

**Emily Susanne Goldman Oral History Interview**  
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
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**Creator:** Emily Susanne Goldman

**Interviewer:** Julius Sztuk

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**Biographical Note**

Emily Susanne Goldman served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1991 to 1993 on a beekeeping project.

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Oral History Interview

with

Emily Susanne Goldman

November 13, 2019  
Washington, D.C.

By Julius Sztuk

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection  
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

SZTUK: [00:00:03] Today is November 13th, 2019. My name is Jay Sztuk, an RPCV from Fiji, 1974 through '76. And today I'm going to be interviewing Emily Susanne Goldman, whose first Peace Corps experience was as a child when her parents were volunteers in Costa Rica in 1972. And later, she served herself in Honduras from 1991 through 1993. Emily, thanks for agreeing to be interviewed today. So this is a unique situation when you were a child, when you first went to the Peace Corps in Costa Rica. So tell us about that experience.

GOLDMAN: [00:00:45] Well, I am thrilled to be part of this oral history project. Peace Corps has had a massive effect and an ongoing effect in my life. So when people say, why did you join Peace Corps? For me, I, there was never a choice not to as an adult. So my story is very odd on several levels. Um, I have a paraplegic father and he, when they first married, they wanted to join Peace Corps in the massive numbers that, you know, people in the big rooms taking the tests and, you know, they wanted to

do this. Well, Peace Corps was very, very slow. And so they're like, well, we're just newly married. We need to make some money. So my father accepted a job with the Park Service as a Park Service planner here in D.C., and as would befall the luck, a couple of months later got the news that they had been invited to Nigeria. And so they said, uh, sorry.

GOLDMAN: [00:01:48] And so ten years later, by then, they had two kids, me and my sister. And at a random party in D.C., my mother overhears what she thought was something about kids in the Peace Corps. She was like, wait, what? So she calls the Peace Corps office. And sure enough, by then there was a newly minted plan, most likely because the first massive wave of volunteers were all very young. None of them had advanced degrees. And so by then people were getting married earlier and people had degrees earlier. So they thought, well, if we want someone with a higher degree, that's almost for sure going to be mean married with kids. So let's try this thing out. So with two kids in tow, they applied. And again, my father, being a paraplegic, put us on a big medical red flag for a while. But finally the word came that we were accepted as a family into Costa Rica.

GOLDMAN: [00:02:46] So I was three, my sister was five, and we had three months of training in Puerto Rico, of which I have no memory at all. I mean, I have one memory that's a tiny memory. And then we moved to Costa Rica, where we lived for nearly five years, from 1972 to 1976. So my first, so when I answer the questions about memories as a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica, they are memories of a kid who happened to be in Costa Rica. And I didn't know that Costa Rica was, I had no memories of D.C. before that, so to me, Costa Rica was my norm. Spanish was my norm. I went there when I was pre-lingual, so my first language was Spanish. That didn't seem odd to me. Okay. So we went to functions on July 4th at the embassy. I mean, that didn't, none of this seemed odd and none of it was Peace Corps per se, in the sense that it was my childhood.

SZTUK: [00:03:39] Right.

GOLDMAN: [00:03:40] However, there was a couple odd things about our family. So because my father is paraplegic and working as a park planner in the then nascent National Park Service of Costa Rica. While my mother was in charge of the English majors program at the University of Costa Rica and taught English as a second language, we had to have a car which has rarely been possible, only in extreme situations for volunteers. So here we have our VW Bug, not in great shape even at the time, shipped through the State Department pouch and given diplomatic license plates. So we would drive up to the embassy for July 4th and it'd be all messed up and dirty and people be like, wait, what is that sitting next to? Like this beautiful car of some poofy, poofy person? And they all have diplomat, and I still have one of those license plates today. And so that was one big issue.

GOLDMAN: [00:04:32] The other issue was that we're Jewish. We're not terribly practicing, and we definitely weren't there then. But going to public school in Latin America is in many situations you get Catholicism. So my parents are like, well, so Peace Corps paid for us to go to one of the most expensive schools in the country, this Jewish day school. So I learned Hebrew and Spanish at the same time. And so that was another kind of odd little thing about our experience. So the things that I most remember, that might have marked me forever, not only do I have the oldest friends on the planet are Costa Ricans, and I go back there all the time. But my parents were very, very unique in a number of ways.

GOLDMAN: [00:05:21] And so there were families that we adopted, literally, not legally, but and we call them *las familias* to this day. One family came knocking at our door begging. Another one we got through the Social Security, my parents got through the Social Security Administration of Costa Rica. This became a secondary project for them.

SZTUK: [00:05:40] Uh huh.

GOLDMAN: [00:05:40] And for 15 years provided money for uniforms, milk, basic foods. My father set them both up with organic gardening, how to, taught them how. They helped them get land through one of the government, you know, programs. And so there were things like on a Hannukah one

year, our parents are like, well girls, we were going to get you guys some like party shoes. But, you know, *las gemelas*, the twins in this one family, *las gemelas* only have one pair of shoes and they're really, really, really old. Maybe it would be nice for you guys to give your Hanukkah shoes to them. And so we did. So it was things like that that kind of have impacted me permanently.

SZTUK: [00:06:29] And these families, you're probably still in touch with today?

GOLDMAN: [00:06:33] For many, many years we were. And then we lost touch. I tried valiantly three years ago. I was in Costa Rica for several months. And so I just did this memory, muscle memory thing, and I went with the son of the man who had sold us the land for them. And we just, I was like, it's got to be this particular street and it's this part of the block. And so as we were asking people in the neighborhood with as many memories as I could, and to the degree they could place the people, they were no longer there. And the sad thing, and so what I would, the way I would have to reconnect is to go back to my parents' photo album, get the names and see if I can search them online. So we aren't anymore. But for many, many years, you know, and all those kids ended up finishing high school. A couple went to college, because one family had like nine kids.

GOLDMAN: [00:07:24] So, um, to me, Peace Corps became something that was very important, very, um, and very, very valuable, very, um, something that, you know, as we left Costa Rica in that same VW driving on the Pan-American Highway all the way through Mexico and Central America back to the States in 1976, just before my eighth birthday. I announced, I'm going to be, I'm going to join Peace Corps. And of course, I had already said I was going to be an oceanographer and I was going to be an astronaut and a teacher. So they're kind of like, my parents are like, okay, you know, whatever. And I was very clear that that was absolutely what I wanted and it was something that I felt I was supremely, supremely made for. Um. So I'm going to pause for one quick second.

GOLDMAN: [00:08:16] Okay. So continuing with my childhood Peace Corps experience, um, there was, there was many sorts of things that marked

my understanding of the world of Peace Corps, of standing up for your rights. And I'm now a human rights advocate. So this is all no surprise. My mother, who was in charge of the English language program at the University of Costa Rica and taught English as a second language, had a little trouble at the beginning with our country director because he was like, no, you know, we don't want to put volunteers in schools because schools rise up in Latin American universities. And that's the way it becomes all hectic. And, you know, we don't want to have any of that. My mother was like, oh no, I'm just going to teach. I'm the most mild, you know, meek, you know, whatever. So Abe [Abelicio] Pena, amazing Abe Pena agreed. So before you know.

SZTUK: [00:09:14] He was the country director?

GOLDMAN: [00:09:17] Uh huh. She was correcting the English of a lot of the Costa Rican English teachers and who were way more senior to her.

SZTUK: [00:09:25] Mm hmm.

GOLDMAN: [00:09:26] And before you know it, she was threatened with being fired. And so the entire foreign language department at the University of Costa Rica walked out in protest and a massive thing started. And so Abe Pena calls my mother and says, um, didn't we talk? No, no, really, I didn't, I didn't stir this up. But anyway, it was, it was all resolved quite well. And my mother was not fired.

SZTUK: [00:09:50] She continued to teach?

GOLDMAN: [00:09:51] Exactly. But she said, I will stand by my word. And teachers cannot be teaching incorrect English. And so I'm not sure how they learned, you know, and so there was. Speaking truth to power, I learned from that. I learned about protesting and boycotting and that kind of thing. There was also the culture shocky weirdness of me and my sister going to school in with people who literally bought and sold Costa Rica. I mean, these were a lot of the muckety mucks in the government and in private sector who sent their kids to the Instituto Dr. Jaim Weizman, the Chaim Weizman Institute, which exists to this day. And so they would

have their drivers in livery picking up the kids. There was maids, there was landkeepers, I mean, um, you know, gardeners. I mean, mansions.

GOLDMAN: [00:10:48] So at the time, this community that's called Rohrmoser is where all the rich people live. Now, it's changed a little bit. There's other neighborhoods of San Jose that are more, you know, considered more exclusive. But so here we are in Peace Corps but rubbing shoulders daily with people who were considered very wealthy on U.S. standards, not just like, oh, you're kind of wealthy for this small country. So there were moments where, and this happened many times. One particular moment that I very clearly remember. I was going to be going have a little afternoon kid date with one of my *chica* friends. And so her waiter, I mean, her driver picked us up in this huge car, which was definitely not a VW bug. And I was like, whoa! And so we go. And she asked me if I would like something to eat, and of course I'm always hungry. So I said yeah.

GOLDMAN: [00:11:43] So this is where I learned the concept of a pantry. I had never heard the concept of having so much food that you like need to have and all these dry foods and all this other food and all. And so she opened up this pantry door and at exactly my five year old eye level was more Snickers bar, or not, it was Hershey's bars, than I had ever seen in my life in one place. I was like, oh my God. And so, of course, I went home and I immediately asked my parents, why don't we have a pantry? Why don't we have chocolate? And why don't we have a waiter and a maid and a groundskeeper? And, you know. So and we ended up getting along way, like our buddies?

SZTUK: [00:12:26] Uh huh.

GOLDMAN: [00:12:26] Were our neighborhood buddies, who were very, very humble. Some poor, I mean, quite poor. And that was who we played with, other than those few.

SZTUK: [00:12:36] Rather than the kids in school.

GOLDMAN: [00:12:36] Yeah. Every now and then there'd be like a play date, as it were, with kids at school. But in the main, when we played, and the people that I'm still in touch with, are those people from that.

SZTUK: [00:12:48] So what was your neighborhood like?

GOLDMAN: [00:12:50] So at the time, it's called Curridabat. And Curridabat at the time was about half an hour by drive thru coffee country between it and San Jose. Now there's precious little even greenery. It's like, it's like a glorified suburb of San Jose. And so there was, you know, yeah. So we were surrounded by coffee country. So it was a village, it was a little village. Which now if you were to be plunked down there, you would not, it is not high rises by any means, but it's lots of stores. There's malls now, whatever. And on the road between San Jose and Curridabat, there's like building, building, building, building, house, building, you know.

SZTUK: [00:13:33] Sure.

GOLDMAN: [00:13:34] So it was very, um, it was the kind of thing where everyone knows everyone. Whenever, you know, one time, we, my sister and I would regularly steal a *colón* or two to go to the corner store to buy candy. And one day my sister got the bright idea to steal 100 *colones*, which at the time was \$100. It was 1 to 1 at the time. So we go to this place that's literally a quarter block away. Everyone knows everyone. So we walk in, we order like three caramels or whatever. And so the change is going to be like 99 *colones* and 90 *céntimos* or something. And so immediately the woman is like, does Dona Lorena, my mother Lorraine, does Dona Lorena know? And my sister pops up like, oh yeah, this is the kind of money she gives us all the time. No worries. And so, of course, before we walk home, my mother is standing at the door saying, girls. Like she'd already heard, the jungle jump said.

GOLDMAN: [00:14:28] You know, and so people took care of each other and people knew. And like, we would just play with our, you know. At one time I overheard my father at a party many years later saying, so Don, what do you think your legacy was in Peace Corps? And I thought, oh my gosh,



this is a, what's he going to say? And he said, you know, I was a park planner. I planned several of Costa Rica's first parks and Lorraine was the English teacher and taught, you know, legions of students. And, you know, maybe that's all in good. But what I know for sure is that my daughter single handedly introduced the hoppity hop and the hula hoop to Curridabat, Costa Rica. I was like, oh my God, that is hilarious. Because we did. No one else had a hoppity hop and everyone played with it and no one else had a hula hoop. And we played with that too. So um.

SZTUK: [00:15:18] So you didn't know any, any life other than Peace Corps?

GOLDMAN: [00:15:21] Yeah.

SZTUK: [00:15:23] At that point.

GOLDMAN: [00:15:24] Yeah, it was. My sister had some memories because she's a little over a year older than me. She had some memories of D.C. prior, but I had none. And so I consider myself to have been born in Costa Rica as far as my memories and my, and my language especially comes, is related. So, um. So, yeah, I could, I could talk about other. Well, okay, so here's what I'm thinking. Okay, so one final memory of Costa Rica before we move on is I was trying to be very, very, very independent at five years old, more independent than a five year old should be. And so we went to visit some friends, I think were friends of my father's through work, in a town called Turrialba, which has a big agriculture school.

GOLDMAN: [00:16:20] And so it was going to be dinner and we were, it was like an hour and a half drive, which was a long time for my parents drive for dinner, but I don't know, it was. And so we, I was immediately taken by that man's motorcycle and I was like, oh yeah, this, this. I want a piece of this. So it comes time to say good night. And my parents are going to go, we're going to go back to Curridabat. And I said, no, I'm staying here in Turrialba, and my father immediately is going to like play along. He's like, oh, here in Turrialba? Yeah, well, you know, they don't have your bed. Actually, I take it back. I didn't have a bed. We only had mattresses

on the ground. But anyway, your mattress isn't here. And I'm like, so? And he's got a motorcycle. Like, oh yeah, but I mean, it's his special motorcycle. Maybe he won't let you ride. Oh, he's going to let me ride it. And like so they're winking the whole time at the guy and they're like, okay.

GOLDMAN: [00:17:16] And so then they say to my sister, come on, Jessica, time to go home. And I'm like, bye! And I'm waving at them and I'm just happy as a clam. So they drive off very slowly, but they do drive off. And so then immediately I turned to the guy, my dad's friend. I'm like, okay, let's go ride on a motorcycle. And he's like, oh no, Emelia, you're too small. Five year olds, they can't ride them. I was like, no, but that's, you know, that, I want to. No. And I said, well, but I left my parents for this, like, and then they're like, well, we can't. So then I was thinking, okay, now it's, I'm looking bad. We need to concoct a story because, like, I got a face to save here. So he starts to just, he's like, okay, I'll drive you home, knowing that we would run into my parents. And so, of course, you know, 2 minutes away, we see my parents still going at like a crawl because they knew exactly what's going to happen. And so then my father.

SZTUK: [00:18:11] Did they let you play it out?

GOLDMAN: [00:18:13] Yeah. So my father stops the car and he acts completely surprised. He said, oh my God, Emily! Let's say Juan or whatever the guy's name was, well, this is such a coincidence. And so I'm standing, I mean, sitting, mashed against the seat as if my father will not be able to see into the car and see me. And he's like, where are you guys going? And I'm like, say Curridabat. And so the man's like, Curridabat. And my father said, oh, oh my God, so are we. You want me to just give Emily a ride? So, like, okay, and that was the end of the running away. Yeah. So that was.

SZTUK: [00:18:51] So eventually you had to leave Costa Rica. You say you drove back?

GOLDMAN: [00:18:54] Yes. We took our. Oh, actually. Oh my gosh, this is a major story at the end. We, as you would know from being Peace Corps yourself, you, once you have your close of service conference, you have and you close your service, your residency is revoked from the country, but you have like one month. You have like either an ID card or maybe it says on the ID card, the expiry date is one month. So it gives you a little bit of time if you're going to hang just a little bit beyond your date or whatever. Well, we did and we were going to mash it up right to that date and the very next day leave on our big driving trip on the then new and still not fully completed Pan-American Highway. So, you know, we had visas for all of the Central American countries except Salvador, we didn't, we didn't go to Salvador, and everything was all in line.

GOLDMAN: [00:19:48] And so the very last night of that 30 day grace period, we were spending at one of my mother's student's, my mother's student's house. And so there was this big goodbye party. And it had all been very, very emotional for the last few days because there was parties in all of our spheres and selling our furniture and giving stuff away. And like, I mean, I was freaking out like, like my sister was vaguely okay, but I just couldn't understand what was happening, why we were leaving.

SZTUK: [00:20:15] Right, this is a.

GOLDMAN: [00:20:16] This is my home.

SZTUK: [00:20:17] Leaving your home.

GOLDMAN: [00:20:18] Yeah. So it was, it was quite traumatic. So we were just exhausted. So we go into, my father parks the car in front of our parents, our friends', their friend's house, and as always says, close the windows. So we go in. And he, in his exhaustion, left his window open. And the bag, his bag, which had our four passports, all of the visas, all of our cash, all of our, uh, our traveler's checks. Maps. Residence. Every, all of our ID, every possible important thing. Of course, it was stolen.

SZTUK: [00:21:07] [inaudible]

GOLDMAN: [00:21:07] So we come out maybe that night or maybe it wasn't till the next morning. We're like, holy crap, we are now alien. We are illegals in Costa Rica. So I learned an extremely valuable lesson, which, and I'm an anthropologist, so I can say this, because sometimes you can make cultural generalizations, other times you cannot. From my dear mother. Suddenly we had to make, oh, and we had like hotel reservations and stuff. So, like, we couldn't, we had to leave. So she dragged me and my sister and cried and cried and cried in each of the embassies of the Central American countries and Mexico in San Jose. And she's like, Latino men cannot stand to see a woman cry, and people in line couldn't either. And she's like, oh my God? And what do you think? Like, oh my God, we got our shit, our stuff stolen. And of course I'm crying just because I don't understand what's happening and I'm so little.

GOLDMAN: [00:22:08] And so we were whisked to the front of line at each. So in one day we got not only a passport, and I still have this, and it's the three of us on one and my father on another. And we're like looking like every best friend of ours was just killed in front of our faces. We're like looking exhausted and horrible. And anyway, and so we got our two passports, we got all the visas. We had to like cancel the checks, like did everything in one day.

SZTUK: [00:22:34] One day.

GOLDMAN: [00:22:34] And I swear, I've never forgotten these lessons of my dear mother. And so then we, we took off and we took a month and a half, if you can imagine, a month and a half with kids in a VW Bug on somewhat, sometimes not paved.

SZTUK: [00:22:48] Right. Most of it was not paved.

GOLDMAN: [00:22:49] Most of it. And running out of gas and getting hit up for bribes in Mexico City, um, which again, I learned from my mom, just be really, really, really loud and people don't like to be embarrassed. So she's like screaming, like shouting at the cop. What, sir? Are you telling me we have to pay a bribe? I'm sorry, I didn't realize that's the way things were going to be. And not only did we not pay a bribe, she got him in trouble.

So anyway, so then we got back to the States, and I turned eight a month later.

SZTUK: [00:23:26] Mm hmm.

GOLDMAN: [00:23:27] And therein, for the moment I'll refer maybe to Costa Rica at the end, but that is chapter one of my experience. And so the question that people always ask is, why did you go in? And so as I mentioned earlier, when I was eight, I mean, I said I was going to go, and it's not like I talked about it every year. But, you know, sometimes I would, I would bring it up. And so flash forward to undergrad. I went to undergraduate university at Emory University in Atlanta. I studied cultural anthropology. And I actually, and I immediately was like, oh yeah, I'm going to apply, I'm going to go to, after college for sure. But I wanted, I wanted to go to Africa because all of my anthropology studies were in Africa. And in its higher wisdom, Peace Corps sent me back to my neighborhood, as it were.

GOLDMAN: [00:24:17] And so I went about eight, ten months after I graduated from college, after also serving in the National Park Service, just like my father, for some months, here in D.C. Yep. Um, in fact, I wore his, one of his shirts.

SZTUK: [00:24:35] So did you, when you left Costa Rica, you came back to D.C.?

GOLDMAN: [00:24:39] To D.C.

SZTUK: [00:24:39] And this is where you spent the intervening years?

GOLDMAN: [00:24:40] Well, we lived here. So we lived, actually, I guess I should say that this one thing, that when we came back, my language trauma was extreme. First of all, culture shock. I did not get the States and to some level, ever since then I never have, but the language. So here I was in D.C. public schools and I would say things that were literal translations of Spanish, made no sense. People would laugh because you know how kids are. And I'd come home. And of course my mother is a linguist, so

she'd be like, she'd start laughing. She'd say, I'm laughing with you, not at you. This is fascinating. Let me take a note of this to, you know.

SZTUK: [00:25:13] So you, did you speak Spanish at home when you were in Costa Rica?

GOLDMAN: [00:25:16] Well, no. So they tried to speak English in the home to keep my non-existent, my sister's nascent English going. And then they tried to, and so they were. So it was kind of.

SZTUK: [00:25:32] English was a second language for you.

GOLDMAN: [00:25:34] Absolutely. Yes, it is my second language. And so then when we got back to the States, they tried to institute Spanish at dinner, which for a year seemed somewhat normal, but by then I had gotten most of my English, and my sister and I had reestablished our relationship in English and our whole lives were in English. So then it felt just awkward and weird. So then we stopped that. But so we lived for about five, um, five. Let's see. No, no, more than that. Like all the way through junior high school, the end of junior high school, here. And then we moved to a tiny town in Texas on the Mexico border, Del Rio, when my father became assistant superintendent of a national park there. And, um, so, but I, because my language was laid down so early, it has never left me. And I mean, I translate for a living now, like for human rights and environmental and development, in community development organizations. So. So it came in handy.

SZTUK: [00:26:40] Sure.

GOLDMAN: [00:26:41] Yeah. So the, the, there was a lot of, you know, it didn't endear me to kids that first year. I was like, it's not the way it's done in Costa Rica, you know? And I didn't. So, yeah, it was, it was just, that was, that was hard.

SZTUK: [00:26:57] You had to learn a whole new culture.

GOLDMAN: [00:26:58] Yeah. And it just, and it, there was things and like there were smells that I was used to having that I didn't have. There were tastes that I was just, there's just like an entire vibe which, you know, it was.

SZTUK: [00:27:12] Yeah. And people were probably accustomed to luxuries that you never had when you were.

GOLDMAN: [00:27:17] Yeah, yeah.

SZTUK: [00:27:18] Amenities.

GOLDMAN: [00:27:19] Yeah. And of course, and my parents are very, very odd to begin with. I mean, we never had a TV. I didn't grow up with TV at any, like almost the entire time. And there was a lot of, you know, composting way before that was cool and organic garden and all this stuff. And so, but yeah, it was, it was a set of values that seemed to be very at odds with what I had experienced. And like language became the big, um, the most obvious manifestation of the problem in the sense that it was like every time I opened my mouth, I felt like I was talking this alien thing. Like it was like, I'm really not in Costa Rica anymore. Um. So and there are still things that are very hard for me to say in English that just seem more natural and better expressed in Spanish.

SZTUK: [00:28:16] Have you ever encountered other Peace Corps kids that had similar experience to you?

GOLDMAN: [00:28:22] Well, bizarrely, one time my sister and I were in a mall and I can't remember. It was somewhere like in Pentagon City, somewhere in the 'burbs of D.C., and she was visiting me. And so we were shopping and I saw this woman who was attending us, this young woman had a T-shirt on that said Costa Rica. So just to make conversation, I said, oh, that's so funny. My sister and I, the two of us lived there when we were in Peace Corps when we were little. And she said, so did I. And so here was someone who we had known as a kid, because the years were the same.

SZTUK: [00:28:59] Oh, you did?

GOLDMAN: [00:28:59] Or there was overlap. And we don't remember her, but it was like. But the thing is, is that when I swore in in 1991 for Honduras, Peace Corps headquarters told me I was the first one that had ever done it in that way. So there's people like my sister who served but don't have any desire to go as an adult, or people who were conceived in Peace Corps and then went as adult or whatever.

SZTUK: [00:29:23] Right.

GOLDMAN: [00:29:24] But that had actually been, you know, my sister and I together were one adult, adult volunteer in terms of we each got half of a living allowance and half of the daily. So yeah, so I was told I was the first one at the time.

SZTUK: [00:29:38] First.

GOLDMAN: [00:29:39] To have done it.

SZTUK: [00:29:40] Yeah. First one who went as a Peace Corps dependent.

GOLDMAN: [00:29:43] Yeah.

SZTUK: [00:29:43] And then went independently later on.

GOLDMAN: [00:29:45] Yeah.

SZTUK: [00:29:45] Yeah. Well, that doesn't surprise me.

GOLDMAN: [00:29:47] Yeah.

SZTUK: [00:29:47] But you know how Peace Corps volunteers often kind of share some common bond, common experience.

GOLDMAN: [00:29:53] Mm hmm.



SZTUK: [00:29:53] And this subgroup, very small subgroup of Peace Corps children, that must be something.

GOLDMAN: [00:30:01] Well, and I've since actually met. I just realized, I've met one other one recently, but he was at the very beginning of the program. So we went in '72. I feel like he may have gone like in '70. It was like, it was like a couple of years earlier or something and it was Africa, so it didn't.

SZTUK: [00:30:21] Okay. So tell us about your Honduras experience. So you applied and, as you mentioned, that you were the first Peace Corps dependent who then served as a volunteer. Peace Corps must have been really happy to have you. Did they try to get any PR off that?

GOLDMAN: [00:30:39] No. I mean, it's surprising. Peace Corps headquarters has very little institutional memory because of the five year rule. So there is, there have been a couple directors of Peace Corps who have to my face said we never had a program like that. I'm like, yes, you did. You need to go back and look at files. Like there's very, very little memory of it. I mean, it's really sad. And so that's why I'm really excited to be part of this project, because it may have been small, but it, you know, it was there and it and it created some, um, I think, very good results. So, so yeah, I had wanted to be in agriculture. There was a lot of competition at the time for agriculture. And of course now the application form is completely different. I mean, at the time, A, was in paper. B, you could only say where you would refuse to serve if placed. You couldn't say, I want to go to, you know, Senegal. You could say, I would like to do agriculture, or I would like to do small business, but it was just way more up in the air.

GOLDMAN: [00:31:40] And so I said, I refuse to serve anywhere where there's an active civil war, of which there were three countries at the time. And but other than that, I, I actually said to my recruiter, I'd love to have Africa because, you know, at the time I was fluent in French too. And so I got placed in Honduras as an Africanized beekeeper. And so one of the first things that, um, I guess was an issue. And let's see if, um, I'm just going to pause for one second.

GOLDMAN: [00:32:14] So in terms of my reaction when I was accepted, I was beyond thrilled. I was really, really excited. My parents and sister were obviously extremely excited. They, they were in the know. Some other people and most of the people my cohort age wise were excited, but no one else that I knew was doing it. They wanted to go and start to get into the work world, but they were supportive. So it, there was no blowback. No, I mean, my parents were like, we can't wait to get our tickets to come visit you.

SZTUK: [00:32:49] They must have been [inaudible].

GOLDMAN: [00:32:49] Oh, they were. I mean, there is a Yiddish word that's *nachas*, that's like pride and like, oh my God, my little baby, you know? So they were, they were just beside themselves. And so. So, again, you were not allowed to state a preference per se. I wanted agriculture. I ended up getting beekeeping. And so, um, we, so in terms of the training, we were the first group of, um, beekeeper volunteers in Honduras to be trained in Honduras. Before that, prior to that, there was like some island off the coast of South Carolina or something, which, thank God we didn't do because the whole purpose is to start speaking Spanish. I mean, I didn't need that, but like to be in the culture as you're training, not be in the U.S. culture. It's just that you're getting beekeeping and then.

SZTUK: [00:33:44] So you've never done beekeeping before?

GOLDMAN: [00:33:46] No. And in fact, and I thought it was like the biggest joke. I mean, I made a couple of good line one liners at parties in the couple of months after I accepted and before I left the country, until the very first day in the apiary, which was the very first day of training because I had technical training. So my training was actually six months. And so we went to the national agriculture school and I was like laughing it up, ha ha ha, beekeeping. And then I realized, oh, beekeeping means stings. And a lot of them, especially when you harvest the honey, and it's literally thousands and I am not exaggerating. And so I started to have kind of, started to have an existential crisis, like, okay, everyone thinks of me and I have thought of myself as the Peace Corps poster child. I cannot quit, but oh my God, can I do this? Can I actually look two and a

half years in the face of getting some, like, pretty much every day? Like, is that something I can deal with?

GOLDMAN: [00:34:41] And so one of the proudest things that I did, and I'm not sure how other than you just get used to it, but I call it my bee Rubicon. And it took all of training and it had not happened yet. And I was still like, oh my God, oh my God. And I'm saying "oh my God" so I won't say stronger words on this tape, but it was in both languages and it was like, ugh. And it was one beautiful day, maybe three months into service, so we're talking like nine months. And suddenly I was with one of my favorite beekeepers in my site and we're doing, you know, we're just managing the hives and opening this one, opening this hive, and opening that one and chatting. And suddenly I had this like out-of-body moment and one Emily looked at the other Emily and said, oh my God, you're joking with this man. You're talking about his wife, you're talking about his kids. You're talking about blah, blah, blah. You're talking about the political situation. You've crossed over.

GOLDMAN: [00:35:42] Yes, I'm paying attention to what I'm doing, but I'm like, oh, I got stung. Oh, I got stung, whatever. Like it wasn't this, it wasn't lighting my brain on fire like it had been. And from there, not that it, not that it felt good, but I was totally, totally fine after that. And so that was a, that was a challenge because I also had to learn bee biology. I mean, I'm an anthropologist. I'm a social scientist. I never took a biology course, none of that.

SZTUK: [00:36:09] Right.

GOLDMAN: [00:36:09] And so in the funny thing is, is that all of my knowledge of beekeeping, of which I have a lot, and bees, are in Spanish, so I never learned it in English. And so sometimes it's amazing through the years we have like, like at a party or whatever, people learn that I'm a beekeeper. Oh my gosh, I've always wondered why bees do blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, tell us. And so then I sit there and I start and I stop and because I have to think of how do I say this in English.

SZTUK: [00:36:35] You have to translate.

GOLDMAN: [00:36:35] Because they're very technical terms. So it's kind of a funny, um. But the cool thing is I've actually used beekeeping in latter years in understanding proposals that I work on and I translate, because beekeeping will be a part of it. And I'll say, no, actually that's not possible. This thing needs to be rewritten in this way and I know why, you know. So in terms of training, training for me was a mixed bag because obviously learning about Honduran culture, I didn't know about Honduran. I mean, there's similarities to Costa Rica, but it's, it has to be respected as its own thing. And so that was good. The history, the geography of Honduras, all of that. And obviously the technical part, the beekeeping part. But the language was a major problem.

GOLDMAN: [00:37:28] Because from the beginning there was me. There was a guy who was Puerto Rican and there was another guy who like had a PhD. There was three of us who were 100 percent fluent. So we went together to the trainers and said, this is crazy. Do not keep us sitting in here all these hours. And I even had an idea. I said, oh, you know, I met in this little village where our training was, there's like a 92 year old beekeeper. I said, let me take his life story, because guess what? Not only are we going to talk about beekeeping, I have to do it in Spanish. And I thought this was an amazing idea and it would be a gift for him and for the community. No. Nope, nope, nope.

SZTUK: [00:38:05] And you couldn't test out?

GOLDMAN: [00:38:06] No. And so they, it was as if they. Everyone who had no Spanish, middling, or even above middling, had a great experience. And so the three of us. So I would write long letters to my then boyfriend, to my sister, to my parents, like, and so and it was really, really aggravating and utterly pointless.

SZTUK: [00:38:24] You said it was six months?

GOLDMAN: [00:38:26] Well, it was, it was three for that part, and there was three for the technical. I mean, you still had some beekeeping in three months.

SZTUK: [00:38:32] But it was your in first kind of cultural language.

GOLDMAN: [00:38:35] This was, so we went to the national agriculture school, the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura, and it's called La ENA. And we studied there for three months with our own hives, like completely hands on. Then we went to Valle de Angeles, which is about 45 minutes outside of Tegucigalpa in the mountains, hills up there. And then we had mostly culture language, but with some book beekeeping kind of. So we didn't have hives, but we would take trips sometimes to see beekeepers or whatever. And so finally, in a fit of like real upsetness, I couldn't believe what I said, but this is what comes out to the head of the training. I was like, you know what? This is completely crazy. I'm sick of doing this. Give me 5 minutes on the clock. I will write a 12 stanza rhyming poem about peace in Spanish. And I just said this. I'm like, I don't even know who said this, how that came out of me.

GOLDMAN: [00:39:34] And the head of the entire training said, okay. And I pulled it out. And it was, and I made sure to add in some real uncommon words. Oh, and it rhymed. And in fact, I put it on a board on this poster and that became my first thing I put it up on my wall when I moved to site. And so they were like, oh my God. And I also was like, oh my God, where did this come from? So they said, okay, maybe you don't need to be here. I said yeah. And so then I went and worked with that 92 year old man. So that was the only thing that to me training and I've kind of heard this a little bit from people who've served elsewhere, that Peace Corps is a little bit at a loss. And I, I don't know why. There's no way. Obviously, we might be a minority, but I mean, this is not.

SZTUK: [00:40:23] You mean at a loss when they encounter somebody like you already knows the language?

GOLDMAN: [00:40:27] They should be able to have a plan B. I mean, and I had said this, like in every possible way, make it known that I, you know, and especially when we were in the agriculture school, I said, please tell the trainers that, you know, that I'm not going to need this. So in any event, I mean, it ended up being fine. And, um, and of course, I did learn Honduranisms, which are not so.

SZTUK: [00:40:53] Well, actually I interviewed a lady from Puerto Rico who served in Costa Rica, and Spanish was her first language. But she said the Spanish was different, you know, so but to have three months worth of training.

GOLDMAN: [00:41:08] Yeah. I mean, it's the kind of difference.

SZTUK: [00:41:10] But there was words and cultural things and?

GOLDMAN: [00:41:12] Yeah, I mean, it's the kind of difference where you going to a bar five times would get the difference. I mean, you would never not understand. You'd be like, oh, that's a slang word. Like let's say people in Boston say wicked.

SZTUK: [00:41:23] Yeah, right.

GOLDMAN: [00:41:24] I mean, but you, you're not going to not understand when someone says, oh that was a wicked party. You're not going to think people were being mean to each other. I mean, you're going to, you know, so it's that kind of thing. And yeah, I mean, and there's obviously there's cultural things, but that was not the part I was asking to be out of. Like the cultural, I wanted to be, like, I love that stuff. Um. So. So, yeah. I mean.

SZTUK: [00:41:49] What was the name of the training site? Where did you do training?

GOLDMAN: [00:41:52] Valle de Angeles. Well, the second one, the language?

SZTUK: [00:41:55] The first. Well, both. The first place you ended up?

GOLDMAN: [00:41:59] The National Agricultural School. So in Spanish it's Escuela Nacional de Agricultura. And that was in Catacamas, C-A-T-A-C-A-M-A-S, Catacamas, in the Department of Olancho, where we called it the Wild Wild West in the east. And then the, the language training, language and culture was, um, in Valle de Angeles, like Valley of Angels.

That's, and it's a very touristy. Oh, no, I lie. I'm sorry. That's where I lived. Santa Lucia. It's just that they're very, Santa Lucia is where the training was. Valle de Angeles was where my host family was. And it's like 15 minutes away. People either live in one or the other and we all go to school in Santa Lucia.

GOLDMAN: [00:42:47] And one of the biggest parts of training that lasted, that lasts to this day where I'm sitting here with you, is my host family. And we fell in love with each other. As it turns out, the daughter in the family was named Emelia, so she became Millie and I became Emmy to differentiate us. And to this day, I'm on Skype contact with her. And so that was another thing that made it very different. I had a little bit of social, not social problems, but I mean like, because I and these other two guys were the only fluent ones out of a group of 27, all of the others and even they sometimes after training in Santa Lucia, immediately go to the bar. Let's grab a drink and let's basically, like, talk English and like, oh, this is stressful. Let's unload and unwind in English. And I would rush straight home to my host family because I love the hell out of them. And I didn't want talk English and I didn't want to do something what I consider to be gringo and like, you know, let's have a beer.

SZTUK: [00:43:55] You didn't want to hang out with the other students.

GOLDMAN: [00:43:56] Yes. I mean, to me, that was a major problem. So we got super tight. By the by, I was not getting tight with my, with my, with my group, not that I was, that I had problems with them. It's just that they built relationships which I don't know if last to this day, I wouldn't be surprised, but I didn't. And so, you know, when I would see them sometimes in Tegucigalpa, in the capital or for July 4th or, you know, we'd chitty chat. But there wasn't this like, oh God, I've got to come to your site and we got to like hook up and this and that.

SZTUK: [00:44:27] So you weren't unfriendly. It was just that wasn't your purpose for being there?

GOLDMAN: [00:44:31] Exactly. I was choosing to go and hang with my host, I saw that as part and parcel. Like I saw.

SZTUK: [00:44:41] Sure.

GOLDMAN: [00:44:41] Like I saw a lot of these things as both I wanted to do them because they're fun or nice, but also representational. Like there was also a lot of symbolism to me in Peace Corps. And one of the things, the second, the first, the second goal of Peace Corps is you have to be interacting and showing what gringos can be, ideally a good thing. And, you know, and building those relationships such that peace becomes something tangible. And so to me, I saw more value. I mean, to be very honest, I saw more value building the relationship. Now, I was very lucky that we happened to click with my family, like if it had been eh, then maybe that would have petered out after a little bit. But it was like every single day I wanted to hang out with Emelia and Nessandro, her brother, my, my brother, you know, and Dona Ella, the mother.

SZTUK: [00:45:40] Do you think, having grown up in Costa Rica kind of made you feel more at home in that situation?

GOLDMAN: [00:45:47] Yes.

SZTUK: [00:45:47] Were you, you really felt comfortable among your host family?

GOLDMAN: [00:45:51] Yeah. No, that's actually a very, very good question. I can't believe I didn't even address that earlier because there are, I feel to this day, way more comfortable in Latin America than I do here. Full stop. And I'm very, very touchy. I love to hug. I love to kiss. These are things that, and in the way I'm talking, you can't see it on the video. Everyone is listening, I mean, on the audio. But like, I'm moving my hands like a tornado and, yeah, and so Latin Americans constantly think that I'm from Latin America. They cannot believe I'm a gringo. And so when I hit Honduras, it was like fish in the water.

SZTUK: [00:46:25] I was going to ask you is, uh, it's very common that people go to completely, a place where they have no concept of the experience, right? They go from Kansas to Tanzania or, you know, somewhere in the States to an island somewhere, you know. And it's a dramatic



experience for them. But for you, Honduras was probably very similar to the place you'd grown up, the first five, the five years that your parents were there.

GOLDMAN: [00:46:57] Yeah. And I, it was very, it was very similar. And I'd also gone back a number of times to Costa Rica, by the way, including a semester in college where I was living in Curridabat, my same village. How bizarre is that? I was living with a host family and that's where I was placed. But yeah. So to me, you know, now what I did try to be careful with was to say to myself, Emily, you didn't live in Honduras, so put your anthropology hat on and try to sense those differences. Like, don't.

SZTUK: [00:47:26] Don't assume it's the same.

GOLDMAN: [00:47:27] Yes, and like, and in a, but also in like a, oh, let's learn, like the excitement of like, oh, that's a little, that's. *Catrachos* are what they call themselves, lovingly, it's not a bad thing. They, Hondurans call it. I was like, so let's see what the *Catrachos* would do in this situation. So I both felt incredibly comfortable but also realized, A, I am now the volunteer. Okay. I am not a kid where I'm, I now have responsibilities and I'm here for the purpose of Peace Corps, as that was I was just came along and it was awesome. But so while I felt incredibly comfortable, and there was no culture shock at all. I mean, it was like, I'll talk about this when I get to my site. But there was no electricity in my site, no running water, no indoor plumbing. You know, there was only telegrams when they worked. And so obviously I had to get used to that.

GOLDMAN: [00:48:28] But I would say it didn't take more than like a couple of weeks. Oh, and scorpions. A couple of weeks. And then I was like, okay, so sun's going down, put the candles on. And, you know, so other than some easily describable, tangible sorts of differences that required a little bit of getting used to, to me it was really like I was going home. And so I would say that that part of that was what, I mean, I'd like to think that it was my personality combined with my host family's unique personality, like because friendships, you know, you can have the same language and the same cultural background. You can still not get close, right? So there is a magic that happened. But I, I think that my history in Costa

Rica and the Peace Corps definitely added to the possibility of making that, that love affair, as I think of it, happen, you know. So, um.

SZTUK: [00:49:28] So after you completed training, you stayed with this host family and then you had to move out on your own and start your job. Was it in that same area or did you go to a different?

GOLDMAN: [00:49:36] No, it was, it was very. It was in the southwest of the country in the Department of La Paz. And so a week, I don't know how other places do it, but in Honduras, like maybe a month-ish before we were going to be done with our training, we had to go, and by then they would say, okay, your site is going to be X, Y, zed.

SZTUK: [00:50:00] Uh huh.

GOLDMAN: [00:50:00] Figure out how to go there and go and find a place to live and kind of basically just introduce yourself and then you're going to spend a week there and then you come back. And so, um, I took the two very long bus rides there. So it was like about a, well, it had just. Anyway, it was about a five-ish hour bus ride from Tegucigalpa to the department seat of La Paz. And from there, a two and one half hour *busito* ride when in the dry season. I later learned in the rainy season it was quite a bit longer because sometimes you have to completely ford little creeks and whatever. But anyway, so I get there and the only place that I could. So there was strictures, right? I'm a single woman, right?

SZTUK: [00:50:49] Mm hmm.

GOLDMAN: [00:50:49] So I, I have to live, a little bit because of safety, but a lot of the stuff that has happened that we've all heard of had not happened yet. But it was more like respectability, like, oh you hussy, you're living by yourself? No, no, no.

SZTUK: [00:51:02] Keep up appearances, yeah.

GOLDMAN: [00:51:03] Yeah. So basically the only place and because my village had 300 people.

SZTUK: [00:51:09] Uh huh.

GOLDMAN: [00:51:09] And the only place was this one section of a family's home. And so, you know, that was going to be, oh, and I know I'm jumping around a bit, but I just want to say one comment that Peace Corps, my trainers, wanted to place me in La Ceiba, which is the third largest city on the north coast of Honduras. And they wanted me to be a beekeeping professor in the national university there, or the outgrowth or the outpost of the national university there. And I said absolutely not. I'm not here to come, to be in a city, to have that kind of job. I want to be in the bush. So luckily I, so, so that would that explains why I was placed in La Florida de Opatoro, in the Department of La Paz. And so.

SZTUK: [00:52:02] La Florida?

GOLDMAN: [00:52:02] La Florida.

SZTUK: [00:52:04] Is the name of the village?

GOLDMAN: [00:52:04] And then, but you have to say the rest of it because there's three La Floridas. D-E, de, Opatoro, O-P-A-T-O-R-O, in the Department of La Paz. Um, yeah, I realized that when I was telling people I live in La Florida and they're like, *cual*, which one? I was like, what do you mean which one? So, so yeah. So that in that one week kind of towards the end of training, I went and I got my spot. And so then I was twinned with the IHCAFE, which is the Instituto Hondureño del Café, the Honduran Coffee Institute. So it's a governmental, um, entity that provides training to coffee makers and like, oh, there's a blight. We'll show you how to fix the blight in the coffee and that kind of thing.

SZTUK: [00:52:55] A coffee association.

GOLDMAN: [00:52:57] Yeah, well, but it was a governmental body and so IHCAFE. So I was twinned with them and I had a technical relationship with them. I mean, they had to okay my vacation slips, you know, sometimes I would do a little bit. But in the mean, right after I moved there, the

IHCAFE office in my little village closed like within a month. So in the main, I was on my own. I found the beekeepers I worked with on my own. I kind of put the word out and people would come to my house and say, oh, I'm a beekeeper, you know? So. So I didn't really have a host country partner. Not really.

SZTUK: [00:53:40] So you didn't report to anybody?

GOLDMAN: [00:53:42] I mean, that's something technically I did, every now and then, because this guy was really nice. The one who when my, when the office of IHCAFE closed in La Florida, it kind of was absorbed. The one staffer there in the office of Marcala, which was the two and a half hour away place, the last bus.

SZTUK: [00:54:03] Uh huh.

GOLDMAN: [00:54:03] That was where there was a phone, when it worked, electricity and vegetables.

SZTUK: [00:54:09] Okay.

GOLDMAN: [00:54:09] And four other Peace Corps volunteers. And so, so I would, you know, when I was there, I'd go and I'd check in and they'd say, oh, how's the beekeeping? But it was, it was more like a friendly kind of.

SZTUK: [00:54:20] In other words, you were pretty much on your own.

GOLDMAN: [00:54:22] Yeah, for all intents and purposes, on a daily, weekly, monthly basis.

SZTUK: [00:54:26] Were there any other volunteers in?

GOLDMAN: [00:54:28] No. And there had not been any for about eight years prior. And those had been a married couple and it was kind of funny because the first thing you are told is, that you're told to do, is like find out who was there, what the rep was. Was it, you know, do you have to clean up anything, you know? So, like, oh, this was a super sweet couple. And,

you know, we never could understand the man's Spanish. We didn't really understand why they were here, but they were real sweet. And I was like, okay, that could be worse. Not ideal. I mean, clearly they did not express through their work in any way what Peace Corps was about. Because every single person, even the gray hairs, learned what Peace Corps is about in Florida through me. Like I'd say, now that I'm telling you, does any of this ring a bell? Like, no. They just kind of wandered around.

SZTUK: [00:55:12] So they were nice, but we don't know what they were doing.

GOLDMAN: [00:55:13] Yeah. And they didn't seem to do anything. So again, I guess better that than bad stuff.

SZTUK: [00:55:20] Yeah, yeah.

GOLDMAN: [00:55:21] But, um, but so one of the first memories, other than learning to live with that electricity, that I have was, and I even had a little note to this, was the very first day I, you know, where I lived was about 10 minutes walk outside of quote town. So there was like five houses where I lived. And then you walk for 10 minutes and then the bulk of the 300 people were in this like, you know, there was a plaza and there was a church and there was a little USAID built little indoor market and stuff. Because we were the big place, like other teenier villages would come for Sunday market to us. We were like the big time at 300.

SZTUK: [00:56:04] At 300.

GOLDMAN: [00:56:04] So I dropped my stuff, you know, chatted with the woman whose house I was going to be living in. And I had a discreet section of the house. Of course, there was no kitchen or bathroom, so I just had like a Coleman. Although Coleman's too nice of a brand, but Honduran version of a Coleman stove. And, and, you know, I used the pila, which is where you wash your clothes or it's like a reservoir of water, and the shower and the toilet when it worked, not in the rainy season, outside. When it didn't work, we used the latrine down the hill. But so, you know, I, I, so I had these three connecting rooms, which was way too much, but

there was no way to close it off and this is what was available. So I was like, okay, so, you know, I after introducing myself to the family who ended up, you know, we ended up getting along really, really well, and chatting. I was like, okay, you've got to go into town and like show your face.

GOLDMAN: [00:56:57] And so I'm not swaggering, but I'm like, oh, I know this, man. This, my whole life has led up to this. And so I went on the plaza, there was a little store, and I later learned it was owned by these two teachers at the, married teachers at the primary school who I got to be really good friends with. But obviously that first day I didn't know them. And so I walk in, I get a warm Coke, of course, because there was no refrigeration and I started to sip it. Within 37 seconds, there's like ten faces in there and they're all just like looking. And so I'm like, *hola, cómo estás*, you know? And so they, they say, oh, so what are you, what are you doing here? Now in close of service, I mean, not close of service. At the end of training, there was a session on exactly this question, okay? You will be asked, what are you doing there?

SZTUK: [00:57:55] What are you doing?

GOLDMAN: [00:57:55] You need to have an answer. And I thought, well, I know, I don't need to, I didn't have to think about this. This is, ah, because I want to save the world. I'm like, oh, my parents and Costa Rica, blah blah. So flash forward. I'm asked this and suddenly I'm like, [gasps]. And I got this wave of heat. And I was like, what am I doing here? How can I say what I'm doing here without hurting their dignity?

SZTUK: [00:58:20] Right.

GOLDMAN: [00:58:21] Oh, I'm here because you people don't know how to do your beekeeping. Like, no. Like how? And so I, I swallowed hard, took another couple of sips of my Coke, and I was like, well, you know, I have some book learning about beekeeping, and there's a lot of field experience here about beekeeping. So I figure if we put that together, that could be like the magic bullet. We could really, because there had been the, the Africanized bee had come up from South America and

mostly unlettered farmers who were doing a ton of the beekeeping in Honduras, burnt thousands and thousands of hives wholesale out of fear. And so Honduras went from an exporting country to an importing country. So Peace Corps was like.

SZTUK: [00:59:05] Oh, they were afraid of those bees?

GOLDMAN: [00:59:06] Yeah. Because suddenly the thing, the management techniques that they had used for years, some went like, wait a minute, they just stung and killed my chicken and my pig and the kid. And so, so, I said, so with that in mind, I said, you know, I know that there used to be a lot more hives here. And so I figure if we work together, maybe we can, you know. And I looked around and I paused and they're like, oh okay. And then I said, oh, you know, and it's Peace Corps. Well, and days after that, there were other questions like, am I cia? "Cia" meaning C-I-A.

SZTUK: [00:59:40] Oh, right, right.

GOLDMAN: [00:59:40] CIA. And I had to. And you know, what exactly is Peace Corps? Is Peace Corps the government? And I said, well, and so this is how I answered it. I said, yes, Peace Corps is part of the U.S. Government, I said, but I'm not representing the government here. I'm representing the ethics and principles and values of my parents and how they raised me. That is what, and I felt like that was the most honest thing I could say because, yes, my living allowance, the reason why I was there and I had the wherewithal to do this, was the USG. But, you know, and then the other question about CIA, at first I was like, what, are you crazy? With this big mouth, are you crazy? And then I realized, wait a minute. I need to be really, really honest about this.

GOLDMAN: [01:00:26] So I said, you know, I could tell you that I'm not and I could give you any number of, like, supposed proof. I said, but there's no way that you, you may not, all those things could be invented in your mind, right? That the CIA could have set this up so perfectly that I have all this proof, the so-called proof. I said, so I would like you to just wait and judge to answer that question. Wait to answer that question in your mind

until you've seen me day in, day out for two years. My then boyfriend, he's going to come visit. My sister is going to come visit. My parents are going to come visit. And just see and judge, you know. And it was kind of beautiful because not that long, it was probably like a year in, when there were several of those people who had initially talked and they're like, you know, you're not CIA, you're just Emelia, you know? And so that was one thing that was challenging.

SZTUK: [01:01:20] Did Peace Corps or anybody prepare the community or the people you're going to be working with for you to come?

GOLDMAN: [01:01:31] No.

SZTUK: [01:01:31] You just showed up there?

GOLDMAN: [01:01:31] Yeah. Yeah. No, there was, this was a major falling down, at least at the time I was there. Peace Corps, you know, so when I joined the second Gulf War was just declared. In fact, I was in the middle of carrying hives when we attacked. And I remember thinking, I'm in the Peace Corps and my country is at war. And because of this, the Soviet Union had just broken up, all the Stans were opening up. And so Peace Corps started divert a ton of money to basically get business skills in English, which really pissed us off. And so from the very first day of training, we knew that Peace Corps beekeeping in Honduras, we were going to be the last class. So from the beginning it wasn't like, oh, someone's going to come behind you in your site and you can pass on the projects and it can grow. No, it was going to be like you do your damndest, but at the end of the day, that's all you have.

GOLDMAN: [01:02:19] And so I have a feeling that there was just not that much due diligence. Thank God I got a site that I consider to be amazing. Obviously it had been in the roster because this couple had been there eight years prior. But no, they were like, I said, did anyone come here? No. Did any, I mean, not even? No. No.

SZTUK: [01:02:37] So they were just completely baffled when you got off the bus?



GOLDMAN: [01:02:41] Yeah. And they were like, oh, it's fine. No, you look like a nice, sweet young lady. It's not nothing personal. I'm like, no, no, it's okay. It's just, like, really weird. And, um, so I ended up setting it up later so that they got other volunteers. And by then, you know, I, you know, I described it all. But the thing. So in terms of. [inaudible] So in terms of beekeeping itself, because I want to talk about other secondary projects, too, that I had. But the beekeeping, the way it ended up doing, because it was kind of like, how do I start? What do I do, you know? I made it known to every single person, *correr la voz*, you run the voice. I am doing beekeeping. I would love, you know, do you know anyone? And the ideal was also to try to get women involved. I was never able to do that. They were always like, it's scary and it's really far away.

GOLDMAN: [01:03:35] Like normally where you have to have Africanized bees, you have to have them at least 300 meters from any living abode or house or anything like that. And so and it was always with men. And so I never, I never worked with women. But I ended up recruiting, or not recruiting, but meeting this man, Pedro Daniele Lopez Lopez. He became my favorite beekeeper. We wrote letters for many, many, many, many, many years. Very, very humble, extremely poor. I mean, his average pay was \$2 a day for himself, his wife, five kids, and his father. And so the battle with him was to get him to understand. He kept the bees for the person I called Richie Rich, Don Ricardo, who was the wealthiest man in all of Florida. And to get him to realize, you know, okay, you keep the bees like a huge, like, I don't know, 120 hives. I mean, not a small thing. And so why don't you have your own?

GOLDMAN: [01:04:35] And he said literally, oh, the bees wouldn't produce for me because they know I'm poor. And so I was like, okay. Well, that, I said that makes sense. Yeah, I could see how that the bees would be really, really sensitive to the fact of socioeconomic status. So why don't we just try one hive? And ideally in a hive you would have a three box hive.

SZTUK: [01:05:00] Mm hmm.

GOLDMAN: [01:05:00] To give the queen room to lay her eggs and to have room for the hive. But in any manner, let's just have a one box hive. I said, because, you know, if it doesn't work, it's like totally not a big deal, you know, like, we'll just see. And then he said, actually, let's just make it a two box. Let's just, just. Well, he started to be like, Emilia, it looks like they're making honey. I'm like, oh my God. Well, I mean, those dumb bees, they can't even tell socioeconomics. They're stupid. They're stupider than we thought. My God. See, they just produce for anyone. So anyway, over a period of time, I was like, you know, this is something that can benefit you and you've got, because he thought of himself as a *trabajador*, a worker.

SZTUK: [01:05:44] Yeah.

GOLDMAN: [01:05:44] I said, no, *eres apicultor*. You're a beekeeper. And a beekeeper is a technical thing. And it's, and so while I was trying to pump his confidence up, I went to Richie Rich. I was like, oh man, you are brilliant. I mean, you have hired. Do you know how amazing this beekeeper is? He's not a *trabajador*, he's a beekeeper. Oh my God, you, and I got to hand it to you. Only someone with your amazing gray matter would be able to find someone this. And, of course, Richie Rich gets all, like, pumped up, like, oh yeah. I said, yeah, in fact, you know what? I think you should pay him more because he's definitely going to jump ship. I mean, that guy is going to be wanted by like everyone.

SZTUK: [01:06:22] Was he okay with people having their own hives?

GOLDMAN: [01:06:25] Well, we just didn't even bring it up, especially because Pedro Daniele lived on land of Richie Rich's that was given to him, quote, for free. But of course, he's given like pathetic \$2 a day wage. Anyway, so I got his, um, salary, his pay raised and his, and he's like, you know, Emilia? And this is one of the most beautiful things. We had the most amazing, amazing friendship. And he would say, I am seen more respectfully in town because you're my friend, because I have had third grade education. My wife has had none. My father had none. My girls are now, you know, in elementary. But you're my friend and you spend time talking to me. And of course, years later, when he would talk about

when the postman would bring letters from me, he'd be like. And he wasn't like.

SZTUK: [01:07:17] Oh, okay.

GOLDMAN: [01:07:17] Lording it over people. He was just so proud. And I said, well, I'm proud to have you as my friend. You're, you're enriching my life. And so we had very, very deep conversations about, you know, I paid for his wife to get her tubes tied. Talk about, oh my God, that was actually against Peace Corps.

SZTUK: [01:07:34] This is probably something he never dreamed of, was having a friend from a foreign country, from America.

GOLDMAN: [01:07:40] Yeah.

SZTUK: [01:07:40] So it was a big deal.

GOLDMAN: [01:07:41] I don't know if you've ever seen the movie *Il Postino*.

SZTUK: [01:07:43] No, I haven't.

GOLDMAN: [01:07:44] Okay, *The Postman*. You know, it was about, it was about when, um, children author. Oh my God. Pablo Neruda left and he went to Italy, I guess, during the dirty wars in Chile. And so it's about this, this, he becomes friends with this very humble postman. And so in one scene, the postman, you know, Neruda is now gone. And he's written him a letter. And he just stares at the envelope and he looks it over and over and over. And he's like, this is the first letter I've ever gotten from someone. That is what Pedro told me. No, it was very intense. So my, so part of it was working with beekeepers, part of it was giving bee biology classes, like, don't be scared kids. This is, you know, this is a good thing.

SZTUK: [01:08:32] You were teaching children about?

GOLDMAN: [01:08:34] About the biology of the bees.

SZTUK: [01:08:35] Did you have to go to the school and?

GOLDMAN: [01:08:37] Uh huh, to both the primary and the junior high school. And I taught bee biology courses. I also gave like public talks. I'm like, do not be scared, okay? This is what you should do if you find a hive, like a feral colony in your eaves, let's say, call me and do this and that. And sort of try to kind of make it so that people were less scared. Because one of the hardest, most horrible things that happened was about two months after I got to my site, I happened to be in Tegucigalpa. I don't know what, for what reason, I'm sure a good reason, and for the weekend or whatever. I come back and I immediately numerous people are saying, your bees stung and killed horses. I'm like, okay, first of all, the operative term "your" is not correct. I don't have any bees. Okay. So first of all, I don't know what you're talking about.

SZTUK: [01:09:29] Yeah.

GOLDMAN: [01:09:29] It turns out it had been market day and some extremely poor, extremely, I mean, extreme poverty is the situation in that village, had rented from father, much further away had rented horses to come to our Sunday market. And they had, you know, tethered them in this one little, it's not a stream. It's like a track. And they had done their market. Well, I can't believe this because Blanca, one of the nurses in the clinic who was a good friend of mine, she knew what I did, and she had had a feral colony in her eaves for a million years and hadn't told me. So what happens when you have feral colony, like the sun hit the, the wax such that it melted so then honey starts to drip down the wall. This other colony that's like looking for a new place to live it's kind of, it's called a swarm. Swarm is using incorrectly, but anyway. It's coming by, coming by. Suddenly. They eat honey too. And so when they're looking for homes, they might have to fly for days. So they see the honey. They're going to get some to like nourish themselves.

SZTUK: [01:10:33] Okay.

GOLDMAN: [01:10:33] But they are carrying a different pheromone from their queen. And these that are in the feral colony and the eaves have another. And

then they, bam! And so they get into this massive, massive ball of fighting bees. The horse, right above the horses. The horses starts to like pull and pull. They scare the bees. The bees sting a couple of horses to death and one manages to get away, runs to a like a pond kind of thing, submerges. The bees can fly for quite a long time. They flew. They waited above the water. The thing comes up for air and they stung that horse too.

SZTUK: [01:11:05] Whoa.

GOLDMAN: [01:11:06] So I'm like, oh, oh my God. This is the worst possible thing. So I was like, okay, we're going to have some talks everyone, okay? We're going to talk about feral colonies and everything. And I was like, these are not my bees. There's nothing about these bees that are mine. I've never had, you know. So that was a little traumatic.

SZTUK: [01:11:25] Yeah, yeah.

GOLDMAN: [01:11:26] But I, but all these things, I address them straight on. I was like, don't, you know, just.

SZTUK: [01:11:30] So they weren't going to execute you right there.

GOLDMAN: [01:11:33] Yeah.

SZTUK: [01:11:34] Throw you in jail for killing horses.

GOLDMAN: [01:11:34] I mean, and I felt like, I felt incredibly horrible, but I mean, I, I hadn't even been there and I didn't, you know, so, um, let's see. Well, let me pause for a second. Okay. So about my living arrangements. I had mentioned that there were these three connecting rooms. And so my quote, kitchen, heavy quotes, the only reason why it was considered a kitchen is because that is where my Coleman stove was and my trash can of water because I would cook the water. Oh, I was living there in a cholera epidemic the entire time. So we had to do rolling boil for 10 minutes. And so once it was taken off the stove, off the Coleman stove, you know, it would go into this clean trash can that's only used for that.

And then after that, it would go into this thing called a *cántaro*, which is like a ceramic holder, which would keep it like cool. I called it my refrigerator.

GOLDMAN: [01:12:30] But basically, and I had a few little dishes, and then the other room I slept in with a mosquito net religiously, religiously put.

SZTUK: [01:12:40] Tucked in.

GOLDMAN: [01:12:40] Tucked in because of the, um, the scorpions of which I killed 52, mashed them on the walls. And then the third room was my reading room. So that was where I read my books at night with a bunch of candles because I had nothing else to do in that room. And language ability for me was massive. Everyone I know, not everyone I know, most people, because I know very few people who went into Peace Corps fluent. There was the learning curve of like, okay, either my language is pretty good in training, but this accent now is faster in my site or something. But so there was this like, not treading water, but, you know, you couldn't really start to do a lot of your job-job until you got that under your belt. And so for me, I hit the ground running and not, I mean, I still had to take time, like where are the beekeepers, you know, I had to figure out how to do beekeeping in that.

GOLDMAN: [01:13:30] But I was able to start friendships immediately and there was nothing that was, nothing went over my head, including horrible comments by guys, like sexist comments. I was like, I wish I didn't understand what you just said, but I do. So I had a bunch of children in secondary.

SZTUK: [01:13:48] Yeah, yeah.

GOLDMAN: [01:13:49] So I had a bunch of secondary projects. And as everyone knows, secondary projects are in a sense almost funner because as I see them, you with your own relationships and with your own heart and eyes, see a problem or hear about a problem, and you're like, you know what? I think I can add to that, I, that, I can do that. And then you do. And so, um, and this has been like when like when I talked earlier about

*las familias*, the families that my parents worked with, that was a major secondary project to them. And so I grew up knowing the value of like, okay, first, because first of all, beekeeping, you cannot mess with the bees more than once every week and half or two weeks or they're going to get pissed off. I mean, it's not a daily thing.

SZTUK: [01:14:37] Okay.

GOLDMAN: [01:14:37] First of all. But also I remembered how beautiful that was for all four of us, that relationship with those families that my parents started.

SZTUK: [01:14:47] Yeah.

GOLDMAN: [01:14:48] So one of the things was the English teacher in the junior, in the, um, elementary school had to go up to the north coast for like five months to care for his mother. I don't remember why. So the only person who could babysit that class was me. So I, um, so I taught English for five week, five months. And in that time, I fell in total love with this girl, Gloria Stella Hernandez, who was in, I guess, the sixth grade at the time. And so I took her under my belt and she would come to my house. She came to my house every day for months and months and months. And I would buy books. She would read them out loud to me. And once she was finished reading the entire book, the book became hers.

GOLDMAN: [01:15:43] I also confront, not confronted, I went to her parents and I asked, I'd like to have her go to junior high school. No, girls don't do that. And so I said, I'm willing to pay for her uniform. I'm willing to pay for her supplies. I, she can come to my house every single day. I'll make sure that she does her work. I said, and again, I use the kind of thing that I used with Richie Rich. I said, you know, because the father was the one that was making the decision. I said, you know how many fathers are going to think that you're brilliant because you were courageous and you took this girl, your girl, because she is a reflection of you? Don't you want her to be super smart? So then, as a reflection of you, you look smarter? Whatever. Anyway, so finally, grudgingly, they allowed me to

do this. And so therein began, you know, she came to my house every, every day.

GOLDMAN: [01:16:30] In the process, I met her mother. And one day her mother came with her. And we were talking about, oh, I know. I wanted to take Gloria, the daughter, to see Copan, which is the largest southern most Mayan ruins in Central America. It's significant. Um. And so and it would be like a week or something. And I was going to pay for all of the expenses and we were going to go there so that she could learn about her history. And so, I was, so the permission had already been given, but her mother and I were talking about the dates. And so I had a calendar up on my wall. And so as I'm speaking, I'm pointing to it as I'm saying, so what about if I left Tuesday or something. And the mother didn't look at the calendar. And I said I said, *senora, senora, can you look on the?* And she's like, *no puedo*, I can't. I'm like, uh. Turns out she was illiterate.

SZTUK: [01:17:30] Hmm.

GOLDMAN: [01:17:31] And I said, blurring, I don't know. I'm like, you want to learn how to read? I can teach you how to read and write. I was like, oh my God, what am I doing? And she said immediately, yes, yes. I was like, oh God. Teaching adults is different. Like there is. My mother later told me, like, that everything I did was actually wrong, but it worked. But because there's very, you know, you don't do it like A-B-C-D, I mean. And so she started coming every day to my house and, oh, like first we had to learn how to hold the pencil because she was holding like a goddamn melon. And so and the A-A-A-A, B-B-B-B, C-C-C-C, you know, over and over and over. And so once she got that, I would start little things like, okay, write the word *casa*.

GOLDMAN: [01:18:12] Then it became, I would like you to write a sentence about being a mother. And this is, this is the one example I'm going to give because it was so profound. So then she writes, *ser madre es cosa seria*. Being a mother is a serious thing, but meaning it's a hefty thing. It's a big thing. And I'm like, that's a pretty big thing you just said with your new words, you know. And so she, we would get the newspaper. So she finally said, you know, I've been standing next to a door all my



life that everyone else had the keys to enter and I didn't. And now I have been given those keys. And so that, they became huge time, like dedications of time.

GOLDMAN: [01:19:02] Also with the class that I taught, the English class. World Wise Schools had just begun, and this was an exchange where schools in the States would be twinned with schools in Peace Corps volunteers' communities. And my mom, I don't know if I heard her or my mom, but my mom looked into it. And as all things Peace Corps, Peace Corps does not like to consider itself a bureaucracy, but it is. And there was just, like it was not clear how to get it started. And so we're like, you know what? We're going to do our own.

SZTUK: [01:19:33] Right.

GOLDMAN: [01:19:33] So my mother at the time did a lot of her professional and volunteer work in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where they lived at the time, in the schools. Santa Fe. So she found a class. And that class became twinned with mine. And so all of my kids would write letters to them. And then my mother would translate those letters. All the letters coming back, I would translate those. And then when I went to visit my parents, I brought, I wore Honduran traditional clothing. I brought money that they could all see. I brought photos and we did this. And my kids in Florida, we got a massive piece of butcher block paper. We taped it on the bottom of the gym. And we all drew like hello in Spanish, hello to our United States friends, whatever. And so I took that there. The kids there drew on it, and then I brought it back. And so we did all these things. And so that was another thing that was quite a time consuming.

GOLDMAN: [01:20:25] Oh, the kindergarten. I hadn't thought of this years. Another thing I did was I got, my mother got a ton of donated kiddy books, little teeny kiddy books, but of course in English. So I translated all of the books. When I would go to Tegucigalpa, I'd print out the translations, cut them out so that such that then I could tape them directly on top of the English. And I donated them to the kindergarten and these were the only books they had.

SZTUK: [01:20:54] Did you cover up the English?

GOLDMAN: [01:20:55] I did. I was very, oh God, it took forever, it took forever. Um, so that was. And then another thing. See, I'm just, sorry. I'm really. And then another thing is my mother and I cooked up a way to get good medicine to my little clinic. I got to be very close with the clinic there. And the way it works as a village that small would never have a dentist or a doctor. But they do their *servicio social*, their social service to get their degrees. They have to go one or two years into the bush. So we got, you know, national level medical professionals for brief, you know, for a year, two years at a time. So I got to be totally buddies with them. So my mom went around to all the doctors' offices and clinics and hospitals in Santa Fe and was like, hey, I know you got like all these, like, like, let's say.

SZTUK: [01:21:47] Samples?

GOLDMAN: [01:21:47] Samples of Advil or whatever, give them to me. And gave this whole story about me. And so I went there on a trip and I came back with massive amounts of drugs. I mean, like legal, I mean, medicine.

SZTUK: [01:21:57] Right, right.

GOLDMAN: [01:21:58] Well, coming in through customs was a little challenging.

SZTUK: [01:22:01] I was wondering about that.

GOLDMAN: [01:22:01] And so I happen to have, I have a big, big, um, wound on my leg where I got hit by a car when I was 16. So drama queen Goldman here, they're like seeing it and there's like purple pills and pink pills and green. I mean, there's like, it's like, my, my, I had a suitcase filled with medicine, with gauze, with Band-Aids, with paper tape. I mean, every pocket. Gloves, because they would use the same pair of gloves.

SZTUK: [01:22:27] Oh, yeah, right.

GOLDMAN: [01:22:27] And so I started like, oh my God, to the, to the border and to the customs. I know, it's horrible. I have to take all this medicine. My leg,

it's horrible. I have to take the pink ones in the morning. And then, and I was going on, and they're like, okay, *senorita*. Okay. And I was like, so I got through. I didn't have to pay any customs. And so with the only stricture that the wealthy people in the village, Richie Rich's family, were not allowed to have any of that. That was the one thing that was made. My mother and I were like, this is not, they can afford it.

SZTUK: [01:22:57] They can buy it.

GOLDMAN: [01:22:58] They can go to the capital city. They can't. So that was another thing. Um. The final thing that I would say is my, uh, was a huge second secondary project was the women's garden. So growing up with my father, who had not a green thumb but a green body, and who had had a huge garden in Costa Rica, he was like, oh my God, it can grow year round. It's not like D.C. where there's snow. This is amazing. I was like, I'm going to do that too. So I had this little piece of land. I mean, the family where I lived had the land and they let me use it. And so there was. I made it known what I was doing and people were like, oh, all these men, do you need help? I said, nope, nope. A woman can do this on her own. The only thing that a man did was build the fence so the chickens wouldn't get in.

GOLDMAN: [01:23:47] So this was horrible soil. So I had to take all of it by hand on my back and move it to another part of the land. Get good land, bring it. And everyone would just watch and be like, I cannot believe it. And I would not accept it. Like if any female came, they could help me. But this was to make a very serious point. Girls can do this. So every now and then girls.

SZTUK: [01:24:07] Do they didn't do any gardening or?

GOLDMAN: [01:24:08] No, there was very, every, there'd be a few little vegetables sold in the Sunday market. But it was something that I don't recall now if it had been done in, or it had been lost or. And so I produced a ton of vegetables, which of course, again, to use the word *nachas*, that pride thing, when I send pictures to my parents, they're like, why not? So my favorite beekeeper, Pedro Daniele that I mentioned earlier, he came by

with his sister. And his sister was like, huh. So girls can do that. I said, yeah. Turns out she had a women's group. Twenty women, all very, very poor, very humble, in another village 3 hours up mountain away from Florida, and she wanted to see would I start a garden with them. And I said, absolutely. So every two weeks, you know, I would hike up. This was like 3 hours up, 3 hours back.

SZTUK: [01:25:04] By foot?

GOLDMAN: [01:25:04] By foot. And so we got a garden going, had some of the biggest radishes. I mean, like the radishes were like the size of grapefruits. It was kind of weird. I'm like, why are the radishes so big? Radishes should not be that big. It's kind of scary. But and so it was all divided and they, some of they would use for their own consumption, some for selling. And I learned a lesson which I later I have since used many, many times in my work in community development. And it's funny now, but I literally cried at the time.

GOLDMAN: [01:25:43] So we were thinking about what to plant. And so I was leading the discussion saying, well, we should first satisfy consumption needs, right? So whatever you need that's not missing, that's missing in your diet. And then maybe there's things that you think could buy a pretty penny, to bring a pretty penny at the Sunday market. Maybe that could be a second. You know, I'm not going to tell you what to do, but it seems to me like if you guys don't have enough potatoes, like let's try that. Or if you don't have enough tomato, you know, whatever. So we chose, you know, some what I would call salad vegetables.

SZTUK: [01:26:13] Yeah.

GOLDMAN: [01:26:13] And that's going on. And then suddenly, one day Pedro the beekeeper came to my house, because sometimes he would come to talk about the bees or we'd just shoot the talk. And so I made popcorn for him. He had never seen or heard of popcorn, and he was like, oh my God, this is awesome. This is amazing. And I said, are you the only one or does anyone? Oh, no, no one's ever seen this. This is not something anyone, no one has ever seen this here. I was like, oh, my aha moment,

as Oprah would say. Oh my God, this is what we should plant. We should plant this. They can make popcorn, they can sell it in the Sunday market. They will have no competitors.

SZTUK: [01:26:56] Right.

GOLDMAN: [01:26:57] So I go to, I go to Tegucigalpa and I buy a bunch of popcorn and I come back, an immediate, incorrect, like major development work 101. I break it immediately by saying, oh my God, this is so awesome. I'm going to plant it. This is going to grow. You're going to, you're going to pop it, you're going to sell it. You're going to get, like it's going to get a lot of money. It's going to get, and in one sentence, in one burst of mouth, I made more promises than you can possibly shake a stick up. So we plant these. Then proceed we're all staring at the ground like every week. Look, it maybe needs a little more water. No, maybe it's got too much water. Maybe, you know, whatever. And so then little sprouts grow. And so I'm. And they're all looking at me like, what's happening? I'm like, I don't know. I don't know.

GOLDMAN: [01:27:52] So on some subsequent trip to Tegucigalpa, I was chatting with a friend of mine who was an agriculture volunteer, and I was like, would you happen to know what this is going on? Well, turns out these are hybrids. They're one generation. And what you buy to pop in your house, you cannot plant. It's like, oh God. So I went back and immediately, I mean, tail between my legs. And it was horrible. It was the most embarrassing thing. But I said straight up, ladies, I was wrong. I was completely wrong. Unless we have to start little, we have to build. This is not the right kind. You know, if you guys, and I said, let's keep the popcorn idea in the sense that let's have some of these vegetables earn you some money. And then maybe when you're in Tegucigalpa, you can buy some popcorn, pop it, and see whatever, you know.

GOLDMAN: [01:28:46] Because at the time, like Monsanto and everything, you could not get, at least in Teguc and Honduras, non-treated, non- like that were hybridized such that they were just one generation because they don't, Monsanto to this day does not want you to use to, like let your plants go to seed and use the seed because then they're out of business.

GOLDMAN: [01:29:04] So I have never forgotten that. And so there have been many times, I mean, I now work in human rights, but for 20 years I worked in community development and I, like in the Yucatan a ton, and in Guatemala and in Mexico. And I had to look straight into people's faces and be like, oh my God, these people are so poor. They want to have. They want to know it's all going to be okay. And I was like, go by the book, go little step, you know, as E.F. Schumacher said, one of the, one of my books that I, one of my Bibles of Peace Corps, Small Is Beautiful. Um, so, so that garden ended up being really beautiful.

GOLDMAN: [01:29:45] One anecdote to finish off the garden story is that I learned what generosity truly, truly is through those women. I mean, there were so many examples of other people in Peace Corps, but it, in a very easily understood by anyone anecdote. It was, you know, the days were running down now and it was going to be time for me to leave soon. And I was dreading it. They were dreading it. Tears had been shed. And so finally there came the last visit. And so I was just like, I am going to be a basket of tears, you know? And so they had all dressed up in their Sunday best and they had killed a chicken in my honor. And they had made, I think, arroz con pollo, chicken with rice, and which is very special because they had very, very few chickens.

GOLDMAN: [01:30:45] And so they all took turns. Oh, Emilia, we love you, da, da, da. And I threw huge, heaving tears. I was also like, you've changed my life. Well, then it came time for the gift for me. As if their friendship wasn't enough. And they together, 20 women, pooled their resources to give me one egg and two *limpidas*, and *limpidas* at the time, this was probably like 90 cents on a dollar. And I just looked at that. I was like, you have nothing, and you give me literally everything. And so I right away, someone that didn't know them, I gave the egg to someone who was even poorer. And I just said, oh my God, I'm going to get fat. And my boyfriend is not going to love me if I, oh my God, I can't have, you know, I said some things just to suave, to soften it.

GOLDMAN: [01:31:44] But I have also had cause to remember that and be like, yeah, we have these things and more things. But you know, like when you say

shirt off my back, that is the definition. Um. Another. Well, another issue was drinking or lack thereof, in the sense that in this village, as in many villages, small villages in America, it's not okay for a young woman to drink.

SZTUK: [01:32:21] Right.

GOLDMAN: [01:32:22] Oh, first of all, they would always say, where is your mother? Why are you here without your mother? And I'd be like, my mother is with my father, which of course was not answering what they were really saying. But they're like, why would you be coming here? You're not married. That's weird enough as it is.

SZTUK: [01:32:36] Who let you come here alone?

GOLDMAN: [01:32:36] Yeah, but so the drinking situation. So sometimes I would have, you know, beers or whatever with other Peace Corps volunteers in Tegucigalpa. But in my site I was, again, symbolism was so important. I was like, I will not be caught at any point with any alcohol. Like, I don't want them to. I don't, there's enough things that they might think were weird.

SZTUK: [01:32:56] Yeah. You don't want to jeopardize your.

GOLDMAN: [01:32:58] Yeah. So the only two times that liquor passed my lips in that village are both kind of cool. One was it was my first birthday. My birthday's in June, and I swore in, I mean, I got there in May, so I should say my second, technically my second birthday. Well, yes. And in my site. So I had been there a year. By then Blanca Rose Marie Martinez was my best female friend. And so she, you know, she had been raised a bit in Tegucigalpa and she had gone to college in Tegucigalpa. So she kind of was a bigger town person. But all of her family, you know, but she lived there all her life, mostly other than college time. So she's like, Emilia. And she's like whispering. She's like, we have to celebrate your birthday. And then she suddenly pulls out this, is a fifth a little bottle like this? Is that which you call a fifth?

SZTUK: [01:33:49] No, a fifth would be bigger than that. Maybe a pint.

GOLDMAN: [01:33:49] Oh. Okay, like a pint of like rum or something. I think it was probably rum. And she's like and I'm like, and I literally look around like, oh my God, I felt like I was in fifth grade or something and I was going to get. And so she's like, come here, we have to toast your birthday. So we go into her shower and but this is the only place my kids won't like, they will give me space. So then we proceeded to drink together to my birthday and I was like, this is so frickin' cool. So that was one time.

GOLDMAN: [01:34:23] The other time was at, it was truly my penultimate day in my site. And Richie Rich wanted to have a party. And so I said, and I had been the whole time, I had been very, very careful to show that my allegiances were not with Richie Rich and his family. But I can't piss him off either. So you know, I would have consort with him. But it was clear that like the people in the health care center, they were my buddies, the teachers were my buddies and all of the poor, like the really, really poor people I worked with. And so I was like, oh God, oh God, oh God. I cannot be seen leaving with this big party. Oh, and by the way, okay, sorry. His house. There was not electricity. Technically there was a little bit of electricity in the sense that AID, no, the government years and years and years before had started electrifying the houses.

SZTUK: [01:35:22] Mm hmm.

GOLDMAN: [01:35:22] Ran out of money and stopped. Richie Rich said, I will finish it. Oh, just around the plaza. Just around it, maybe like 15 houses, but then it's mine. So there was like the few houses around the plaza which were maybe like ten or 15 plus this AID built marketplace were wired. That was it. And they were, it was only turned on for like a couple of parties. So literally my two years there, maybe three times it was turned on. So for all intents and purposes.

GOLDMAN: [01:35:51] Well, I was like thinking, okay, back to the goodbye party. Oh, God, he'll turn the electricity on. So yeah, of course, because it's the gringa and he'll invite his whole family, which are the rich ones. So I said only, I will only come to a party with you if I get to write the invite list. So I



put everyone and his mother, like they're eating on his dime. They're going to eat well and they're going to drink. So all and so all, all of the women in the women's group and my beekeepers and all, you know, they came in their Sunday best and they all were coming up. And, you know, they came up with a pillowcase or, no, it was a t shirt. A t shirt. And they all signed it. I mean, oh God, that very precious thing. And so they, they were all there. And suddenly, Don Ricardo says, Emelia, come up here. I want to say a few words. I was like, oh, God. And I was like, I've been crying and I. And he's like, we need to have a drink. And I was like, oh, no, no. And he's like. And I finally thought, wait a minute. He's the one that rules the roost here.

SZTUK: [01:36:56] Right.

GOLDMAN: [01:36:56] It's my last day. So we did bam and we had a shot of I don't know what and, um, and then he said some really nice things and everyone else came up and was saying. So those are my two drinking times in my site. Um. So let's see. Oh, yes, I said. So let me pause one second.

GOLDMAN: [01:37:19] So in terms of when I think of my tour, both, you know, both Costa Rica and Honduras, you know, in terms of what my accomplishments were. In Costa Rica, I would think of just having created lifelong friendships and especially with, in the interim years with the U.S. government oftentimes doing things that aren't terribly great. They always know, oh the Goldmans, they are our friends. They're, all the U.S. is not completely bad, you know, like that whole thing. But in terms of Honduras, I feel like I helped instill a dignity in my beekeepers as to what they did, as to what they understood their position to be, that they were not just.

SZTUK: [01:38:09] Not just laborers.

GOLDMAN: [01:38:10] Yeah. And I felt like the friendships that I established. I mean, my best male friend was an evangelical Christian. I mean, I am a non-practicing, extremely liberal Jew. Like it didn't make any sense and we were really, really tight. And I felt like I was able to put my money where

my mouth was in a literal way every single day. And not that I've never done that since, but in a way that made me feel proud that I was adding my grain of sand, as you would say, in Spanish. And at a young age, at an age when, you know, I felt like I was a very respected member of that community in a way that, you know, you kind of need some gray hair to get it here. You know, you got to kind of move up a little bit. You have to. And I felt like I was doing something that was valued and valuable.

GOLDMAN: [01:39:08] And of course, every volunteer would say, and you'd probably agree, you know, I got way more than I get, that I, then I gave, you know. I think that there's definitely some of that. I don't know if I have any, well, I do have a regret. I shouldn't have stayed with the guy that I was dating. But I, because of that, dating that guy, I ended up mentally sometimes being away from Florida, you know.

SZTUK: [01:39:31] Oh, okay. Because he was.

GOLDMAN: [01:39:32] In D.C. and I, and I came here twice and I, like, so it was that jolt was too hard. The culture shock back and forth was. So my one regret would have been what my recruiter said, break up with him now, and then see if you can sort it later, you know. Um.

GOLDMAN: [01:39:48] So how it, how the Peace Corps experience influenced my plans for the future. I mean, I immediately was like, I got to stick with this whole save the world thing. I didn't know what that meant. I'm not sure how I'm going to do that, but it's got to be something. And well, and so the way that's translated over the years is always nonprofit, never for profit. For many years it was community development with an environmental focus. So working especially with women, but so, you know, maybe small businesses but environmentally focused. You know, sustainable forestry, sustainable agriculture, and also a love of travel. And now I'm working in human rights, which is the next step beyond or next to development. So in that sense, lessons that I lived and learned in Peace Corps, some of which I've shared today, inform me on a nearly daily basis.

GOLDMAN: [01:40:45] And in terms of the three goals, you know, I feel like, um, I try to do the third goal all the time. And there was one time, right after 9/11, when Peace Corps, in D.C. anyway, I don't know about elsewhere, I think it was a national thing, was like calling all our RPCVs. Please. So as I was saying in D.C. after 9/11, Peace Corps was asking people, volunteers, to go to schools and to talk about their country of service, to try to break, to try to encourage people to not be scared of the other, because of what had just happened in 9/11. And so as luck would have it, I was put in Alice Steele Junior High School, which is where I went to deal here, speaking to my old French teacher's class. I didn't realize it was her until halfway through. She's like, oh my God, yeah. So I gave that presentation.

GOLDMAN: [01:41:38] So another cute little anecdote I want to say before we end is that, um, in the close of service workshop in how to get used to like getting a job and all this kind of thing, I was, you know, we were taught like, you're going to have to learn how to make beekeeping or something like that somehow applicable in the, in the, in a, in an office situation. And I said, well, of course I can do that. I can just, I can make it be relevant. So lo and behold, I go and I get my first job interview after Peace Corps. And I'm asked, so how can like beekeeping, you know, how can what you learned in Peace Corps be applicable here in this office setting? Exactly the question. And so I said. I took a deep breath and before you know it, I said, well, I can increase your honey yield by 150 percent. I can make sure that your queens thrive. And we can also get a whole lot of royal jelly and sell it.

GOLDMAN: [01:42:33] And I realized, oh my God, what am I saying? My mind is still back in Peace Corps. And luckily that woman at the National Wildlife Federation said, that's okay, I can work with that. I can do something with that. So, u, I guess to just finish up, you know, Peace Corps has been and remains a huge marker in my life. A huge, defining, um, defining part of my path and the way I view people, the way I view the other, the way I view our foreign policy, pretty much everything. So it's been a real honor to be able to share my memories. And there's obviously so many more, but this has been really, really wonderful.

SZTUK: [01:43:13] All right. Thanks. Thanks very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]