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Entrevistadora: Dennise Álvarez

¿Cuáles fueron sus emociones mientras estaba en la balsa?

Las emociones son un poquito difíciles de explicar porque prácticamente uno no sabía lo que estaba haciendo hasta que te das cuenta de que puedes morir. Eso fue lo que pensé, al principio estaba bien emocionado de que nos íbamos, pero una vez que nos dimos cuenta de lo que estábamos haciendo, uno se da cuenta que es de vida o muerte. Es una mezcla de emociones. Vimos el peligro pero decidimos seguir adelante hasta llegar donde llegáramos.

¿En la balsa, ¿sentiste algún remordimiento?

En realidad no sentí ningún remordimiento, era más como modo de supervivencia. Había que seguir para adelante. No había tiempo para pensar en lo que dejaste atrás, ni para dónde ibas. Era prácticamente sobrevivir, pasara lo que pasara. Una de las cosas que me afectó mucho fue que uno de los muchachos que venía conmigo murió en el viaje. Pero bueno, pudimos tenerlo con nosotros y lo trajimos aquí a los Estados Unidos y le dimos un entierro adecuado.

¿Cómo te sentiste cuando llegaste a tierra en los Estados Unidos?

Cuando llegué a los Estados Unidos me sentí bien contento, por supuesto al principio. A nosotros nos recogió el Coast Guard, diecisiete millas de Cayo Hueso. Estaba bien contento *but in the meantime I was pretty mad because when we first got here, they treated us like political prisoners, like refugees from a communist country. It was very confusing* porque de la forma en que la Guardia Costera trabaja; me recogieron, me dieron comida, me pusieron un traje de prisionero y me llevaron a la prisión. Me hicieron interrogaciones para asegurarse que no era infiltrado del gobierno cubano. Me sentí un poco raro hasta quería irme a Cuba de nuevo y se lo dije a las autoridades porque me pusieron esposas y yo no era criminal. *I didn't understand the system* cuando llegué.

Interviewer: Dennise Álvarez

What were your emotions while on the raft?

Those emotions are a bit difficult to explain because you practically didn't know what you were doing until you realize that you can die. That was what I thought, at first I was very excited that we were leaving, but once we realized what we were doing, one realizes that it is a life and death situation. It is a mixture of emotions. We saw the danger but decided to keep going until we arrived.

On the raft, did you feel any remorse?

Actually, I did not feel any remorse, it was more like survival mode. We had to keep going forward. There was no time to think about what you left behind, or where you were going. It was practically survival, whatever happened. One of the things that affected me a lot was that one of the guys that came with me died on the trip. At least, we could have him with us, we brought him here to the United States and we gave him a proper burial.

How did you feel when you arrived to the land of the United States?

When I first arrived in the United States I was very happy. We were picked up by the Coast Guard, seventeen miles from Key West. I was happy but in the meantime I was pretty mad because when we first got here, they treated us like political prisoners, like refugees from a communist country. It was very confusing because of the way that the Coast Guard worked; they picked me up, they gave me food, they put me in a prisoner's outfit and they took me to the prison. They asked me questions to make sure I was not infiltrate of the Cuban government. I felt a bit strange like I even wanted to go back to Cuba again, and I told this to the authorities because they put handcuffs on me and I was not a criminal. I didn't understand the system when I arrived.

