll have to ask them, I think he was in Spain in the '30s when they had that big fascist uprising and everything. I can't remember their whole background but she, Jane, was a close friend of mine. Do you have anyone name Wubbold on your list?

S: Wubbold.

K: I don't know what happened to the Wubbolds but those three girls, Wubbold, Potts and Marcus were my best female friends.

S: And all went to school with you.

K: Yes. They were all in Ruston in the same class. The others were boys. Like do you have Capitzis on your list?

S: I do.

K: Mark and Chris Capitzi.

S: What did Capitzi's father do?

K: He worked for Pittsburgh Paint. And he's in this picture. This is Capitzi and his wife is here. You know back in these days you didn't sit beside your spouse at a thing like this. That was unacceptable. Totally unacceptable. That's why there is no person in this picture who is sitting beside their spouse.

S: Why?

K: Because you don't do that. Because you can talk to them at any time. You want to talk to other people. So this is Mr. Capitzi and this is Mrs. Capitzi. That's my mother and that's my father. This is Mrs. Brown. That's Mr. Brown. These two were married and then she's married and here's her husband.

S: But they're still gendered order.

K: Right. That's deliberately done like that.

S: That's so interesting. Wow.

K: Even when we came back to the United States my mother would say you've got to sit like that. Anyway, he worked for Pittsburgh Paint. They, I believe when they came to the United States and then ended up going to Puerto Rico, his wife died relatively young and he remarried and he's got a son Mark who was in my grade that lives out west and I think Chris is a concert pianist. I think so. So you might be interested in talking to Mark and Chris Capitzi. They have girls. They have daughters but they wouldn't remember anything because they were like five or born in Puerto Rico. But at any rate, so I knew the Capitzis pretty well. And the Godinises. I really think Mr. and Mrs. Godinis are still alive and living somewhere in Pennsylvania. Their son operates a canoe and kayaking place in Hawaii and I was in contact with him in 2014? I can't remember. It was around when my father died so I think it was in 2014 and he said both his parents were still living. Now they went to the school named Lafayette. You know about Lafayette. So my best riding partners went to Lafayette as opposed to Ruston.

S: Lafayette was considered a lesser school in some ways or no?

K: I remember my mother saying the reason we went to Ruston is because it was accredited in the United States and she wanted to make sure we could get into college and she wasn't sure that Lafayette was accredited in the United States. I'm not sure what's true. The other big thing about Lafayette is that I believe it was air conditioned in the '50s if you can believe that.

S: Give and take. Accreditation or air conditioning. Especially in Cuba. That's a tough call.

K: But anyways my parents went for accreditation. Of course, the houses weren't air-conditioned. It was different. It was totally different.

S: Was there a southern culture amongst the U.S. colony?

K: If there was I didn't know about it because I'm not from there. I don't know. You could ask Cathy Brown because they're from Georgia.

S: How about... do you remember the church you went to? The Methodist church?

K: Yes. It was a Methodist church in Vedado and that church was organized in the 1890s and it was an English speaking church. Our maid went there because she was also a Methodist.

S: Your Jamaican maid?

K: I'm trying to remember. I'd have to look at my notes, that thing I sent you, to see where Delles is from, because interestingly enough I have her biography in the notes. Daisy Gonzalez... when we arrived in Cuba and we went to Mrs. Ross's boarding house, the black lady there who was in charge of the kitchen was Daisy Gonzalez and that's when they had the Christmas lechón asado and my parents were like, "What? We can't do this." And we went elsewhere and with some Americans and had probably chicken or something like that because my parents weren't quite ready for the roasted pig with the apple in its mouth. But the relationship of my mother with Daisy Gonzalez spanned from 1950 until all the way up through when my mother died in the 1980s because Daisy and her husband and their daughter lived all the way up here in Rockville, Maryland. And I was in contact with her daughter who is a few years older than me until the last few years and she suffers from dementia. But I have known that family my entire life so to say that I was very comfortable going in and out of different levels of people in Cuba, people of different social statuses because I've always known the Gonzalezes and my main objective when I went to Cuba was to see Delles, which I did and she was... I can't remember. One of them is from Jamaica and one of them is from Trinidad but you'd have to look at it. And when we sat there, when we went there, she was living in a storage closet in this place called La Plaza Vieja and they had it was like a big storage room was her room and in speaking to her... I asked her about her life like if after we left if she got married. She said yes. I said, "Did you ever have any children?" and she said, "I only ever had one child and that was your sister." I went back to the United States to tell my sister that... That you're the only child she ever had. She considers you her child

because when my sister was born, Delles was there. So I'm just saying, "My God." You know? That is just really an incredible thing and just talking to this woman and she was concerned and wanted to know all about my sister. She said, "That's the only child. The only child I ever had."

S: Wow. Has your sister been down there to visit?

K: No. And I don't think she'll go because I think it will make her too upset to go back.

S: Yeah.

K: It's so changed there. The community college in 2000 did a thing where they got a license to go down and have conversations with people in Cuba and that's how I went and anybody that had any status there was a very committed socialist. And of course they talked at great length about the mob being there and about the prostitution and the gambling and corruption and everything else like that. And so yeah. I got it. But if you get out into the country with the people, the people are just the same people and they are great because we were in Havana and then we also went out. It's people that belong to the communist party that are tough to deal with down there because their social status depends on them having a communist society there which... everybody is not equal. You have everybody that's in the party up here and then you have everybody else. And the everybody else? They're great. Because when we got out into the country, the people are great. They don't care if you're French, American, German. They don't care. They're just working, trying to sell their stuff. It was... I don't know. For that reason, I don't think my sister would go there because I think it would be greatly upsetting and I think that Cubans that left Cuba and went to the United States if they went back to Cuba it will be shocking to them and it's very hard to see what has happened there and how things have changed. So you're not going back to what you knew. It's not there. It's just not there. Things have changed hugely.

S: Ms. Ross's boarding house. Was this just... In the memoir you sent me you said this is where the Americans stayed. Was that just United Fruit Company?

K: My father claimed that Americans coming to Cuba, that their companies would set them there and you live in the boarding house until you find a place you're going to live. So we went to Ms. Ross's boarding house and then we moved from there to an apartment on 10th Street. So we were there, you know, a few weeks I guess. And then you could make up your mind on where you want to live.

S: So that wasn't just the United Fruit Company?

K: No I don't think so.

S: Well he didn't work for the United Fruit Company actually.

K: No it was called the Ward Line, which had a Cuban name then. So I think that as companies were bringing people down there, if they didn't have any particular place to stay, you could stay at Ms. Ross's boarding house. And I don't even know where it was but it was in downtown Havana.

S: Sorry. Sometimes I forget to take notes while you're talking. And then just a little bit more about the church that you went to. Do you remember anything about who the minister was? Cause I actually just finished up a grant at Drew University and so I was deep in the Methodist archives so I'm kind of interested in that culture.

K: I knew his name and I don't remember it now but it's really interesting because a Cuban woman joined our Presbyterian church here and I was talking to her one day. She's older than me. She's probably in her 80s and she was saying to me, "I know the church that you went to because my family was in the printing business and we printed the bulletin for that Methodist church." She was young and she said, "Don't you just remember the minister, Mr. so-and-so, he was such a dreamboat." And I was like, "I was 10." I don't remember that. I just don't remember that. But she remembered him well. I don't remember him and I don't remember his name.

S: Did you ever go to Sunday school or no?

K: That's where I went. When you got to this church, the kids went downstairs and the adults went upstairs and we went to Sunday school all of the time and I think Methodists are kind of a neat religion and I liked them a lot. But we were Presbyterian and that's very different from Methodists.

S: Why didn't you go to the Presbyterian Church?

K: Because they didn't have English language services. Otherwise we would have. So it was all because of the English language services. Then Delles, the maid, she said she used to go there for the Spanish.

S: The Methodist or Presbyterian?

K: The Methodist church. They gave English and Spanish. Are you on the Facebook page for Ruston Academy?

S: I am not.

K: Oh you should get on that. They have good pictures. They have a picture of that Methodist church in its heyday and then I posted a picture of what it looked like in 2000 but it sort of looks like the same thing but it is not as elegant.

S: Yeah. I've seen the contrast.

K: It's like, you know, it was at one time it was a very beautiful thing and now it looks like it needs to be power washed. But I liked that Methodist church. The Methodist church was good. I liked the Mother's Club a lot. That's where we kids got to do a lot of neat things and the mothers were, you know, made sure their kids

went there. So those were institutions that I enjoyed. The Methodist church and the Mother's Club. Other than that, I wasn't big on joining things.

S: How did your parents get oriented? Did they ever tell you? I get the accreditation thing. How did they find that out? Was that Mrs. Ross? Was that United Fruit Company?

K: Like how did they get oriented to Cuba?

S: Yeah like how did they know where to send you guys to school? How did they know what clubs to join?

K: Ok. After we left Ms. Ross's and we moved to 10th Street, this apartment building that's still there. As I say the people across from us were the Browns and downstairs were people named the Joneses and down and around the corner were the Godinises and speaking to these women who became their major lifelong friends, were telling them where you should live, where you should send your kids to school, what things you should join. Now my father was doing the same thing at work. So he was going to places like the American Club but my mother was taking us to the Mother's Club. So it was all because of that and it's the American contacts, it was not Cuban contacts.

S: What did companies provide for their American employees down there?

K: Well they provided my father with a car.

S: A car.

K: So we had a Chevrolet, which my parents bought which my mother drove. The company car was a Ford, which my father used to bring home. Of course, our family is not a Ford family. In the old days you were either like a Chevrolet company or a Ford company and we were like a Chevrolet company, family I should say. But this particular car was a Ford car and my father brought it home and it was great because it gave my mother the freedom of having a car. He had a car for going back and forth to work and also that was the car that they used during the day when they went around to talk to the people to make arrangements for shipping. I'll tell you a story about that Ford. It was stolen during the revolution at some point and when it was recovered my father said it had bullet holes and blood in it. So there had been some sort of shootout. So the car was gone for a while and then we got it back and it had to be repaired. So that I knew about right then when that was happening.

S: Are those cars still in Cuba or did you bring them back with you?

K: No. We didn't. You can't. When you leave Cuba you could take a suitcase and \$1,000 and that's it. And we left rather abruptly. You know, we just left.

S: What was the impetus to get out quickly?

K: The difficulty had to do with getting these things. My father believed sincerely that things were not going well and he wanted to leave so he told me that he sent my mother down and said, "Get in the line down there and stay in the line however long it takes until you can get our transit passes out." So once she got these things, that's when he had the people come in and pack everything and move it down to the United Fruit Company piers and then we moved to a little boarding place, like furnished and we were there less than a week and my sister and I got up one morning and my parents said, "We're leaving." It was that fast.

S: What was it that made you father make that decision? Was there a policy change? Was there...

K: No. He felt over a year and three months that he could see that the revolutionary government was totally sincere in what they intended to do and that there was no place for the United Fruit Company in that plan. And the United Fruit Company's position over and over again was, "You are mistaken. It just needs to shake out and it will be business as usual. We are the United Fruit Company. We've been through this for over 100 years. We know how it works. You just pay them off." And my father said, "You people don't get it. I want you to get me out of here and transfer me or at least pay to get my wife and kids out." And they just kept saying, you know, "You're overreacting." And he just said, "Well fine. I'm outta here." So he made his plans and left.

S: Did your father know anybody in the first revolutionary government? Like Lopez Fresquet or Pazos?

K: Pazos? Oh yeah. Sara Pazos. Oh yeah. Her brothers. Yeah I think he knew them. Sara Pazos was in my class. Yes.

S: Were you friends with her or not really?

K: Yes. Because, you know, in terms of you go to each other's birthday parties.

S: Did they have a nice house?

K: I don't remember.

S: I'm sure.

K: But her brother, you know the movie *The Old Man and the Sea*? Her brother is the kid.

S: Yeah. Felipe I think.

K: God. I'm thinking of stuff I haven't thought of in a bazillion years.

S: Michael Sanjenis. I don't know if that is a name you're familiar with but he's in his class.

K: I remember in fifth grade, Sara Pazos came in and she was just crying and crying and crying in class and this was before Batista left and she said they came to our house last night and they took away... whomever they took away out of the house. I guess maybe they let him go later.

S: I think one of the sons and then one of the sons went to the United States.

K: Is that what it was? I mean she was hugely distraught obviously. But by the same token you have the other side because a kid by the name of Antonio Blanco Rico who was in my class, his father was assassinated right in the elevator.

S: The head of SIM? Is that right?

K: I don't know. He was military. Head of something in the military.

S: What was the name again? I'm sorry.

K: Antonio Blanco Rico. When the elevator doors opened he was machine gunned to death and obviously Antonio did not come to school that day, the day after. But stuff like that was going on. We had people in Cuba who their chauffeur was blown up on the corner. This was during the revolution. You have to be very careful what you're saying and who you're associating with. Very careful. After the revolution, I believe an American, I believe it was Gary Anderson's father, was executed by Fidel Castro. I mean, these are shocking, shocking things. Was he really a CIA agent? I have no idea. I have no clue. My mother told me that the only time she ever really encountered difficulty in Cuba was getting these things and when the guy finally gave her the four of them he just said, "Here you are señora. Go. You need to go." Cause they wanted the Americans out. You know. So if you had been living a life where you feel you are so disenfranchised because these people are taking up all the resources, you want them to go.

S: Do you think that was a... I mean, how do you think that gained traction in the popular consciousness of Cuba? That idea that you just articulated.

K: That the Americans need to leave?

S: And that they were...

K: I'm really not clear about this because in Cuba during the revolution you had student movements and then you had Fidel Castro and I'm not sure what the student movements were about. Maybe they were just to try to get rid of a dictator. But Fidel maybe wanted more expansive. So the people that wanted to get rid of the dictator, I'm not sure if they were anti-American. I think that Fidel and these people who had an experience of working on sugar plantations were probably more anti-American or anti-foreign because they felt perhaps more exploited by those big... United Fruit Company is considered the great exploiter of Central America and the islands. I mean, my father worked for the United Fruit Company. I mean, its called 'La Grand Flota Blanca.' I mean, give me a break. These are the people who had all

the banana plantations and the sugar plantations and they were uniformly hated. You can read all sorts of novels, which I have, about all of that.

S: In Cuba?

K: Not in Cuba but lets say in Panama, in Central America, in Colombia, you know, the United Fruit Company is notoriously disliked.

S: Have you read Rachel Kushner's book *Telex from Cuba*?

K: No.

S: If you're interested in that world, it talks about the United Fruit Company in Cuba not so glowingly.

K: Okay. That's right. So I was only experiencing them as a shipping thing. But down at the eastern end of the island they're operating huge sugar plantations so they are using people as labor there. So the people apparently, you know, didn't have their own farms or anything but they're labor on these sugar plantations and they're seeing how the top one percent lives and they didn't like it.

S: Did you feel the Americans operated under a different set of rules than other people in Cuba?

K: If they did, I couldn't tell. I only know how we operated. You know, we didn't have a big house. We had a rental house. It was a small house, one-story. But then again we had a maid; we had a manicurist who came to do my mother's fingernails at the house; we had a gardener; the egg lady used to come to the house to bring the eggs. So maybe I just thought that was the way everybody lived. I don't know what I thought.

S: What did your mother do during the day?

K: She hung out with all of these females. You know, they played Bridge.

S: Canasta also?

K: Yeah they did that. That's right. They played Canasta I think. But they had a big Bridge thing so they would set up two tables and they would do their bridge thing. My parents and my mother, they also had the little theater in Havana. That was a big deal. I remember going to see performances of the little theater in Havana.

S: What was the little theater?

K: It was, I guess it was mostly Americans who put on community theaters. They would put on, I remember specifically *Guys and Dolls*. And they would put on different theater presentations that you could go and see and my parents were involved with the little theater people.

S: Was it a building?

K: I guess they rented it. I don't know where they rented but it just looked like a stage and all kinds of chairs and my parents mostly worked not as actors and actresses but behind the scenes in the back stage type people and I know they liked that a lot. So they did that so my mother was involved with that. She was also involved with something called The Cresh, the Havana Cresh, which was a charity and I think it had to do with the Catholic Church and they were raising money or something for underprivileged, disenfranchised people. So she just did things like that. But women didn't work. Even if you were in the states a woman wouldn't work if she were married then, so she was a homemaker. My mother liked to cook most of the meals even though Delles was there and would cook them. My mother liked to cook. We had a piano in the house. My mother liked to play the piano. She liked to hang out with her female friends by going to the Biltmore or playing Bridge or Canasta or whatever they were playing and she was involved in the theater, she was involved with the charity group.

S: What was the charity group called?

K: It was called the Havana Cresh. How do you spell Cresh? I don't know. In the thing I gave you of my father's there may be a reference to it because I remember in the newspaper had shown some pictures of it and I may have gone up to the library of congress to find those. Because there was a Cuban newspaper there called *El Mundo*. Do you read Spanish well?

S: Yeah.

K: Ok. They have the run of it up at the Library of Congress. *El Mundo*. Because the man who lived next to us Rodriguez Estaura, he worked for *El Mundo* cause on my birthday party he sent a photographer there to take pictures of us and put it in the social page.

S: That's awesome.

K: Yeah it was great.

S: This charity thing was often an activity for the women?

K: Yeah. Yeah it was because I remember the picture that was in *El Mundo* showed this same crew, the same women doing that. So yes, they were into those things.

S: What was your experience in the Cuban countryside? Did you ever go anyplace?

K: Yes on our horses we did cause you can get pretty far on a horse and also these people, the Godinises, whose kids went to Lafayette, we used to go out to their farm. I mean, these people probably had tens of thousands of acres and when you got out there, those farms, if you want to call them farms, were run by campesinos out there so you were interacting with them. And if you would get out there, they might have like a pig in a pit, cooking it, and you would just interact with them. You could go into their houses and there are chickens running all around and goats and pigs, but I

think... I'm trying to think back. The Godinises, I think it had something to do with hemp. Do you make rope out of hemp?

S: I think you can.

K: I think you can. I think they were growing stuff like that. It was like massive farms out there. So I don't mean a farm where you were growing weed but I think they were growing hemp. But I remember going out there more than once because that's where we took my horses in the end because we had to have some place to go. But those were country people out there and they're very genuine people and they're very welcoming and pleasant people.

S: Do you remember where the farm was?

K: It wasn't so far away that we couldn't put my horse on a truck and drive her there.

S: Got it.

K: So it had to be on the western end of the island.

S: Was he U.S. educated? Godinis?

K: Yeah he went to the University of... It was a Wharton school I think. Because Mrs. Godinis's brother was going there and she brought Tony Godinis home to Pittsburgh for the weekend and that's how he met Mrs. Godinis because I remember Mrs. Godinis always said, "We fell in love immediately" but she was too young. She was a like a kid and he just said, "When you grow up, I'm going to marry you." And so that's what happened but I'm pretty sure that he was at the Wharton School. His name was Antonio Godinis. Cause your mother taught there right?

S: No. She's a social psychologist actually.

K: Oh. A social psychologist. Okay.

S: Not the Wharton School but did teach at Penn. I think those are all the questions I have. Is there anything that I'm missing here?

K: No. I don't have that much to tell you actually.

S: You said this and we've been here an hour and a half and you very much entertained me and have given me a ton of great information. Also, you're very insightful in a way that a lot of these people are, you know, caught in the loss of it all and I was very impressed with the way you've thought about these issues very deeply.

K: Did you read the book, oh gosh... they had Learning to ... in Havana. I can't remember what it's called. He's up at Harvard or Yale or something like that. Learning to Die in Havana? Learning to Live in Havana? Something like that.

Anyway, he grew up in Havana at the same time I did and when I read that book it was so cool because he was remembering so many of the things. He was a Cuban.

S: Not Jorge Dominguez.

K: I wish I could remember. Just a second. Let me just see if I have one of his books down here. This book. This one. *Waiting for Snow in Havana*. This book is phenomenal. It's just phenomenal.

S: Yeah I've read this.

K: This one is different. I can remember just sitting and reading this book and just saying to my husband, "Oh my god! It's true what I've told you. It's here in this book." It's just great.

S: If you're into that one, another one that I found really interesting that's similar is Tony Navarro, who was...

K: Oh the Navarros. Cathy Brown knows all about the Navarros. She's somehow related to them or something.

S: Burke Hedges'...

K: Burke Hedges. That's her uncle. Yes.

S: Burke Hedges was her uncle?

K: I believe so yes. I believe it was her father's sister was married to Burke Hedges. This is why you have to speak to Cathy Brown and she has two twin sisters who live out in Texas, in San Antonio. Yeah this is the Hedges connection.

S: He was ambassador to Brazil for five minutes under Batista.

K: But whatever. They're hooked up with these people. But this here, this *Waiting for Snow in Havana*, the reason I don't have it here is because I gave this book to a guy whose parents are Cuban and he was born in the states but he couldn't read this book. He started reading it and he became so upset reading it that he just, he wouldn't give it back to me and he had to hang onto it but he couldn't continue reading it. It was so upsetting to him. It's amazing but you know, they were... this is a great book this one. Let me see if I have Cathy Brown's phone number. I wonder what is the best phone number for her. Ok use 612.709.1963.

S: This is perfect. I'm actually going to be in Minneapolis for a wedding.

K: She's in Champlain, Minneapolis. That's her address right there.

S: Have you visited her up there?

K: No I haven't. I should but I haven't. I'm going to see if she answers. She might still be at work. But that's her number and... This woman Dane Wilson, she was in San Marcos, Texas.

S: I'll check it out. And then Joyce Miller was another name.