

Kathleen Snyder Cox Oral History Interview
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Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Kathleen Snyder Cox served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1971 to 1973 on a public health and nutrition project.

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Kathleen Snyder Cox

March 2, 2017
Healdsburg, California

By Phyllis Noble

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

NOBLE: [00:00:01] This is Phyllis Noble. I'm in Healdsburg. Do I pronounce it right?

COX: [00:00:07] Mm hmm.

NOBLE: [00:00:08] Healdsburg, California. And we're in a motel here. And I'm interviewing Kathleen Snyder Cox, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras from 1971 to 1973 in a public health program. Today is March 2nd, 2017. Hi, Kathleen.

COX: [00:00:31] Hi.

NOBLE: [00:00:31] Very good to meet you.

COX: [00:00:32] Nice to meet you.

NOBLE: [00:00:34] So, Kathleen, I'd like to know, before we talk about what you did in the Peace Corps, who were you, who you were before you joined the Peace Corps? Where were you born?

COX: [00:00:43] I was born in Portland, Oregon, but my family lived in Vancouver, Washington, which is across the Columbia River from Portland. So I was, the hospital was in Portland, but my family lived in Vancouver.

NOBLE: [00:00:57] So you grew up in Vancouver then?

COX: [00:00:59] Well, until I was 12 when we moved to Southern California, and then we moved back to Eastern Washington, to Pullman, when I was a junior in high school.

NOBLE: [00:01:09] Oh, boy. Okay, so you have three distinct segments of your childhood. And who was in your family? Did you have siblings?

COX: [00:01:18] I'm the oldest of seven.

NOBLE: [00:01:19] Oh, wow.

COX: [00:01:21] And my brother and I are only ten months apart. And then my sister is 13 months younger than my brother. And my next sister is 12 months younger than the one before her. So for a period of a month when my mother had a two, had two two year olds, a one year old and a new baby, and then after that.

NOBLE: [00:01:46] Someone needs to give your mother a hug.

COX: [00:01:48] After that, the last three were more spread out.

NOBLE: [00:01:52] Wow. Wow. So you and your siblings were very close?

COX: [00:01:56] We were very close. We still are very close.

NOBLE: [00:01:58] Oh, good. Good. And you still got them all?

COX: [00:02:01] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:02:03] How wonderful.

COX: [00:02:04] My father was, both of my parents were teachers. And my father went in, then became an administrator. My mother, when she started having kids, didn't work anymore outside the home.

NOBLE: [00:02:14] Yeah, she sure did work at home. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But your parents both had a college education.

COX: [00:02:19] Yes, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:02:20] Yeah. And so you went to public schools?

COX: [00:02:24] I went to, we went to public. My mother was a Catholic and my father was Jewish.

NOBLE: [00:02:29] Uh huh.

COX: [00:02:29] And when they got married, in those days, you know, you had to sign papers saying that the children would be raised Catholic. And so they, but they really were committed to public education. And in those days, people were told from the pulpit that was a sin to send your kids to public school. But they were committed to public education, except for, and we all went straight through public schools, except for one year when we had moved to Southern California. My dad went down like, I don't know, I think probably in September. And my mother stayed in Vancouver to sell the house with the seven kids and didn't go down. We went down around Christmastime, but my dad couldn't find a house that was big enough for all of us in Inglewood, which was where he had the job.

NOBLE: [00:03:25] Mm hmm.

COX: [00:03:26] And so he bought a duplex that was being built and had a door cut through it so that we lived in both halves of this duplex that was in

Lenox, which, and the house was right directly under the flight path of LAX.

NOBLE: [00:03:43] Oy.

COX: [00:03:44] And it was a real, um, the schools were terrible. So we went to school there for a year and a half and then they put us one year in Catholic school until, and then they found a house in Inglewood and we moved into Inglewood and went just one year to the Inglewood schools. And then we moved back to eastern Washington.

NOBLE: [00:04:04] Yeah. I'm, I'm trying to imagine your mother moving from Vancouver down to the Los Angeles area. There was eight people. How would you, you can't?

COX: [00:04:17] There were nine. Nine. Well, yeah, there were eight people, nine with my dad.

NOBLE: [00:04:21] Right. But if your dad wasn't, but he wasn't there.

COX: [00:04:23] Well, he came home and then we, uh, when we actually did the move.

NOBLE: [00:04:28] Okay, he was part of it.

COX: [00:04:28] But she was home for I think from September till December selling the house.

NOBLE: [00:04:33] And taking care of babies.

COX: [00:04:34] And taking care of us.

NOBLE: [00:04:35] Incredible. But I'm imagining taking vacations with ten people, well, wait, nine, nine people in the family. You'd have to have a bus.

COX: [00:04:47] We had those, you remember those three seater station wagons?

NOBLE: [00:04:51] Yeah, yeah, with the way back. Yeah.

COX: [00:04:52] And the seat faced backwards, the back seat faced backwards.

NOBLE: [00:04:54] Yeah. Yeah.

COX: [00:04:55] So, yeah. And we did take vacations, you know, occasionally we went camping. We went. They would rent like a place at the beach for a weekend. We certainly never took any elaborate vacations. We never stayed in, we never went to a resort or a hotel.

NOBLE: [00:05:13] Yeah, yeah. But you went camping.

COX: [00:05:15] We went camping a couple of times and rented places at the beach for weekends and visited. My dad's family came from Colorado and my mother's from Montana. So we visited there.

NOBLE: [00:05:28] Yeah.

COX: [00:05:29] Stayed with relatives.

NOBLE: [00:05:31] Sure, sure. It actually, I'm an only child, and so I have to say that it sounds terrific.

COX: [00:05:36] It was terrific for us.

NOBLE: [00:05:38] Difficult for your mom, but how rich.

COX: [00:05:41] It was. It was. We were never, ever bored.

NOBLE: [00:05:44] Yeah.

COX: [00:05:45] We always had somebody to play with, especially the first four of us. And we're still very close. Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:05:51] Wonderful. Yeah. So where were you when you went to high school?

COX: [00:05:56] My freshman year was the year I went to a Catholic high school.

NOBLE: [00:06:00] Oh, yeah.

COX: [00:06:00] I went to St. Bernard's, which was in, um, well, it's just outside of Westchester in Southern California. And then we moved. Then we went, then I went one year to Inglewood High School, which was very traumatic because I actually had, I had loved that school, St. Bernard's, it was a new school. It was small. It was what they called co-institutional. So there were girls, there was, there were two wings, a girls' wing and a boys' wing. So we never saw each other.

NOBLE: [00:06:36] Not even for algebra?

COX: [00:06:37] Nothing. Nothing. So it was all girls and it was small. It was that each year they had started in each year and they added a year. And I think the year I was there, there were freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. And then, then so but I only got to go one year because then they bought the house in Inglewood and we had to go to the Inglewood schools and that was a school of 1,000 kids.

NOBLE: [00:07:02] Oh.

COX: [00:07:04] Where I didn't know a soul and.

NOBLE: [00:07:07] That's hard when you're sophomore in high school. The cliques have already formed and you're cutting.

COX: [00:07:12] And then my junior year we moved back to Pullman, Washington. So I actually changed.

NOBLE: [00:07:18] Oh, three different?

COX: [00:07:18] I changed schools in the middle of the sixth, the middle of the seventh, the end of the eighth, the end of the ninth and the end of the 10th grades.

NOBLE: [00:07:25] How difficult.

COX: [00:07:26] It was really hard.

NOBLE: [00:07:28] Yeah. Yeah. Your family saved you, I think. I mean, that you might have been lonely at school, but.

COX: [00:07:34] But we had each other.

NOBLE: [00:07:35] You had each other when you went home, and you were all going through that, those transitions in the mid school year.

COX: [00:07:41] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:07:41] Yeah. Did you, when you were in high school, did you have summer jobs or did you work part time during the school year?

COX: [00:07:53] Yes, when we, well, I always babysat from the time I was in the sixth grade, really, all of my, the four oldest ones. We were fabulous babysitters. We had, we were very much in demand. We babysat for \$0.25 an hour.

NOBLE: [00:08:08] Not for your own siblings but for other people?

COX: [00:08:11] For other people, because we had so much experience.

NOBLE: [00:08:12] Sure. Sure.

COX: [00:08:13] So I had always babysat. And then when we moved to Pullman, I got, uh, I worked in. Pullman is the home of Washington State University, so I had a job in the banquet halls. They would put on banquets and then they would hire high school kids to like bus tables and serve meals.

NOBLE: [00:08:32] Oh, yeah, sure.

COX: [00:08:33] One summer, I worked in the admissions office filing. That was the most boring thing possible. And I think that's, that was it for high school.

NOBLE: [00:08:50] And in high school, did you study foreign languages?

COX: [00:08:53] I studied Spanish as a freshman.

NOBLE: [00:08:56] Did you have a choice? Did you choose Spanish?

COX: [00:08:58] It was really interesting. It was this Catholic school. And I remember my dad, my Jewish dad, took me to register. And you took placement tests. You had to take placement tests to get in. And they said, and according to how you placed, I guess, on the language part of the placement test, they, the high people were supposed to take Latin and then the second tier was French and the third tier was Spanish.

NOBLE: [00:09:28] Oh dear.

COX: [00:09:29] But I really wanted. From the time we moved to Southern California, in Vancouver there were African American kids in the junior high that I went to, but there were no Latinos at all at the time. And I, my mother and I, my mother also was quite fascinated by the whole Mexican influence in Southern California. And I just loved that. And I really wanted to take Spanish and they were going to put me into Latin. And my dad said, no, she wants to take Spanish.

NOBLE: [00:10:00] Good for him.

COX: [00:10:02] And so I did. So I took four years of high school Spanish and it was just so fun.

NOBLE: [00:10:10] Wonderful, wonderful. And then you went to college?

COX: [00:10:15] Well, after college, I went.

NOBLE: [00:10:18] Or after high school?

COX: [00:10:19] After high school, I went into the convent.

NOBLE: [00:10:21] You did?

COX: [00:10:22] My one, my one year at the Catholic school. So I went in to this Catholic school that I had gone to. There were three different religious communities that taught there and each, uh, and we had home rooms.

NOBLE: [00:10:40] And now you're talking about your one year in Catholic school?

COX: [00:10:42] One year. I think that if I had gone more, if I had gone to like six or even probably four years of Catholic school, I would have never gone into the convent. But my one year. So I became quite close with some of the nuns that, um, that like the community that I joined that one of them had taught me was my homeroom teacher. And then there was a drama and speech teacher who had been one of the Little Rascals.

NOBLE: [00:11:18] Oh.

COX: [00:11:20] And she was fabulous. She was so good.

NOBLE: [00:11:24] And what was the order?

COX: [00:11:25] Daughters of Mary and Joseph.

NOBLE: [00:11:26] Huh.

COX: [00:11:27] They're a Belgian order, but all of the, most of the nuns that were here at the time were from Ireland. And they were young. They were very, you know, they were probably all under 33 at the time.

NOBLE: [00:11:43] Oh wow, what a vibrant bunch. And so you left Pullman, Washington, to come back?

COX: [00:11:50] To Palos Verdes was where that novitiate was.

NOBLE: [00:11:53] Uh huh. Okay. So for one year?

COX: [00:11:57] No, no, no. The novitiate was three years. And then, um.

NOBLE: [00:12:03] During which you were doing what?

COX: [00:12:04] Mostly we were going to college. Mostly we were taking theology and philosophy.

NOBLE: [00:12:08] Yeah.

COX: [00:12:10] We did get to take one year of French because it was a Belgium community.

NOBLE: [00:12:15] Oh yes.

COX: [00:12:16] And, you know, some things like music appreciation, but it was almost all. And we did have an English class. We went to Mount Saint Mary's College, which was near there. And then that was three years. And then you made vows, temporary vows for five years.

NOBLE: [00:12:38] And those were vows of?

COX: [00:12:40] Poverty, chastity and obedience. And then we went to, still in Southern California, we were supposed to, you know, then go full time to college and, um, it was a teaching order in California. What they did was teach in Catholic schools, which I really did not want to teach in a Catholic school, because I had a real bias against, I mean, such a public education school.

NOBLE: [00:13:08] Right.

COX: [00:13:10] So, um. I was in what was called, that was called junior eight for one year. And then I was sent up to San Francisco to teach, never have, not having a BA, not having had any education classes.

NOBLE: [00:13:30] And this is when, in the late 1960s?

COX: [00:13:32] This would have been the late sixties.

NOBLE: [00:13:34] And you're wearing a habit.

COX: [00:13:35] Yeah, well, we had a modified. Well, yes. When we went up there we had a habit and then while I was there, the habit changed and we were wearing street clothes, but we had a little veil.

NOBLE: [00:13:48] Little veil, yeah.

COX: [00:13:51] So I taught third grade at this school that was in the western addition in San Francisco, which before World War II had been a Japanese. It's where Japantown is in San Francisco, but all the Japanese had been interned and then the area had been, um, at the time that I was there, the neighborhood was pretty African American.

NOBLE: [00:14:17] Oh, the Japanese people did not come back?

COX: [00:14:20] Their houses were gone.

NOBLE: [00:14:22] Oh, really?

COX: [00:14:23] Yeah. So they then, actually that was in 19-. It must have been. Let's see, it must have been around 1969, '68 or '69 was when they were building Japantown. And so, but the school that I taught in was a Japanese mission. So it was a school for Japanese children and Japanese was taught there every day. There was a job. They got like a half an hour of Japanese a day.

NOBLE: [00:14:54] And these were kids who were born here in America?

COX: [00:14:56] Yes, but their parents may not have been. Most of them, even their parents, most of their parents had been born here.

NOBLE: [00:15:03] Hmm. But there was a sense that there was a value to keeping alive the heritage of that language.

COX: [00:15:08] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:15:09] Yeah. How rare.

COX: [00:15:10] Yeah, it was very. So I taught there for one year and I really hated it.

NOBLE: [00:15:16] Oh, you did?

COX: [00:15:16] And I was, and I was terrible. Oh, I was terrible. I didn't know what I was doing.

NOBLE: [00:15:21] How many kids did you have?

COX: [00:15:22] I had 38 third graders.

NOBLE: [00:15:24] Okay. They're about eight years old.

COX: [00:15:25] They were eight and there were three African Americans from the neighborhood.

NOBLE: [00:15:31] Yeah.

COX: [00:15:32] And there was one girl, little girl who was Filipina. Her mother was Filipina and her father was a Merchant Marine American, and everybody else was Japanese. And I knew I didn't know. I mean, the difference between me and other people like me was that because my parents were teachers and I had had a really good public school education, I knew that I was crap.

NOBLE: [00:16:03] Oh, oh.

COX: [00:16:06] It was awful.

NOBLE: [00:16:06] What was the hardest thing? Was it disciplining the kids?

COX: [00:16:09] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:16:10] Yeah. 38 kids is a lot.

COX: [00:16:11] 38 kids is a lot. Yeah. And I, yeah, I didn't know what I was doing. I mean, actually the kids did. It's amazing that kids learn in spite of their teachers.

NOBLE: [00:16:21] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [00:16:21] You know, the kids did learn.

NOBLE: [00:16:23] I think back to my first year teaching, I'd say exactly the same. They survived and they learned something I think.

COX: [00:16:29] They did. You know, I mean, they, well, they passed the tests and, you know, but I really hated it. So and I was living in a house where, um, I was 22. I might have been 23. Yeah, I think I was. I was 22 and everybody else, everybody in the house except for me was Irish.

NOBLE: [00:16:56] From Ireland?

COX: [00:16:57] From Ireland, except for one nun who actually had been at the high school where I had gone to high school, who was getting her master's in theology at USF.

NOBLE: [00:17:08] And she lived, she shared the?

COX: [00:17:09] She shared the house, but she, so.

NOBLE: [00:17:12] Did you have to cook? Did you take turns cooking?

COX: [00:17:15] No, we had a cook. Well, except on weekends, yeah, but I didn't have any friends, you know, I was very lonely, really lonely. And it was quite difficult. And you know, you know, I mean there are huge

cultural differences between growing up in Ireland and growing up in the U.S.

NOBLE: [00:17:39] Right.

COX: [00:17:40] And you know, so it was, it was hard. And then what happened was this nun who was getting her master's at USF had this vision that she, for nuns to be doing parish work rather than being just in hospitals and in schools. And she wanted them to really be part. Her idea was to be part of a team and a parish and work like the priests and plan the liturgies and do adult education and, you know, whatever needed to be done in the parish. So at that time, the Santa Rosa diocese had a reputation for being quite liberal, and the bishop did. And so she came. She came up to and made an appointment with, to talk to the bishop of the Santa Rosa diocese and the chancellor of the diocese, who is like the administrator, is my, is now my husband.

NOBLE: [00:18:48] Oh! And he was a priest at that time?

COX: [00:18:49] He was the priest.

NOBLE: [00:18:50] I love it.

COX: [00:18:51] And he was the one that she talked with first and he said, oh, that's a great idea. But what we really need, besides what she wanted to do, was somebody who, is somebody who would like to work with the Spanish speaking. And she knew I really, really wanted to do that. And so she came back and said, you know, do you want to do this? And I would have done anything to get out.

NOBLE: [00:19:18] Out of the classroom.

COX: [00:19:18] Of the classroom, yes, yes. So, um, she, I went up there with her the next time and we met this Monsignor Cox and.

NOBLE: [00:19:32] Monsignor.

COX: [00:19:32] Monsignor, and the bishop. And he said, you know, why don't you, why don't you work part time and go to school part. No, you couldn't, I wanted to get my BA.

NOBLE: [00:19:46] Sure.

COX: [00:19:46] I, you know, I mean, I was. And he said, you could go to school at night, and work during, you know.

NOBLE: [00:19:55] And your work would be parish work, not classroom work?

COX: [00:19:58] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:19:58] So maybe that would be doable.

COX: [00:19:59] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:20:00] Teaching and going to school at the same time is very, very difficult. Yeah.

COX: [00:20:04] So I wrote to the superior general and said, you know, I wanted to do this. And she said, um, you know, I really had only been in community one year.

NOBLE: [00:20:18] Yeah.

COX: [00:20:19] She said, no, you haven't been in community long enough. You need to, uh, you can't go off by yourself. I mean, this, this woman, this nun, her name was Karen. Her idea was that we would rent a tract house in a neighborhood and live with the people.

NOBLE: [00:20:34] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [00:20:34] And she was like, no, you can't do this. So I wrote.

NOBLE: [00:20:38] But Monsignor said.

COX: [00:20:39] So I wrote back and told her all the reasons why I didn't really want to stay in third grade, why I was really, how difficult it was. And so she said, okay, you've got three choices. You can go to school full time and get your BA. You can go up to Santa Rosa or you could teach a higher grade. You probably need to teach a higher grade level.

NOBLE: [00:21:03] Junior high. That's the absolute worst.

COX: [00:21:06] So I said, oh, I want to go to school full time. I really want to get my BA.

NOBLE: [00:21:11] Yeah.

COX: [00:21:12] And then I went back up to Santa Rosa and Monsignor Cox talked me into, you know, doing the work up there and getting my BA, which I did do in, I think it was. I mean, I had gone, I had done, besides all the theology and philosophy, I'd had one year full of full-time school and then a summer school. Two summer schools, I think. So it took me I think another two years going at night.

NOBLE: [00:21:42] At night?

COX: [00:21:44] I think I only went once or twice a week.

NOBLE: [00:21:46] Yeah.

COX: [00:21:46] It's an hour, about an hour from Santa Rosa to San Francisco.

NOBLE: [00:21:53] And so you finished up at, um, San Francisco?

COX: [00:21:54] So I finished at USF, at the University of San Francisco, which is a Jesuit. It wasn't a good education compared to, you know, what my siblings did, but what the hell? I got the degree.

NOBLE: [00:22:08] Yes. And your degree was in what?

COX: [00:22:10] It was in sociology.

NOBLE: [00:22:12] Aha. Not education.

COX: [00:22:14] Not education, no.

NOBLE: [00:22:16] Yeah, sociology could be sort of anything.

COX: [00:22:18] Yeah. And I really wanted to do, I mean, that was just so fascinating.

NOBLE: [00:22:22] Yeah. Yeah.

COX: [00:22:24] It was. And I did really love studying it. It was really interesting.

NOBLE: [00:22:29] So how did you wind up in the Peace Corps?

COX: [00:22:32] So I worked in Santa Rosa for three years and um.

NOBLE: [00:22:37] And doing sort of community social work?

COX: [00:22:40] In this, yeah, in this parish. And so the way it worked out was we did have this house and we had a little house in this kind of blue collar neighborhood that was, and we had two parishes. I was, so at the, so Gerry Cox, my husband, was the only priest in the entire Santa Rosa diocese, which goes from Santa Rosa to the Oregon border and includes.

NOBLE: [00:23:05] Oh, that's huge.

COX: [00:23:06] Napa, Lakes, Sonoma, Mendocino, Trinity and Del Norte Counties. Geographically huge.

NOBLE: [00:23:14] Enormous.

COX: [00:23:15] And he was the only priest in the diocese that spoke Spanish.

NOBLE: [00:23:19] Oh.

COX: [00:23:20] And so, um, he. And he had just been, he left the chancery office and was, had just gotten at his parish, which instead of building a church, he built what he called Resurrection Community Center, which was this multipurpose building that had stacked chairs that you could and an altar on wheels. And but a lot of, um, very modern, but very kind of spiritual building. But you could use it for everything. So I worked with him and then the other nun worked in this more traditional parish. So I stayed there for three years and he actually only stayed for one year. And then he became the head of Catholic Social Service. And so at the end of three years, there were two things that happened. I always say there were two things that just made it clear to me that I was going to leave.

COX: [00:24:24] And the first one was there was this, there was a terrible earthquake, a seven point, I think it was a seven point earthquake in Santa Rosa in, must have been like 1968, '68 or '69. Yes, it must have been '69 because it was in the spring and it was like about 7:00 at night. And I was in a house in a discussion group with all married couples. And this earthquake happened and the power went out. And the house where we were, the woman had a glass, an antique glass collection. And there was just this glass crashing, flying. And the ground was literally felt like the ocean.

NOBLE: [00:25:10] Yeah, you're showing with your hands the undulating.

COX: [00:25:13] Yeah. The ground, the earth was moving.

NOBLE: [00:25:16] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [00:25:17] It was literally, I've never been so scared. It's the scariest thing I've ever experienced. And all these married couples grabbed on to each other and I was standing there by myself and I said, no, this is not what I want. I do not want to be standing alone.

NOBLE: [00:25:35] Alone, yeah.

COX: [00:25:36] And it was very clear to me.

NOBLE: [00:25:38] Yeah.

COX: [00:25:39] And then.

NOBLE: [00:25:40] You needed a partner.

COX: [00:25:41] I needed a partner. Yeah. And the other thing that had had happened was that it was, you know, a time of great turmoil in the church. Radical changes going on.

NOBLE: [00:25:51] Vatican II had just happened a few years before.

COX: [00:25:53] Vatican II had happened. And the community that I belonged to, Belgian, Belgium was a very liberal church. And we had houses in England, Ireland, Belgium, Africa and California. And we were very avant garde, very liberal. We got out of, we were one of the first groups to not have a habit. We had started to do these other kinds of works, not just teach, but it was very hard for a lot of the nuns, for a lot of those Irish nuns, especially the older ones.

NOBLE: [00:26:31] Well, that's not what they thought they signed up for.

COX: [00:26:33] No. And it wasn't their theology.

NOBLE: [00:26:35] Yeah.

COX: [00:26:36] So we had this meeting in the spring and every house was supposed to present a position paper about what did they see, what was their vision for the community. So there were four of us who were, there were three of us living together in Santa Rosa, doing this parish work. And another nun in Ukiah who was living with a different community but doing the same thing. So we came up with. We said that the essence of religious life is not poverty, chastity and obedience. It is community service and prayer.

NOBLE: [00:27:14] The community service part, the service part is what Peace Corps is all about.

COX: [00:27:19] Right. And, well, it's community, comma, service and prayer.

NOBLE: [00:27:25] Yes.

COX: [00:27:26] And that we did not owe obedience to the bishop. That the obedience was, you know, anyway, it was. So I don't know why they decided I should be the one to present this paper. I was the youngest one in the house. And so anyway, you know, there was just. There was this nun that I had lived with when I was going, the one year that I went to college who was, she did the fundraising for the community. And she was like a, she was a John Birch Republican. And so we used to have these tremendous fights at the, um, at the dinner table, which because nobody else ever took her on, but you know.

NOBLE: [00:28:06] But you would.

COX: [00:28:06] But I did. So and I, so she did, you know, we were just at loggerheads. And she said, after I gave this talk, she said, well, you can do that, but don't call yourself a DMJ. We were called the DMJs, Daughter of Mary and Joseph. Don't call yourself a DMJ and don't call yourself a religious. That is not religious life.

NOBLE: [00:28:29] Oh my.

COX: [00:28:29] And it just became so clear to me that if I stay here, I am going to turn into a bitch because I am going to just be constantly fighting.

NOBLE: [00:28:41] Yeah.

COX: [00:28:41] And I don't want to. I mean, I that's kind of who I, it's very easy for me and I'm not afraid of confrontation. I've never been afraid of confrontation. But I do not want to spend my life in confrontation and I don't want to spend my life fighting. And I don't need these women to live the life that I want to live. And if I stay here, why am I trying to convince them to do something they don't want to do when I don't need them?

NOBLE: [00:29:10] Yeah.

COX: [00:29:10] So I decided I was going to leave. Those two incidents. I decided I was going to leave.

NOBLE: [00:29:16] So at this point, how old are you?

COX: [00:29:18] I was 25 when I left.

NOBLE: [00:29:20] 25 when you left the convent.

COX: [00:29:21] And went into the Peace Corps. And so I was.

NOBLE: [00:29:24] But then Monsignor Cox is wandering around here somewhere, and he must be going through similar questioning of his role.

COX: [00:29:35] So he is 20 years older than I am. So I was 27, 25, and he was 45. And actually I had known that after I had been there about a month, he invited me. He was doing this. There was a fundraising campaign that was going on throughout the diocese, and he had to drive up 101 and take these materials to all the parishes along 101 between Santa Rosa and the Oregon border. So he said, you know, would you like to come along and it will give you an idea of what the diocese is like? So, you know, we had this like three day car trip and, you know, I would stay in the convents and he would stay in the rectories. But we really got to know each other on that trip.

NOBLE: [00:30:28] Yes. As can only happen when you're driving in a car with another person, there's a unique opportunity to talk.

COX: [00:30:34] Yeah. And I really fell in love with him on that trip.

NOBLE: [00:30:38] Yeah.

COX: [00:30:40] But he, I mean, I never thought anything would come of it. First of all, there was the huge age difference, and he was a priest. And I didn't have that. I didn't have any intention of leaving.

NOBLE: [00:30:52] Yeah.

COX: [00:30:52] And I certainly never thought he would. But then around the time that I was thinking I was going to leave, he invited me. There was a series, it was like a kind of a theology philosophy one night a week lecture with people from all over the world that the Graduate Theological Union at Berkley was sponsoring. And he asked me if I would want to do that with him. And in the meantime, he was, yeah, he was also really struggling with like, is this, you know, is this what I want? Is this, is this the church I want to be part of? And so, um, actually, and one of the ones that we went to was on Paulo Freire, who turned out to be. When I got to Honduras, it was so fortuitous that I knew about Paulo Freire because the group that I worked with, he was their gospel.

NOBLE: [00:31:59] Ah.

COX: [00:32:00] So anyway, when we. We started going to that and one day we, um, he then. One day we stopped at Stinson Beach and took a walk on the beach. And all of a sudden the relationship was no longer just platonic. But even so, I didn't think he would leave the priesthood. I just couldn't, I mean, he had been ordained for 23 years and he had gone into the seminary after the, out of the eighth grade.

NOBLE: [00:32:36] Oh, okay. So he had never had the high school sock hops, the dating.

COX: [00:32:43] Never, ever, ever.

NOBLE: [00:32:44] Yeah.

COX: [00:32:45] Although he's also from a family of seven kids with four sisters who were close in age. So in the summer he, you know, hung out with his sisters and went to parties and things.

NOBLE: [00:32:59] Okay, yeah.

COX: [00:33:00] But. So anyway, I decided I was going to leave and I was trying to figure out what I would do. And I thought I wanted to get a master's in social work. And so I applied at different schools. And then I became friends with this young woman who was the youth minister for, I think, the Baptist church, who was my age. And she was going into the Peace Corps in Africa.

NOBLE: [00:33:40] Ah.

COX: [00:33:40] And I went, the Peace Corps! I always wanted to go to the Peace Corps, you know, from the time John Kennedy said it. Didn't everybody want to be a Peace Corps volunteer?

NOBLE: [00:33:50] Right. Right.

COX: [00:33:51] And so I did apply to different graduate schools. And then Gerry said, my, oh, no, you should apply. There's going to be a new school of social work at San Jose State. And it turned out that he was going to, um, he had been offered a job there because he had, he has a master's in social work, in clinical social work, thank God. And so he was going to leave, and not leave the priesthood, but as a priest, go to San Jose State and have this job. It was going to be a master's in social work with an emphasis on the Chicano experience. He said, you should apply there. That's where you'll want to go. So I did apply and I got in and then I also applied. I applied there and to Roosevelt University in Chicago.

NOBLE: [00:34:48] Chicago.

COX: [00:34:48] It just sounded like it was cool, like a really interesting program.

NOBLE: [00:34:52] Yeah.

COX: [00:34:52] And a third place, some place in New York I think, but I can't remember where. And I got accepted at all of them. And then I remembered the Peace Corps. And I thought, I don't. First I thought, oh, I'll go to this school at San Jose State. But then I thought, you know, my Spanish isn't really fluent, I'm not really bilingual. I'm going to be in there

with all these Chicanos. I'm going to be the only Anglo. I don't really speak Spanish. I don't think, I think I should do that after the Peace Corps.

NOBLE: [00:35:28] Ah.

COX: [00:35:29] And then I said, I would, I wanted to go to any Spanish speaking country. I didn't care where.

NOBLE: [00:35:34] So they asked you if you had a preference?

COX: [00:35:35] Yes.

NOBLE: [00:35:36] And you said any Spanish?

COX: [00:35:37] Latin American country, yeah. And I didn't even know where Honduras was. I had to look it up on the map.

NOBLE: [00:35:44] Yeah, of course.

COX: [00:35:45] So then I got this invitation before I left to, um. And I, and I decided I wasn't actually going to leave. I was just going to go into the Peace Corps. And I had a meeting with the woman who was, there was like a leadership team, and she was the person in the north. So I went to San Francisco and told her that I wanted to go into the Peace Corps and I wasn't formal. If they would give me permission, I was going to go into the Peace Corps.

NOBLE: [00:36:20] Now, you were asking permission of the order?

COX: [00:36:22] I was just telling them.

NOBLE: [00:36:23] You were still a?

COX: [00:36:24] I was still a nun.

NOBLE: [00:36:25] A nun. Yeah.

COX: [00:36:26] And it was actually the, um, my, the fifth year. It was time to take my final vows. But at that point, they didn't have everybody take their final vows automatically after five years. You took them, you take them when you wanted to. So I said I wasn't going to take my final vows, but I wasn't going to leave. But I was going to, I would go into the Peace Corps as a Daughter of Mary and Joseph.

NOBLE: [00:36:53] Ah.

COX: [00:36:53] And she said okay. And so I went home. I left. My family lived in, my parents lived in Spokane. And I went, I think, like the middle of July, we were supposed to go report to Puerto Rico.

NOBLE: [00:37:09] And this would be 1970?

COX: [00:37:11] '71. July. Yeah. So I was home and I got a letter from them, from the superior, from the Mother Superior. The General. The Superior General she was called, saying Sister So-and-so has informed me that you're leaving. Here is your, when you went in you took a dowry of \$500. It was called a dowry.

NOBLE: [00:37:35] Yeah.

COX: [00:37:35] Here's your dowry. That was it.

NOBLE: [00:37:38] You were out?

COX: [00:37:39] I was out.

NOBLE: [00:37:40] And that was not what you had intended.

COX: [00:37:42] It was not what I had intended, but it was, you know, absolutely the best thing.

NOBLE: [00:37:46] Yeah.

COX: [00:37:47] Because I would have dilly dallied around and, you know, been conflicted and. But I was incensed, you know, that they didn't even say, you know, we love you, or I mean, I'd been there eight years.

NOBLE: [00:38:01] Yeah. Here's your 500 bucks.

COX: [00:38:03] Here's your \$500.

NOBLE: [00:38:04] Goodbye.

COX: [00:38:04] I mean, the thing was that I had been in the novitiate and then we only had three houses in San Francisco, so almost everybody was in Southern California, so they didn't really know me. But still anyway, so that was that. And then my thing with Gerry was, you know, we had said that we loved each other.

NOBLE: [00:38:26] Yeah.

COX: [00:38:26] But.

NOBLE: [00:38:27] And he's still a priest?

COX: [00:38:28] He was still a priest. And then this, the people that were doing the school of social work got too radical and the school wouldn't let them do it. So his job that he thought he was going to at San Jose State no longer existed.

NOBLE: [00:38:46] Oh.

COX: [00:38:46] So he ended up. Let's see. So I left and I went to Puerto Rico.

NOBLE: [00:38:54] For Peace Corps training?

COX: [00:38:54] For a Peace Corps training.

NOBLE: [00:38:55] And we'll get, I want to get back to that. But meanwhile, what's happening with the monsignor?

COX: [00:39:00] Well, so he was like, I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know what I'm going to do. And I was like, you know, whatever. You know, you need to do what you need to do. I didn't really think he would leave, and I didn't think he would, uh. And that was okay. I mean, I wasn't heartbroken. I loved him.

NOBLE: [00:39:27] Yeah.

COX: [00:39:29] But, you know, it was whatever. Whatever you decide to do is what you need to do. So I left and it was up in the air. And so my, so I went. My sister, who was two years younger than I, was going to school at this Fort Wright Holy Names College for Women in Spokane. And they had an Upward Bound program. And the two of us had worked as house mothers the previous summer. And it was just such a blast for these high school girls that were African Americans, Native Americans, and a few white, poor white kids. And then so I did that for about six weeks. And then Gerry came up to visit me, and at that point, he thought he was going to leave.

NOBLE: [00:40:30] Uh huh.

COX: [00:40:30] Then I left.

NOBLE: [00:40:32] You left to go to Peace Corps training?

COX: [00:40:33] I left. Went to Florida. First, I went to New York to visit a friend. And then I went to, uh, left from Florida. And I was terrified.

NOBLE: [00:40:46] Now, wait a minute. When you say left, when you say you left from Florida, was there, did the Peace Corps training group gather in Florida and then go together?

COX: [00:40:54] No, everybody just had their own. Everybody arrived individually.

NOBLE: [00:40:59] Okay, so you all met up together for the first time.

COX: [00:41:02] In Puerto Rico.

NOBLE: [00:41:02] In Puerto Rico, okay.

COX: [00:41:04] Yeah. So I had, I got to, I remember I got to the airport in Miami at like 3:00 in the afternoon, and my plane didn't leave until, it left early in the morning. Like, I think I, I remember I got a hotel room at the airport. And I just sat in that hotel room and cried.

NOBLE: [00:41:28] Yeah. Yeah.

COX: [00:41:29] I was so scared. I was terrified.

NOBLE: [00:41:33] Oh.

COX: [00:41:33] And I thought, if I pick up the phone and call Gerry, I won't go. So I cannot pick up this telephone. And then I got there, and for some.

NOBLE: [00:41:48] You got to Puerto Rico?

COX: [00:41:50] I got the plane and got to Puerto Rico. And at the airport, I met this couple whose names I can't remember. And they were, they were also from California and they were teachers. And they said, oh, we have to go get a pina colada. I didn't even know what a pina colada was. And so then it was okay. As soon as I met them, it was okay. And I think we got there at night for some reason. We stayed. I remember it being night when we got there and we stayed overnight and then we went to Ponce. They must have picked us up together. They must have taken us together to Ponce.

NOBLE: [00:42:30] And then the orientation and things began?

COX: [00:42:33] Everything was in Ponce, yeah.

NOBLE: [00:42:36] Did your whole training take place in the area of Ponce?

COX: [00:42:39] It did. And but I didn't stay the whole time because I did speak more Spanish than, even though I wasn't bilingual.

NOBLE: [00:42:48] You had had a couple of years of Spanish.

COX: [00:42:49] I had four years of high school Spanish and a couple of years of college.

NOBLE: [00:42:54] Okay.

COX: [00:42:55] And I really, really was motivated.

NOBLE: [00:42:58] Right. But there had been some, there had been some time lapse.

COX: [00:43:00] Yeah. But my Spanish was much better than anybody, than people who, other people. And there was another woman there, Linda Freed. She had grown up, she was, she had grown up in Ecuador. Her parents are Jewish Americans who had gone to Ecuador. She just, she's one of the few people that I'm still connected with. I think during World War II, and her father had a big, uh, something to do with cars and mechanics. And so she had grown up in Ecuador, so she was completely bilingual and we became good friends and she only stayed like maybe a month, and I stayed about six weeks. And then they sent us both into Honduras early.

NOBLE: [00:43:53] Oh, really?

COX: [00:43:54] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:43:54] Because the training, it sounds like the training was largely language?

COX: [00:43:58] The training was largely language.

NOBLE: [00:43:59] And that language was Spanish of course.

COX: [00:44:00] Yes. Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:44:01] What else went on in training in Ponce? And this is, I have to say, this is absolutely unique that some people get to finish training before others in a group. It's, I've never heard of that happening before.

COX: [00:44:16] Yeah. Well, what, it was pretty interesting. When we first got there, all the girls, all the young women were in one house.

NOBLE: [00:44:25] How many, how many people are we talking about?

COX: [00:44:28] It was a pretty big group because it was nurses, foresters, fisher, fishing.

NOBLE: [00:44:33] Oh.

COX: [00:44:36] Well, health. And most of them were nurses. I think there were four of us in this nutrition program. And then a pretty good group of foresters.

NOBLE: [00:44:45] Uh huh.

COX: [00:44:46] I would say we were maybe 40, 40 or 50.

NOBLE: [00:44:50] Okay. But what you had in common there was all the study of Spanish. Beyond that, people were going to be off into different, in terms of job training and preparation for your work.

COX: [00:45:03] So there wasn't. So most of the time was language. After we were there for a week, everybody had to go out and knock on doors. They assigned you neighborhoods and you had to go knock on doors and find yourself a family to live with.

NOBLE: [00:45:19] Ah, find yourself a family. Oh!

COX: [00:45:22] Yeah. I mean, I couldn't believe that.

NOBLE: [00:45:26] After a week?

COX: [00:45:27] After a, well, maybe it was two weeks. It must have been two weeks.

NOBLE: [00:45:30] People who had less Spanish than you did, how did that work?

COX: [00:45:32] I mean, I could do it, but I was like. I have to say, though, that language training was amazing.

NOBLE: [00:45:39] How did they do it?

COX: [00:45:40] Well, they must have gotten, they must have been given, you know, here's what you say when you. But literally just, and the people in the neighborhoods that they assigned us had had Peace Corps volunteers living with them before.

NOBLE: [00:45:55] Oh, okay. So they knew.

COX: [00:45:56] They were kind of primed, but they didn't give you addresses. They just said, you go to this neighborhood, you go to this neighborhood, you go to this neighborhood.

NOBLE: [00:46:04] And you were to go on your, on your own?

COX: [00:46:07] Yeah, well, married couples went together.

NOBLE: [00:46:09] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [00:46:10] Single people went on their own.

NOBLE: [00:46:11] Whew. Wow. It's baptism by fire, right?

COX: [00:46:16] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:46:17] Whew. So. So what was your experience? You knocked on a door?

COX: [00:46:20] I knocked on the door. And actually, the first door I knocked on. I was also slightly older than the other volunteers because most of them had just graduated from college and I was 25.

NOBLE: [00:46:31] Yeah.

COX: [00:46:32] So I was like four years older than they were, three or four years older.

NOBLE: [00:46:36] You know, we're in our seventies now and looking back at that.

COX: [00:46:39] It's nothing.

NOBLE: [00:46:40] What's the difference between 21 and 25? Not much, but in fact, there is a bit. And you'd been out in the world doing things.

COX: [00:46:46] Yeah, I had been. I might. And my life experience was so, my adult life experience was so different than theirs because I hadn't gone to the college like they had. I was, you know, in love with a man that was 20 years older than I.

NOBLE: [00:47:01] Yes. And you had, you had a year of teaching under your belt.

COX: [00:47:04] And I had three years of social work.

NOBLE: [00:47:06] That's right. That's right.

COX: [00:47:07] So I had four years of work. Real life.

NOBLE: [00:47:10] Yeah.

COX: [00:47:11] So I knocked on this door and this woman opened it and I, you know, I could communicate. I was pretty good. My grammar wasn't perfect, but I could, I could communicate. And I told her what I was looking for, and she said she was. Her children were grown and gone, except for one son who was might have been like 11. And it turned out that her

husband, it was just so classic Latin America. She was dying to have me move in there because she really wanted company. And, you know, I could talk a little bit. I could talk and could understand her.

NOBLE: [00:47:52] Yeah.

COX: [00:47:53] So it wasn't like getting somebody that couldn't speak any Spanish. And it turned out that her husband had a mistress and a whole other family. And so every day, you know, she would tell me about this and cry and. But it turned out that then the husband would come home because he was kind of interested, not sexually interested in me, but it was just sort of a curiosity to have this gringa living there. So he kind of wanted to talk to me and find out what things were like, so he would come home. So she was happy. And you know, he drove us. He took a, we did, we did a couple of weekend trips because he wanted to show me different things. And I think, I think I had told them that I had been a nun. So that also was a real curiosity to him.

NOBLE: [00:48:51] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [00:48:52] So but every single night, she fixed the exact same thing for dinner. Exactly.

NOBLE: [00:48:58] And what was it?

COX: [00:48:59] It was fried chicken, which was fine with me because I loved that, canned beans like they eat. In Puerto Rico, they just eat canned beans, and rice.

NOBLE: [00:49:11] Huh. No vegetables?

COX: [00:49:13] No vegetables, no salads. Fruit, there was fruit, like whatever it was in season.

NOBLE: [00:49:17] But no greens?

COX: [00:49:20] No. I don't remember the other meals, but every single night the dinner was exactly the same.

NOBLE: [00:49:25] What did you have to drink?

COX: [00:49:28] Uh.

NOBLE: [00:49:29] Water or was there a fresco of some sort?

COX: [00:49:32] You know, I'm, it might have been. I can't remember. I can't remember. We had coffee, you know, coffee in the, coffee in the mornings. There was a lot of fresh fruit.

NOBLE: [00:49:51] Sounds pretty good.

COX: [00:49:52] It was pretty good. And there were other people who were, you know, and the house was nice.

NOBLE: [00:49:57] So you stayed with this woman and her children.

COX: [00:50:01] And occasionally the guy.

NOBLE: [00:50:03] The son, the 11 year old son, and the husband who was sometimes there for? And in the evening.

COX: [00:50:09] I think it was about six weeks.

NOBLE: [00:50:10] Six weeks. But in the daytime, you went to?

COX: [00:50:12] To the training center.

NOBLE: [00:50:13] Back to the training center with the other Peace Corps volunteers.

COX: [00:50:15] Right. So there we had language classes and we had some cultural, what they called cultural sensitivity training, which people thought was just a joke.

NOBLE: [00:50:23] Hmm.

COX: [00:50:24] I thought it was kind of interesting, but I was kind of into that. But most people thought it was really ridiculous.

NOBLE: [00:50:30] What sorts of things?

COX: [00:50:31] I think they were, you know, like, it was like body language and it was returned volunteers who were doing it. Well, there was one that we all really liked, this woman named Arietta. I think her name was Arietta Wilson. And she had been. She had been in a public health program as well. I don't she was.

NOBLE: [00:50:52] In Honduras?

COX: [00:50:54] In Honduras.

NOBLE: [00:50:54] Oh, cool. Okay.

COX: [00:50:55] She was like a returned volunteer that they hired.

NOBLE: [00:50:57] Those are people with credibility, that have actually been there themselves. Yeah.

COX: [00:51:02] We didn't do any, there was nothing. There was no physical component to it like these people that told us about the first group that went into. There was nothing physical.

NOBLE: [00:51:11] Yeah.

COX: [00:51:14] And I don't remember any. I think that there must have been some nutrition stuff on nutrition, because that's what we were supposed to be, was nutritionists.

NOBLE: [00:51:23] Nutritionists.

COX: [00:51:24] And none of us were.

NOBLE: [00:51:25] But there were just, there were just a few of you who are going to be doing that.

COX: [00:51:29] There was myself, Linda. This girl who, young woman who didn't end up staying. And we knew she would never make it. Um, there might, I think there might have just been three of us that were doing that.

NOBLE: [00:51:43] So it's hard for, I think, for a training program to specialize with such a small number of people.

COX: [00:51:51] Yeah. And I think that they did give us some, um, I think we had, they gave us some nutrition training and maybe some, you know, like community organizing type techniques. But most of the group was nurses. Almost, almost all the women were nurses.

NOBLE: [00:52:13] Yeah. And, um, was there any talk of deselection?

COX: [00:52:18] Oh, yeah. Yeah. And some people were deselected. So there was a psychiatrist there.

NOBLE: [00:52:28] I was going to ask if you had psychiatrists come and talk to you.

COX: [00:52:30] There was a psychiatrist, yes. And he was the same person that had been at the staging.

NOBLE: [00:52:37] And the staging had happened?

COX: [00:52:38] In Denver.

NOBLE: [00:52:39] Oh, we hadn't talked about that.

COX: [00:52:41] Yeah, I forgot about that.

NOBLE: [00:52:42] So you had met, you had all met up somewhere in Denver?

COX: [00:52:45] Well, it wasn't like. I think they were different stagings in different parts of the country.

NOBLE: [00:52:51] Oh.

COX: [00:52:52] Because. [background noise] I hope that doesn't go on all night. There was, um, I don't remember meeting anybody that was in the training when I was in Denver, and that was all so programmed. There wasn't really any time to, I don't remember any time to mingle, but we all had individual conferences with the psychiatrist at the staging. And that same that same psychiatrist was there in Ponce. And I think he was there the whole time.

NOBLE: [00:53:28] Oh. Observing you in groups?

COX: [00:53:29] I think so. I think so. I wouldn't swear to it, but I remember meeting with him individually. We met with him individually again.

NOBLE: [00:53:38] Yeah. Did you have to do any peer ratings of passing judgment on one another?

COX: [00:53:44] No.

NOBLE: [00:53:44] Who maybe ought not to go?

COX: [00:53:46] No, no. At least I don't remember it. Did you do that?

NOBLE: [00:53:50] Oh, yeah.

COX: [00:53:50] Oh, no. We didn't have any of that.

NOBLE: [00:53:52] Painful. And so some people were deselected.

COX: [00:54:01] Mm hmm.

NOBLE: [00:54:01] Do you remember how you felt about that? Were there, were there, were there objections from those who remained?

COX: [00:54:08] I don't remember. I don't. I think we all kind of felt like they would have never made it. And there was one person who we, oh, actually, she was another one of the nutritionists that, she was the fourth. That at least Linda and I were like, this woman is nuts. She was young. And we really thought she should have been deselected. And in fact, she had a total nervous breakdown. And they had to, they had to, they had to ship her out of the country. There were, I don't remember it being a big thing.

NOBLE: [00:54:47] So if people were deselected, they deselected themselves?

COX: [00:54:53] Yeah. I mean, some people just decided they didn't want. I remember this woman who was at the time, she was probably, I think she was in her fifties actually. Single, quite glamorous, you know, makeup. And she approached me and said, Kathy, I think it would be great if we got a house together in Honduras and let's get a parrot. We'll get a house. And I mean, she just had this total, totally unrealistic picture of what Honduras was going to be like. And she didn't go.

NOBLE: [00:55:27] She didn't go?

COX: [00:55:28] Yeah.

NOBLE: [00:55:29] Yeah. So you and a couple of others.

COX: [00:55:33] Just Linda. Linda and I went early.

NOBLE: [00:55:35] Went early. You left training early because they decided you were ready. They must have also, on the other end, needed you to begin something?

COX: [00:55:43] I guess they were ready to, um. So the program that we were assigned to was Caritas, was with Caritas, which is the international relief arm of the Catholic Church.

NOBLE: [00:55:58] Yeah. So it's an acronym, right?

COX: [00:56:01] I don't think so. Caritas is charity in Latin.

NOBLE: [00:56:07] Okay.

COX: [00:56:07] So it's like the, um, it's like the AID of the Catholic Church and, um, which to me was totally ironic because I really did not want to be involved in the Catholic Church. I mean, I wasn't anti Catholic, but I just, you know, I mean, I thought I was going into the Peace Corps. That was going to be totally.

NOBLE: [00:56:30] Different.

COX: [00:56:30] Yeah. And, um, and it was pretty interesting because Linda was an atheist. And, um, so but this was the most, these people were so smart, these people that worked for Caritas. I, we were in awe of them.

NOBLE: [00:56:50] Huh. Who were they?

COX: [00:56:52] Well, the head of Catholic Relief Services. Well, no, they were. Catholic Relief Services is like the AID and Caritas was a program under Catholic Relief Services.

NOBLE: [00:57:03] Okay, okay.

COX: [00:57:04] And the guy who was the director of Catholic Relief Services was from the US and his name was Sal Pinsino. And then there were these Honduran men who were in their thirties, and they had offices all around the country, like five or six, and they were all Christian Democrats.

NOBLE: [00:57:25] And that's a political party in Honduras?

COX: [00:57:27] That's a political party which had no, I mean, at that point, they'd been, they were they were forming a new party. They were forming a new political party that was, you know, a radical. It was a revolutionary party. And they had this unbelievably sophisticated plan for organizing. And so it was the Catholic Church. It was, um. It was liberation theology.

And what they started with was what they called. And this was happening actually all over Latin America, not just in Honduras. Celebrate, Los Celebradores de la Palabra. So there were not.

NOBLE: [00:58:12] Can you translate that?

COX: [00:58:13] Celebradores, the Celebrators of the Word.

NOBLE: [00:58:15] Okay.

COX: [00:58:16] So there aren't enough, you know, it's a big spread-out country for Central America, sparsely populated. Only one paved highway in the entire country at the time.

NOBLE: [00:58:28] And would that be the Pan-American Highway crossing from Guatemala through Honduras?

COX: [00:58:32] Yes. And it went from, it was, it was built by, uh, Standard Fruit.

NOBLE: [00:58:40] United Fruit?

COX: [00:58:41] United Fruit. Standard brand, United Fruit.

NOBLE: [00:58:43] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [00:58:43] Chiquita banana. Honduras is the classic banana republic.

NOBLE: [00:58:47] Yeah.

COX: [00:58:48] And it was United Fruit and the highway went from the port where they shipped the bananas out.

NOBLE: [00:58:56] Now which, uh, Honduras has two coasts, right?

COX: [00:58:59] Yeah. So if we look at map.

NOBLE: [00:59:03] Let's look at the map. We've got a computer here with a map and so we're looking at it here. So we have the Pacific coast on the south and the Atlantic on the north.

COX: [00:59:11] And so this is where most of United Fruit had their stuff, their stuff around San Pedro Sula.

NOBLE: [00:59:18] And San Pedro Sula is in the north, on the Atlantic. It's that part of Latin, of Central America, which goes east and west. We think of it as north and south. But here the Atlantic is on the north and the Pacific is on the south.

COX: [00:59:32] Yes. So I'm always confused. And so.

NOBLE: [00:59:35] Yeah. So you're looking at the port up here and San Pedro Sula.

COX: [00:59:40] Then Tegucigalpa, here's the capital. So the one highway went from San Pedro Sula to through Tegucigalpa down here, which was where they shipped the bananas.

NOBLE: [00:59:53] And when you're saying down here, we're talking about the Pacific coast.

COX: [00:59:57] I think. I think.

NOBLE: [00:59:58] A small, small part of Honduras has, um, it's got a huge Atlantic coastline, but a very small Pacific coastline.

COX: [01:00:07] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:00:07] Yeah.

COX: [01:00:09] So. What was I talking about?

NOBLE: [01:00:14] Well, the, the highway, that there was the only one highway.

COX: [01:00:18] Oh, right. So the priests. So. So you've got this big, you know, I mean, it's bigger, much. Look at how tiny El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador is compared.

NOBLE: [01:00:27] Right.

COX: [01:00:28] And, you know, it's sparsely populated. And there were not enough priests. So what they did was they, they started out their organization, their organizing strategy was to start training men, campesino men, peasant men.

NOBLE: [01:00:45] When you say their strategy, this is the Caritas?

COX: [01:00:47] This is the Caritas people, to be, essentially they were celebrating the mass. They were celebrating the liturgies in their villages. And so these people, and they, and they, the readings that were selected for these celebrations, La Celebración de la Palabra, were all liberation theology. It was all about, you know, the Hebrews being freed from, the Jews being freed from slavery. And, you know, Jesus, uh, Saint Matthew with I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was thirsty. I was imprisoned. As long as you do it to one of these, the least my brethren, you do it to me. It was all those scriptures. So that's what every Sunday, that's what people were studying for years.

NOBLE: [01:01:39] Yeah.

COX: [01:01:40] In their villages. That was their first step. Then their second step was.

NOBLE: [01:01:46] And then this was all part of sort of the fallout from Vatican II, right?

COX: [01:01:50] Right. And it was the fallout.

NOBLE: [01:01:51] The liberation theology.

COX: [01:01:51] Right, which started in in Medellin, Colombia. In Medellin, Colombia, in the late sixties, all the bishops of Latin America got together and they looked at the reality of Latin America. And what they said was, what came out of it was, the reality of Latin America is oppression, and the church is part of it. We're responsible for it. And we now take, it's more than this but this was the gist of it, we now take a preferential option for the poor. We have created this oppression. This is not God's will and we have to end this.

NOBLE: [01:02:29] So that was a segment of the Catholic Church?

COX: [01:02:32] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:02:32] Not everyone in Latin America was on the same page.

COX: [01:02:36] No.

NOBLE: [01:02:36] Yeah.

COX: [01:02:37] But it was a big movement.

NOBLE: [01:02:38] And Oscar Romero next door in El Salvador. Well, I'm trying to remember when Oscar Romero was killed. It was.

COX: [01:02:44] It was later. It was in the eighties.

NOBLE: [01:02:46] Oh, was it later?

COX: [01:02:47] I think it was in the early eighties.

NOBLE: [01:02:50] And then there was something of the Maryknoll nuns.

COX: [01:02:52] Yeah. Same time in El Salvador.

NOBLE: [01:02:55] Yeah. Yeah.

COX: [01:02:56] And um.

NOBLE: [01:02:57] So you were there in sort of the early.

COX: [01:03:01] The beginnings.

NOBLE: [01:03:02] Beginnings of the implementation of that idea.

COX: [01:03:06] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:03:06] And the changing of what was being said from the pulpit.

COX: [01:03:09] Yeah. Yeah. So then the next thing they did was they organized radio schools. So because everybody had transistor radios.

NOBLE: [01:03:17] Oh yeah.

COX: [01:03:18] And using Paulo Freire's, Paulo Freire was their guru, using Paulo Freire's pedagogy, they brought people in who didn't know how to read and trained them and gave them lesson plans. And then these, they taught people to read over the radio with, you know, some with another peasant in the village, because there were no schools.

NOBLE: [01:03:42] And we need to talk about that Paulo Freire is the author of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and he sees literacy as key to the liberation of oppressed poor people.

COX: [01:03:55] Right.

NOBLE: [01:03:55] So, yeah.

COX: [01:03:56] And the way he teaches them to read is by taking, the subject matter is their reality and it's dialectical, so it's all like Socratic dialogue. So that was the second part of it. And then there, then they had, they had requested Peace Corps volunteers because they wanted, their other thing was housewives clubs and *promotores de salud*.

NOBLE: [01:04:28] Okay, translate *promotores*.

COX: [01:04:28] So that was like the barefoot doctor concept.

NOBLE: [01:04:32] Health promoters, literally. But yeah.

COX: [01:04:35] So they, they, so they thought, well, this is what has to happen with women, that this society. We're not going to have a revolution unless women are part of it. I mean, women were the most oppressed segment of the population.

NOBLE: [01:04:52] Right.

COX: [01:04:52] And they saw that. And so they were organizing these housewives clubs. And then they had money from Germany and they wanted Peace Corps volunteers that were going to organize this.

NOBLE: [01:05:07] Money from Germany?

COX: [01:05:08] From the Christian Democrats, because the Christian Democrats are a political party in Germany.

NOBLE: [01:05:14] Oh, and also in Honduras at that time.

COX: [01:05:17] And they were trying to form this party. They were, they were it. There weren't very many of them. So. So the idea was that. I mean, the whole thing. I just to this day I think it was so smart. So they had these villages. They had about 30 or 40 villages where I was in Olancho.

NOBLE: [01:05:45] You were where?

COX: [01:05:46] I was in Olancho.

NOBLE: [01:05:47] So I'm looking at the map again. So where is Olancho?

COX: [01:05:50] So I lived. I saw it on here. I lived here in Juticalpa.

NOBLE: [01:05:55] Okay. Juticalpa. And where is Olancho from that?

COX: [01:06:02] So this is, all of this is Olancho. But you can see it.

NOBLE: [01:06:06] Oh, I see it. There's a little town called Olanchito up here, but there's.

COX: [01:06:09] But that's not part of it.

NOBLE: [01:06:11] There's a whole province.

COX: [01:06:12] Right. It was a province.

NOBLE: [01:06:13] Yeah.

COX: [01:06:14] The province. And it was kind of considered the wild west of Honduras.

NOBLE: [01:06:20] Wow.

COX: [01:06:20] I mean, it was mostly cattle ranches and there is some hardwood forests. But look at how far it is from Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, which are the only cities.

NOBLE: [01:06:31] It's hard to tell on the map how far. Let's talk in terms of time. If you wanted to get from your town of Juticalpa to the capital, Tegucigalpa, how long would it take you?

COX: [01:06:42] There is 8 hours of a bus ride on a dirt road.

NOBLE: [01:06:45] Okay, 8 hours on a bus. And to get from Juticalpa to San Pedro Sula, would you have to go down to Teguc and then up?

COX: [01:06:53] Yeah. So that was two days.

NOBLE: [01:06:55] A couple of days. Yeah.

COX: [01:06:57] So no one ever came out here.

NOBLE: [01:07:00] Oh, so you're pretty isolated. And were you by yourself?

COX: [01:07:03] Well, I lived with a British nurse and an Irish nurse who worked at the hospital in Juticalpa.

NOBLE: [01:07:10] You're back with the Irish again.

COX: [01:07:12] I know, I could not escape them. And then.

NOBLE: [01:07:15] So let's talk, let's talk about. Let's slow down and talk about where you lived and how you lived in Juticalpa. You're an American living with a British woman and an Irish woman, and they're both nurses?

COX: [01:07:30] Mm hmm.

NOBLE: [01:07:31] And what kind of house were you living in?

COX: [01:07:32] The house was a nice house. It had, you know, it was in the town. This, Juticalpa, is the only town in all of the. They were just little aldeas, little villages, all connected by dirt roads. I mean, most of them didn't even have busses that went to their villages. The house was a nice house, you know, cement house with tile floors. There was a living room and then a patio with three bedrooms around the patio and a dining area on the outside with no wall, a table, covered table. The kitchen had a two burner, you know, little kerosene burners.

NOBLE: [01:08:19] Mm hmm. Refrigerator?

COX: [01:08:21] We had a refrigerator.

NOBLE: [01:08:25] Did you have?

COX: [01:08:25] We had water on and off.

NOBLE: [01:08:28] Aha. So you had a flush toilet?

COX: [01:08:30] Sometimes, if there was water and we had a pila, a big tub, where you could, you know, like wash your clothes.

NOBLE: [01:08:38] Yeah. And so did you do your own washing of the clothes?

COX: [01:08:45] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:08:46] You did. And you did your own cooking?

COX: [01:08:48] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:08:49] And so that meant you had to go to the market and shop yourselves. You didn't hire anyone who did all those domestic things for you.

COX: [01:08:55] At one point we had the sister of one of the *promotores de salud* that wanted to come in and go to do a class on to become a beautician. She lived with us for free in exchange for like doing the laundry and some of the cleaning.

NOBLE: [01:09:14] Ah, yeah, okay.

COX: [01:09:15] So that helped. But we did our own cooking.

NOBLE: [01:09:16] Yeah. Yeah. And your own shopping in the market?

COX: [01:09:19] Yes.

NOBLE: [01:09:19] Yeah. What you're talking about is so heady and so important. And I feel, I feel like I'm pulling you back now to talk about nitty gritty things. But how did you buy food and what did you eat?

COX: [01:09:39] There was a little tiny store right across the street where you could buy like bread and eggs. And sometimes people would walk up the street selling stuff, you know, fruit or eggs or. In the market you could buy. What we ate was beans, beans and rice.

NOBLE: [01:10:01] Would you buy dry beans or can?

COX: [01:10:03] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:10:03] Not canned like Puerto Rico.

COX: [01:10:04] Oh, no.

NOBLE: [01:10:04] But you'd buy the dried beans and so forth and then boil them.

COX: [01:10:08] And tortillas.

NOBLE: [01:10:09] What kind of tortillas, were they handmade?

COX: [01:10:13] Uh, they must have been.

NOBLE: [01:10:15] I'm thinking of the typical Mexican tortillas. Flat. Very like rolled thin like paper. But in Guatemala, sometimes they have these quarter inch thick things that people make by hand.

COX: [01:10:28] Yeah. Yeah. They were more like Guatemalan. More like Guatemalan.

NOBLE: [01:10:32] And El Salvadorans too are thicker. Yeah.

COX: [01:10:36] We had yucca, cabbage, eggs. We could get bacon. We could get pork. We could get pork. Chicken was hard to come by.

NOBLE: [01:10:48] No kidding.

COX: [01:10:49] We didn't. It was hard to get chickens, but we had a lot of pork. Mostly pork for meat.

NOBLE: [01:10:55] And you'd buy it in the market.

COX: [01:10:57] In the market fresh, yeah. Eggs. We had eggs. And there was, you could get, like there was a *panadería*. You could get like sweet *pan*

dulce. Well, actually the *panadería* was in the next town in Catacamas, but they would bring and sometimes you could get *pan dulce*.

NOBLE: [01:11:18] So I have to interrupt here. *Panadería* is a bakery, bread being *pan*.

COX: [01:11:23] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:11:24] So *pan dulce* is a sweet bread?

COX: [01:11:26] Yeah, sweet bread. You could get, you know, like in Mexico, the *bolillos*, those rolls. little round rolls. Yeah. Sodas. And then whatever fruit was in season, it was only what was in season. There was nothing, you know, there was nothing. You could get sometimes guavas, mangoes, pineapple, everything when it was in season.

NOBLE: [01:11:55] Right.

COX: [01:11:56] Oranges.

NOBLE: [01:11:58] Any greens?

COX: [01:12:01] Cabbage.

NOBLE: [01:12:02] Huh.

COX: [01:12:02] I don't remember. Oh, and cabbage and yucca and then those squash. That chayote squash. I think that we had cucumbers. I'm remembering cucumbers. But I might have that confused with Mexico. It wasn't, there wasn't very much variety, but it was.

NOBLE: [01:12:27] It was nourishing.

COX: [01:12:28] Yeah, it wasn't, you know.

NOBLE: [01:12:31] You had coffee?

COX: [01:12:32] We had coffee.

NOBLE: [01:12:34] Beer?

COX: [01:12:36] Yes. The Honduran beer was stronger than American beer. And if you went into a bar, not in Juticalpa. I never went into a bar, but in Tegucigalpa, if I would go in with other volunteers, you know, they would serve you little. But if you order a beer, you would get like a little thing of peanuts. Or a little, they'd give you little *boquitos*, *bocaritos* with your beer.

NOBLE: [01:13:05] Um, a *bocarito* would be?

COX: [01:13:07] Like a little appetizer. Peanuts, they would give you, or in the best place was after I, at the end of my time they sent me to Costa Rica to train a new group coming in and in Guanacaste and there was a bar. It was just this little crummy bar across the street from the training center where they, if you ordered a beer, you would get like little plates and pieces of fried, fresh fried fish and.

NOBLE: [01:13:35] Fabulous.

COX: [01:13:35] That were, you didn't pay for.

NOBLE: [01:13:36] Like tapas.

COX: [01:13:38] Yeah, it is automatic. It comes with the beer. Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:13:41] Very nice. So. So you had, it sounds like your living situation was pretty well taken care of. It was not a crisis of keeping yourself alive.

COX: [01:13:53] No.

NOBLE: [01:13:54] You had your own room to sleep in.

COX: [01:13:55] Yes, I didn't share a room.

NOBLE: [01:13:56] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [01:13:59] There was also a garage to this house, which that was where this girl who lived with us and then did our wash in exchange for board and room.

NOBLE: [01:14:08] Yeah.

COX: [01:14:08] She slept in there and we fixed up a room for her in the garage.

NOBLE: [01:14:11] Yeah. So, um. So there you are. You're pretty well taken care of. You have electricity sometimes?

COX: [01:14:20] No, the electricity was pretty good. It was the water.

NOBLE: [01:14:22] The water was on and off.

COX: [01:14:24] Yeah. And up the street these, if you, the street went up a hill and at the top of the hill was the hospital where these two nurses that were part of the British Peace Corps equivalent.

NOBLE: [01:14:39] Oh, VSO.

COX: [01:14:41] Yeah, one was British and one was Irish. And the British girl, she left. I keep saying girl because we were so young.

NOBLE: [01:14:51] You were girls.

COX: [01:14:51] And we called ourselves girls. I mean, it does feel terrible to say that.

NOBLE: [01:14:56] No, but not then.

COX: [01:14:58] She was actually only there for a year and her term was up, but the Irish one was there and then another one came and took the place of the British one who had left. But she worked with me with the *promotora* project, and working in that hospital would have just been hell. So

depressing, you know? I mean, people, you just did not want to go to that hospital.

NOBLE: [01:15:23] Yeah.

COX: [01:15:24] I mean, the hospital had flush toilets, but the water never reached it. So you can imagine. And then they took the sheets down from the hospital and washed their sheets in the river, which was the source of water for the town. It was just, it was just awful. That was very, my job was very exciting.

NOBLE: [01:15:45] Because you were not a nurse. You were doing nutrition.

COX: [01:15:48] I was doing community organizing. That's what I was doing.

NOBLE: [01:15:51] So talk about your work.

COX: [01:15:53] And it was very, it was very intellectually stimulating. And I mean, you were working with complete. So, getting back to how these people had organized this, they had these like 30 or so villages where they had *celebración*. They had the Celebrations of the Word and they had the radio schools and they had housewives clubs formed. And then the next step was to create these *promotores de salud*. And so they were to become. There were two women from we did 15 villages at a time, two women from each village, so 30 women at a time.

NOBLE: [01:16:30] And they would come in from these villages?

COX: [01:16:31] And they would come into this training center in Juticalpa, which was just catty corner from where our house was, which was run by Caritas.

NOBLE: [01:16:39] Where did they sleep?

COX: [01:16:41] Oh, my God. It was so, talk about unsanitary. Because once again, the toilets, you know, half the time there was no water.

NOBLE: [01:16:49] Water to flush.

COX: [01:16:49] It was like a dormitory.

NOBLE: [01:16:51] Yeah, okay.

COX: [01:16:51] This was like, I mean, think of like an extremely basic retreat center. It was, there was like, there were like big dormitories and bathrooms and showers. And they would come in with their babies because if they were nursing or little kids.

NOBLE: [01:17:06] Yeah. And they'd come in for how long?

COX: [01:17:07] 30 days.

NOBLE: [01:17:08] So a month.

COX: [01:17:10] And so the way it worked was.

NOBLE: [01:17:12] And they came in to get trained to do what?

COX: [01:17:15] So I trained them to be on the nutrition, the preventive health, and like community organizing and teaching techniques, because they were supposed to try to get their communities to build latrines, boil their water, plant gardens. They were, you know, teaching people about balanced diets. And then there was a nurse and she taught them how to give injections.

NOBLE: [01:17:41] Oh.

COX: [01:17:41] How to sterilize, uh, how to deliver. They had, they had midwives in these villages, but they didn't know much about sanitation.

NOBLE: [01:17:51] Yeah. So these people were going to go back and be?

COX: [01:17:54] The health providers.

NOBLE: [01:17:56] The health providers for that community.

COX: [01:17:57] And they went back at they end of their course.

NOBLE: [01:17:59] And they may not have gone to high school themselves.

COX: [01:18:01] Right, oh no, nobody had gone to high school because the only, the only schools only went to the third grade.

NOBLE: [01:18:06] Oh, okay.

COX: [01:18:08] So, um, they got a little medicine kit and then they were supposed. So it had things like aspirin, bandages, you know, antibiotic cream. It had some, they could give injections and then they were supposed to sell, like they would sell the Band-Aids and aspirin for a penny.

NOBLE: [01:18:31] And the giving injections gives me pause there, that people without an education would know which drug to administer.

COX: [01:18:43] Oh, well, they didn't. They could only administer what they had. It was more like, this is where you. So somebody could go come into Juticalpa, for example, and get something in the pharmacy and bring it back. And they would know how to inject it, but they didn't have things that they could inject.

NOBLE: [01:19:00] So they didn't, they weren't prescribing medicine.

COX: [01:19:02] Oh, no, no, no.

NOBLE: [01:19:02] They knew the mechanics of giving an injection.

COX: [01:19:06] Exactly.

NOBLE: [01:19:06] Right. And when you go to the pharmacy, you don't get a pill, you get a solution to inject.

COX: [01:19:12] Because they, that's the only thing that works in their mind. Everybody wants an injection.

NOBLE: [01:19:17] Right.

COX: [01:19:19] Because that's more powerful than a pill.

NOBLE: [01:19:20] Yeah, yeah, okay. So let's move on.

COX: [01:19:23] So the, um, so they came in. So the way it worked was, we would go out to this village. Besides the men that were in charge of each of these regions, there was a team of social promoters, *promotores sociales*, of like I think there were four in Juticalpa who, they were the ones that had organized, done all the organizing. And they, um. We would go, one of them and I would go out to a village and we would have a meeting and we would explain this is what the program is going to be. And then the people would nominate like five or six candidates. And then we would interview them and we would choose two.

NOBLE: [01:20:08] Ah. And those are the people who came back into Juticalpa for the month. You had had a role in selecting them.

COX: [01:20:15] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:20:16] How did you, how did you work out your criteria? How did you figure out?

COX: [01:20:19] Well, we had to have people that could at least read.

NOBLE: [01:20:23] Yeah.

COX: [01:20:24] And we didn't want young teenage girls. And they were the ones that could read. So if we did have a teenage girl, it had to be somebody who was pretty special and she had to be with somebody that was older. They had to be somebody that the community really respected. And it had to be somebody that, you know, that had, that believed in the cause. And somebody that was, had, you know, that we, had some

leadership, because the main thing we really wanted them to do was boil their water.

NOBLE: [01:21:03] Yeah. Yeah.

COX: [01:21:04] You know, if they just would boil their water, so much of it.

NOBLE: [01:21:07] But to understand the whole idea of microbes and so forth is, uh, you almost have to present this as a kind of magic. You boil the water, you'll be healthy.

COX: [01:21:19] So. So then they came in for this month, but for one week before we started any of the technical stuff, we did this whole Paulo Freire dialogue about what is the reality of Honduras.

NOBLE: [01:21:32] Uh huh.

COX: [01:21:33] So that they saw but they, they saw their role then. By the time they, they saw boiling your water as part of the revolution.

NOBLE: [01:21:43] Okay. All right.

COX: [01:21:45] And building latrines. And also, as I mean, the other big thing was empowering women. We had one whole, a couple of days on the role of women in Honduras. And why is it that the saying is *el hombre manda*, the man commands. Why is that, you know? And we would go through this whole dialogue with these series of questions, all programmed out, the dialog to get to, you know, well, is that, you know, is there any reason for that? What is the reason for that? And is that right? And, you know, you never.

NOBLE: [01:22:22] People thinking thoughts that they never dared to think before.

COX: [01:22:24] Exactly.

NOBLE: [01:22:25] Yeah. So what is, to name the problem and then to figure out, you know, who profits from things being as they are.

COX: [01:22:35] Yeah. And the problem always in Honduras, the problem always came down to land. So then the other part of this was these land invasions.

NOBLE: [01:22:48] What do you mean when you say land invasion?

COX: [01:22:50] So these, so they, they. So they had the radio, they had the Celebrations of the Word, the radio schools, the clubs, the housewives clubs, the health promoters. And they had the *ligas campesinas*, which were campesino unions. And that group, what they did was they researched the. All of these people, it was a system of sharecropping.

NOBLE: [01:23:17] Ah.

COX: [01:23:18] So in all these villages, there is a landowner who maybe owned, you know, 1,500 acres of land and everybody else worked. It was sharecropping. It was a system of slavery. It was really a system of slavery. Well, no, not even sharecropping. It was feudal. It was feudalism. So they would, somebody would go in to the capital and get the title to the land. And in many cases, the saying in Honduras was the fence posts walk at night, because in many cases these people didn't own the land that they said they owned at all.

NOBLE: [01:24:01] Oh.

COX: [01:24:01] That their family, it had been in their family for generations. And maybe in the beginning they owned 50 acres and now they owned 150. And some of that land was in the name of the Virgin of Sujatha, or it was national land. And so then these campesino leagues would go and squat on a piece of the land. And they would.

NOBLE: [01:24:26] That they knew was not the property of so-and-so.

COX: [01:24:29] Right. And they would say, this land is ours because we've earned it through sweat equity.

NOBLE: [01:24:36] Ah. And did they succeed?

COX: [01:24:38] Well, the. So, the first. I got there like in July.

NOBLE: [01:24:45] Of '70?

COX: [01:24:46] Of '71. And we probably had our first training in, maybe we had done one course, and that might have been in October. So then maybe in November, um, I think it was around November, they were doing a national *contas*, it was doing a national training of *promotores*. They were going to train women to be these social promoters, not just men, and they were doing it nationally. So they chose a, I don't know, like five women from each of their areas and brought them into Tegucigalpa. And Linda Freed and I, we were working on this in Tegucigalpa when one of these land invasions occurred in this village called La Talanquera, which was about seven kilometers away from where the training. The training center was called the Centro Santa Clara in Juticalpa.

COX: [01:25:45] So there were 25 houses in this village, and everybody in the village went and squatted on seven hectares. That's all they wanted was seven hectares.

NOBLE: [01:25:59] How much is that in acres?

COX: [01:26:02] It's a hectare. It's not as big as an acre.

NOBLE: [01:26:05] Oh, so it's less than seven acres.

COX: [01:26:06] Less than seven acres.

NOBLE: [01:26:08] That's a pretty small piece of land.

COX: [01:26:10] So the first day they were there, the landowner came and told them to get off and they didn't leave. And the second day, he came back with the military and told them to go and they didn't go. And the third day, the military came back and they told the women and children to start running. And they ran into the seven, they ran into the center of Santa

Clara. And they just, and then they tied the. They tied the hands of the men behind their back and told them to start running. And they just started shooting. And they killed, I think they killed about five people. And then the guys who were the leaders of it went into hiding. And I wasn't there because I was in Tegucigalpa.

NOBLE: [01:26:57] Oh. And you had been in the country, though, for a while?

COX: [01:27:00] I had been there since July. And I knew all these people because this was one of the villages where we had done the training.

NOBLE: [01:27:08] Oh, gee.

COX: [01:27:09] And so they, the Peace. There was a Peace Corps volunteer in a town who wasn't at all connected with us. That in the town, if you went on the highway, it was this little town before you got to Juticalpa. He had a, he had a jeep. And there was another Peace Corps volunteer who worked in the town, a guy, who didn't work with Caritas either. But somehow or other they got the jeep and they went out and picked up the bodies and brought them into the center of Santa Clara. And then there was, you know, this big, all this stuff in the paper about this is a communist plot. This is, everything was, everybody was a communist.

NOBLE: [01:27:57] So the press was on the side of the landowners?

COX: [01:27:59] Oh, absolutely.

NOBLE: [01:28:01] It's all in Honduras?

COX: [01:28:04] There is no separation. The military, the press, the politicians, the government, it's all the same.

NOBLE: [01:28:11] And the landowners.

COX: [01:28:12] And the landowners, exactly, they're all the same. So it went on and on, all this. And then there was a march in solidarity from Santa Clara out to La Talanquera, people with signs, which was where the massacre

had happened. Um, then. Then what happened was other aldeas, other villages where there were all these Caritas organizations went and camped on the property with them. So there were hundreds of people there and they had tractors.

NOBLE: [01:28:51] Oh.

COX: [01:28:52] And finally, they gave it to them. They gave them the land.

NOBLE: [01:28:57] That was quite a victory.

COX: [01:28:58] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:28:59] But at the price of five lives.

COX: [01:29:00] At the price of five lives. And it just went on, and it didn't. When I left in, well, it was. Let's see. In seventy. I left in '73. My daughter was born in '74, in the summer of '74. No, in the summer of '75, I was in the Philippines visiting my parents who were there. And Gerry sent me this article about how there had been this massacre, where, at the center of Santa Clara.

NOBLE: [01:29:34] Oh.

COX: [01:29:34] Where they just went in with machine guns and they just mowed people down.

NOBLE: [01:29:37] Oh, oh.

COX: [01:29:37] And they kidnapped and killed this priest that was working with us, buried him alive in a well.

NOBLE: [01:29:44] Oh, my God.

COX: [01:29:45] It's, there's a book called, um, oh gosh, what's the name of it? Oh, it's written by Penny Lernoux, who was a journalist in Latin America. And she was, uh, she wrote about the whole thing of liberation theology in

Central America. And she's got a chapter on Honduras that tells about it. So. It's terrible.

NOBLE: [01:30:15] Awful.

COX: [01:30:16] Really terrible.

NOBLE: [01:30:20] But in your brief time there, two years, you were able to open the eyes of?

COX: [01:30:28] 90 women.

NOBLE: [01:30:29] 90 women who began to see themselves as.

COX: [01:30:32] Who saw themselves as, they saw their lives change.

NOBLE: [01:30:36] Yeah. Yeah.

COX: [01:30:38] It was, it was fabulous. It was just fabulous.

NOBLE: [01:30:43] What an incredible story.

COX: [01:30:45] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:30:46] Meanwhile, so there you are in Juticalpa in Honduras, probably writing blue air letters.

COX: [01:30:56] Every day.

NOBLE: [01:30:57] To Monsignor Cox and receiving them from him too. I have to ask you if he still has those letters that you wrote? And your mom and dad too you would have been writing.

COX: [01:31:11] Yeah, most, I mean, we were writing to each other every day and then we started sending tapes.

NOBLE: [01:31:16] Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

COX: [01:31:17] So I saved all of his. And then he, I finally wrote to him and said, I hope you're saving all this because. And so then he did.

NOBLE: [01:31:26] Instead of a journal, you were writing it in letters.

COX: [01:31:29] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:31:29] That was your, that was documenting, your documentary of what you were doing every day.

COX: [01:31:34] Yeah. Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:31:36] And did he save them?

COX: [01:31:37] He did. And after I told him to, so I have them. I have them. And I was always going to, you know, transcribe. My idea was, I really wanted to write a novel about Honduras because I'm such a reader of novels myself, but it's not really my style. I have taken a couple of creative writing classes, but I can't ever retire to have enough time to do it.

NOBLE: [01:32:01] That's it.

COX: [01:32:02] But if I ever do. Although writing is such a solitary thing, you kind of have to close yourself off.

NOBLE: [01:32:10] But not for, not for 24 hours a day.

COX: [01:32:13] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:32:13] So you wrote, you kept, you were in constant contact with Gerry. And then?

COX: [01:32:20] And then he came to Honduras after I had been there a year. He came that first summer.

NOBLE: [01:32:26] Oh, he did.

COX: [01:32:26] He came out to Juticalpa and met everybody.

NOBLE: [01:32:29] Was he still a priest at that point?

COX: [01:32:31] At that point, after. So he stayed in Santa Rosa for a year after I left. And then he went to Washington, D.C. He, then he decided he was going to leave and he went to Washington, D.C. and some, a friend of his got him a job, which was such a joke, in housing. It was training housing managers of low-income housing projects in Washington, D.C. and he stayed there for two years. No, no, he stayed there, because the first year he was still in Santa Rosa. The second year he was in Washington. And then I got sent by the Peace Corps twice to do stagings. So I got to see him. He came to Honduras, stayed for about five days. And then we traveled in Guatemala.

NOBLE: [01:33:22] Ah.

COX: [01:33:22] And then I came up. The Peace Corps sent me up twice so I could. And then after these stagings, I would see him for a couple of days.

NOBLE: [01:33:33] I'm not ready to leave your Peace Corps time in Honduras yet. I'm wondering if Peace Corps came to visit you out in your remote Juticalpa and did they help in any way?

COX: [01:33:45] Yes, we had the most fabulous health rep.

NOBLE: [01:33:50] Oh, good.

NOBLE: [01:33:51] Ethan. His name is Ethan Van Eck.

NOBLE: [01:33:53] A doctor?

COX: [01:33:54] No. He had a master's in public health planning.

NOBLE: [01:33:58] All right. He talked about the work you were doing. He wasn't there to give you your gamma globulin shot or anything.

COX: [01:34:04] Oh, no, no. No doctors ever came. And I did get deathly ill with parasites.

NOBLE: [01:34:10] Oh, I was going to ask.

COX: [01:34:10] I was so sick. I've never been, well, I have been that sick, but yeah. Then you had to go into Tegucigalpa, the 8 hours on the dirt road and the bus to go to get to a, um, what did they give you for, oh, Flagyl.

NOBLE: [01:34:28] Oh, yeah.

COX: [01:34:33] There really wasn't any way if you were in the campo. And then, well, see, the other part of this job was after these women finished their course, then once a month, they came back for a refresher.

NOBLE: [01:34:45] For a refresher.

COX: [01:34:46] And then we were supposed to go out. We went out to the villages and then we would stay overnight.

NOBLE: [01:34:51] That's when you got sick.

COX: [01:34:52] And that's when you would get sick.

NOBLE: [01:34:54] Yeah, because you took care of your own water and things.

COX: [01:34:56] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:34:56] When you were in charge of your cooking, you were okay.

COX: [01:34:58] You were okay. But as soon as you went out, there was just no way.

NOBLE: [01:35:02] No. And so, um. But then some people did come out to give you some, they could talk to you about the work. Peace Corps would talk to you about the work.

COX: [01:35:14] You know what? I was just thinking about the training, the best training. This was another thing that was so, I mean, people always say, oh, you got more than you received. But what I got was professional. I grew professionally.

NOBLE: [01:35:28] Oh.

COX: [01:35:29] Because these guys at Caritas were so smart.

NOBLE: [01:35:33] Now, these were not Peace Corps guys?

COX: [01:35:34] No.

NOBLE: [01:35:34] They were Caritas guys.

COX: [01:35:35] Caritas. And they were giving me all of these things to read in Spanish from Paulo Freire. So I was becoming an, I became an expert in Paulo Freire.

NOBLE: [01:35:44] Yeah, yeah.

COX: [01:35:44] And then Ethan, he gave us some fabulous training on program planning so that when I went to the School of Public Health and we had to do. Then when I got out of the Peace Corps, I got my master's in public health education at Berkeley. I mean, I was so prepared because he was fabulous and he gave his fantastic training on program planning. How to set goals, you know, goals, objectives, deadlines. Just. I mean, I just grew. I grew. It was a fabulous experience for me, professionally and intellectually challenging. And so he had been and his wife had been Peace Corps volunteers in Malaysia.

NOBLE: [01:36:31] Oh.

COX: [01:36:32] And then when they got out of the Peace Corps, he went to get his master's in public health. And they wanted to go of course, they

wanted to go back to Malaysia, and they sent them to Honduras. And he was the health rep, I guess, because they had this big health program.

NOBLE: [01:36:47] So he was there as staff?

COX: [01:36:48] He was staff, yeah. And we just became, he and his wife. His wife and I are still very close.

NOBLE: [01:36:57] Wonderful.

COX: [01:36:58] Very divorced. But he liked me and I loved him. And so I would always stay with him when I went in. Well, I would stay with Linda or with them. And he came out a lot. And well, after that massacre happened, you know, he. I mean, it's a miracle they let, they let me stay out there really.

NOBLE: [01:37:19] Well, how was it? It seems. How was it that you found yourself in Tegucigalpa when the massacre was happening?

COX: [01:37:27] Because I was going, I had gone in to do this Caritas national training for *promotores sociales*.

NOBLE: [01:37:35] So you were in the capital city for further training?

COX: [01:37:38] No, I was training them.

NOBLE: [01:37:40] Oh, oh.

COX: [01:37:41] I was, so the, so besides the *promotores de salud* that they were doing in the village. They were, villages. They were doing a national program of training women all over the country to become *promotores sociales* like these men were.

NOBLE: [01:37:56] Yeah.

COX: [01:37:57] And so this was the first training course, and Linda Freed and I were giving it.

NOBLE: [01:38:02] I see.

COX: [01:38:04] Along with other people.

NOBLE: [01:38:05] Right.

COX: [01:38:05] We were part of the crew.

NOBLE: [01:38:06] This is like maybe in your second year or something?

COX: [01:38:08] No, this was, this was in like November.

NOBLE: [01:38:10] Oh, oh.

COX: [01:38:12] I mean, we were like.

NOBLE: [01:38:13] Yeah, wow.

COX: [01:38:14] I mean, you hear, I hear about these volunteers who say, well, I really didn't do anything, you know.

NOBLE: [01:38:19] You did a whole lot.

COX: [01:38:20] I couldn't figure out what to do. I mean, these guys knew what they wanted us to do.

NOBLE: [01:38:24] Yeah.

COX: [01:38:24] So we were so lucky.

NOBLE: [01:38:26] That you fell into a organized program.

COX: [01:38:29] Yeah. And so. So when it happened, we were. The guy who was my boss, who was the Centro Santa Clara director, he was in there too. So we went back and then Ethan came out and he was like, you know, are you safe? And then by that point, we all, he and I really knew what was, I mean, they were, they were, they were doing revolution.

NOBLE: [01:38:56] Yeah.

COX: [01:38:58] It was revolution. And I was part of it as a Peace Corps, which we weren't supposed to do. But he let me stay.

NOBLE: [01:39:05] Well, that whole program of Caritas was a revolutionary thing of.

COX: [01:39:09] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:39:09] Of poor peasant people realizing that they were intelligent human beings.

COX: [01:39:14] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:39:14] Of equal worth. And that's a revolutionary idea.

COX: [01:39:17] Exactly. So. So, I mean, that was really the only time that I was there. Although once I was there, another thing they were doing was organizing co-ops, little co-op stores. And I was at this village at night with these guys, these social promoters and my boss, and we were having this meeting about the co-op and somebody came with and shot a gun into the room where we were meeting.

NOBLE: [01:39:48] My God.

COX: [01:39:49] And we, there was no electricity in these villages. We had these lanterns. So they, you know, the lantern went out and everybody, you know, they were like, fall on the floor. But that was just a single crackpot guy. That wasn't like the military coming in, which happened later after I left.

NOBLE: [01:40:07] Yeah.

COX: [01:40:10] So yeah. So I got a lot of support from Ethan and a lot of professional training from him.

NOBLE: [01:40:21] So you stayed for a full two years. Did your role there change in any way as time went on into the second year?

COX: [01:40:30] Well, the last, the end, then I was asked by Peace Corps to go to Costa Rica for three months to train that this new group that was coming in.

NOBLE: [01:40:40] To prepare them.

COX: [01:40:41] Right. And in the meantime, when Gerry had come to visit, he had met the director of Peace Corps, who was this guy.

NOBLE: [01:40:50] The director of Peace Corps Honduras?

COX: [01:40:52] Honduras.

NOBLE: [01:40:52] Country director.

COX: [01:40:53] The country director who, this was in the, this was in the Nixon era. He was a Nixon appointee. And he was this rancher, Republican rancher from New Mexico, who had like these turquoise belts and stuff.

NOBLE: [01:41:10] I can see him with a big hat on.

COX: [01:41:12] And he really liked Gerry, really liked him. And so, so he had. What had happened was, Peace Corps was going to open up their own training in country. And they asked me if I would stay and be part of the training. And this guy had offered Gerry the position of the education rep because the education rep had been moved to the Dominican Republic. So when I, so when I. So the last three months I was there, I went to Bosico, which was this training center in Guanacaste in Costa Rica. And then I left, I came back to Honduras and helped take these people I had trained to their villages. And came home and we were going to get married and then we were going to go back to Honduras. And I didn't even bring anything home. I left my stuff down there.

NOBLE: [01:42:12] Because you were going to go back.

COX: [01:42:13] I was going to go back. And then what happened was Peace Corps Washington. So the Peace Corps director had, you know, this was a three year contract. The rep positions were for three years. Peace Corps Washington wouldn't approve the contract for three years. They would only approve it to finish out the term of the guy who had left, which was one year. And Gerry was like, I'm not going to go down there for one year.

NOBLE: [01:42:42] For one year, huh.

COX: [01:42:42] And probably it was for the best. You know, it's hard to. Probably better for us to start our life in a new place for both of us than for him to try to.

NOBLE: [01:42:54] Come into your world.

COX: [01:42:55] Yeah. But I was devastated. I was like, how do you go on with your life? How do you just walk out of this? You know, you walk out of this reality of these people whose lives are so, uh, oppressed. And you just go back to your comfortable life? So I was, you know, for a year, I was like just so.

NOBLE: [01:43:23] Now this is the year after you left?

COX: [01:43:25] When I came back, yeah.

NOBLE: [01:43:26] Where did you go when you came back?

COX: [01:43:28] We came back to the Bay Area.

NOBLE: [01:43:30] And you're married?

COX: [01:43:31] We got married in Spokane at my parents' house in August.

NOBLE: [01:43:36] Oh, how nice.

COX: [01:43:37] And then we came down.

NOBLE: [01:43:39] And that was how long after leaving Honduras?

COX: [01:43:42] I left in July. My sister. My sister came down and we had, we took the bus. We were going to take the bus all the way to LA. We got to Mexico City and my sister.

NOBLE: [01:43:55] You mean coming up from Honduras?

COX: [01:43:57] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:43:57] And you're together with?

COX: [01:44:00] My sister.

NOBLE: [01:44:00] Your sister? Not Jerry at this point?

COX: [01:44:01] No. Jerry was in Washington, D.C.

NOBLE: [01:44:04] Okay.

COX: [01:44:04] He was finishing his job in Washington, D.C. And some sister had a boyfriend in Washington, D.C. She came to Honduras, spent a couple of weeks, and then we took the bus.

NOBLE: [01:44:17] Okay. So you're going up through.

COX: [01:44:19] We came through Guatemala.

NOBLE: [01:44:20] El Salvador, Guatemala.

COX: [01:44:22] Right. We spent.

NOBLE: [01:44:23] Up through Mexico.

COX: [01:44:24] And then we were going to go to LA and take the bus, I mean, and then fly from LA to Washington, D.C.

NOBLE: [01:44:31] Yeah.

COX: [01:44:32] But we got to, as far as Mexico City and my sister was as sick as a dog. She'd gotten sick in El Salvador and everything in Mexico was so much more expensive than it had been in the Central America, even though it was much cheaper than the U.S.

NOBLE: [01:44:47] Yeah, but still. And you're on a Peace Corps living?

COX: [01:44:52] Right.

NOBLE: [01:44:52] You don't have much.

COX: [01:44:53] My sister had just finished her master's degree. She didn't have any money. So we got to Mexico City and she was so sick and we had a hotel, you know, from The Lonely Planet or something that we thought we were going to stay in and we couldn't get into it. And this taxi driver said, oh, I know a good hotel that I'll take you to. And it turned out to be a brothel.

NOBLE: [01:45:19] Oh, yeah.

COX: [01:45:20] It was a brand new hotel. Brand new. But, you know, it was obviously a house of prostitution. People were. And we were just like, oh, let's go home. So then we flew to Washington, D.C.

NOBLE: [01:45:32] Yeah.

COX: [01:45:33] And then I spent.

NOBLE: [01:45:34] To Washington?

COX: [01:45:35] Because that's where her, that's where Gerry was.

NOBLE: [01:45:37] That's right. And that's where her boyfriend was.

COX: [01:45:39] Her boyfriend was, yeah. So then I stayed in Washington. That was in, that was like I think early July, maybe mid-July. And we got married.

NOBLE: [01:45:51] Of '73?

COX: [01:45:52] Of '73, and then we, I stayed there and then went home. We got married on August 25th, so I must have stayed there about a month. And then went home and we got married in Spokane and then we came down to the Bay Area to look for jobs.

NOBLE: [01:46:06] Yeah. And then you have the rest of your life, which won't fit into this particular interview about your Peace Corps. But thinking back on Peace Corps, um, it certainly seems as though those, the experience you had in Honduras would have pointed you in a somewhat of a new direction.

COX: [01:46:32] Absolutely. I had never thought about health as a career.

NOBLE: [01:46:35] Yeah.

COX: [01:46:36] Then I, and then I found this program at Berkeley with public health education, which was exactly what I had been doing.

NOBLE: [01:46:42] Yeah.

COX: [01:46:43] So I got my master's there and worked in public health, first for the San Francisco Public Health Department and had some interesting jobs there for about eight years. And then we, um, one of which was at the time that the Southeast Asian refugees were coming in. So I had a really interesting job, which I didn't keep very long because, because I had babies and it was just too hard to work and do everything and commute. But it was a great job, very, where we were essentially, I was working with a public health nurse and we were taking people from the Vietnamese,

Hmong, and Cambodian populations and they were going to be health outreach workers in their refugee communities.

NOBLE: [01:47:37] Wonderful, wonderful.

COX: [01:47:39] And then we moved to Anderson Valley, which is a tiny, rural, isolated community. At the time that we moved there, there were very few Mexican farm workers. There were some. And I got a job as the health educator at this rural public health clinic where I worked for eight years, and then I just got bored with it. In the meantime, the valley just exploded with vineyards and Mexican farmworkers. So I, you know, had this whole new life with Mexicans.

NOBLE: [01:48:14] And Spanish was ever so much better having been.

COX: [01:48:16] My Spanish. Yeah. And by then I was. And then I, when I got bored with public health education, I decided to get a teaching credential and have been teaching Spanish. I started out doing Spanish and ESL and then pretty much just doing Spanish.

NOBLE: [01:48:33] And that's what you're doing now?

COX: [01:48:35] Well, now I'm supposed to be retired. I retired from the high, well and also for four years we went to Hong Kong and I taught at an international school in Hong Kong.

NOBLE: [01:48:44] Oh, wow.

COX: [01:48:45] Which is very totally the antithesis of everything else I've ever done in my life. I mean, Hong Kong is so different. And it was with very wealthy, very privileged kids, but it was pretty fun for four years. And then we came back and so I retired five years ago and then I taught part time at the community college in Ukiah teaching Spanish. And then we went to Mexico to live for a year. And when I came back, I, um, I won't go into all the details, but what I'm doing right now is I'm teaching one class at the high school where kids are getting, it's through the college and kids are getting college credit. I've been doing that for two years, but I really want

to be through with the high school. And just last year I started teaching adult ESL.

NOBLE: [01:49:42] Oh, that's a joy.

COX: [01:49:43] That's so fun.

NOBLE: [01:49:44] Yes.

COX: [01:49:44] So now I have two classes of adult ESL.

NOBLE: [01:49:47] Wonderful.

COX: [01:49:48] Which I would like to continue doing and not do the high school anymore.

NOBLE: [01:49:52] Sure. Sure, yeah.

COX: [01:49:53] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:49:54] Any further thoughts about Peace Corps?

COX: [01:49:57] Well, the thing I think about in general. I think what the Peace Corps did for me, besides this professional, setting me on a direction professionally, was that I really is. I really think, and I tell this to kids all the time, you can't know yourself until you have lived outside your own culture. I mean, I really believe that. I, I, everything I look at, I look at differently because of that experience. My whole life was radically changed by that, by living outside my culture.

NOBLE: [01:50:34] Yeah.

COX: [01:50:35] Because you never know how your culture forms you until you live outside it. So you have no choice. You have no control over it. You have no power over it. You just are who your culture and your family make you. I mean, shape you, not make you, shape you. But when you live outside your culture, all of a sudden you realize that, oh. I always tell

people, I remember waking up one day when the honeymoon was over and saying to myself, I am completely different than these people in every way. Which of course I wasn't.

NOBLE: [01:51:11] Peace Corps talks about culture shock. And that moment there two or three months into being there.

COX: [01:51:17] Yeah.

NOBLE: [01:51:17] Your eyes open up and you're thinking, whoa.

COX: [01:51:19] Oh my God. I was like, my concept of time is different. My concept of what it means to be a human, even what it means to be a human being. And my control over my destiny is different. Certainly my concept of what it means to be a woman is different. Then when you've had that experience, you can pick and choose what you want to be. And I tell people, and I've never been on time since.

NOBLE: [01:51:50] Ah! Thank you, Kathleen. This has been a real treasure listening to your story.

COX: [01:51:57] Well, it's a treasure to talk about it because, you know, you don't talk about it too much.

NOBLE: [01:52:03] No.

COX: [01:52:03] I used to when, during the civil war in El Salvador and when we were giving all that money to El Salvador. I used to, I was part of this solidarity group, and I used to go around and give talks, mostly in churches. And I went back to. In 1980, I went to visit these, with this group to visit, stay in these camps, refugee camps for Salvadorans and Guatemalans that were in Honduras. And after that, then I would go around to these churches and talk about it. And, you know, we put on some forums to try to, you know, bring pressure to not be supporting the government of El Salvador. But since that time, you know, not too many people are interested in it.

NOBLE: [01:52:54] Yeah.

COX: [01:52:55] So it's very fun to talk about it with people who had a similar experience.

NOBLE: [01:53:02] Thank you.

COX: [01:53:03] You're welcome. Thank you for being so persistent, and I'm glad we could finally make it work.

NOBLE: [01:53:08] Me too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]