

Linda: I think everybody felt like family. Even those of us that really did not even know each other well, I really do not even know how to explain this and I know Pola would say the same thing, that...

Pola: It is a very heartfelt thing.

Linda: What we experienced, it is like we are very much kindred spirits together because of our experience. We were all thrust into this situation, certainly the Cuban Missile Crisis, but there we were on this rock and we all lived together and experienced life there and it was beautiful.

Pola: Even for the very short period of time when some of the military came, their tour of duty might have been a year and a half to two years. In that very short period of time the kids that they all... We became family.

Linda: Very much.

Pola: To this day, after fifty years my best friends are still people that went to Gitmo.

Linda: When someone finds out that you need each other, no matter what it is, everyone is there for each other, really, truly, we are there, you know? If somebody finds out that somebody has been ill or there is a problem, everybody is concerned; they genuinely care about each other.

Pola: It is not rare to see on Facebook, because we all stay in touch, to see, "Dear friends, we have lost somebody today" and it is really like losing a family, a member of your family.

We used to have a teenage club and we all lived there. It was not real big but again, very well disciplined; we had our jukebox. I can remember we did not have one and it was a big deal when somebody donated one to us and we used to have a lot of functions at school. We had a bowling alley, go bowling. I remember when I was very young in the summer time the school always had summer activities. I learned about all the different leaves on trees, things that just does not happen outside of Gitmo.

Linda: Not back then

Pola: Yea, and we had...

Linda: It did in other areas of the world. I do not know. It was...

Pola: You know, we learned to play tennis. We learned how to ride horses. We learned to swim. You had like what? Four...

Linda: That is what we did in phys-ed. I had a horse. Did you?..

Pola: Oh yea, I had three.

Linda: I had a horse; my parents bought me a horse and a lot of us had horses and we rode up in the mountains. One day a friend of mine and I were riding up in the hills and my horse all of a sudden just pivoted; reared up, pivoted on its hind legs. I almost got into the cactus. My friend almost got into the cactus and that horse took off so fast. There was a mountain lion. That was Naomi and I.

Pola: Oh my god.

Linda: It was a mountain lion. Some of us would take our horses in the water. I never thought about great white sharks being out there, did you?

Pola: No.

[Laughter]

Linda: You know, the beach, the family beach, the Cuban militia would be up there looking down with their guns at our families swimming.

Pola: We had these white, umm, the salt flat, and we were not allowed to ride on those because you could sink. Well you know what? As kids, we could do anything. We were invincible; we could do anything. I can remember we went running across those salt flats and I used to think, "I wonder one of us will fall down through." And did you worry about it? *No*. You just hope that it would not happen.

Linda: I just remember going across the salt flats during [Nagnefs?], like I was saying before...

Pola: You are a pretty wild child there, girl! [laughter]

Linda: You know what, it was like Naomi, Maria, myself, Judy, and we put on black and we were not supposed to be out, and we would all sneak across in the [bomar bowl?] in different places, gong across the salt flats, not even thinking about, you know, the dangers at all.

Pola: Having lived in Gitmo, I learned a lot of things about being able to be responsible, I have been in a lot of organizations. It has taught me how to deal with people because you meet so many people on yearly basis, those that come and go.