

[00:00:00] **Rosa Linda Román:** Hello and welcome to New Mexi-Castaways, the enchanting podcast following my family's adventures from living in New Mexico to living on a sailing catamaran, and now currently living in Austin, Texas and I actually have in between living kind of as full-time traveling.

[00:00:51] So, I'm Rosa Linda Román, if you're new to my channel. And generally, my podcast is affectionately referred to as Rosa Linda's Ramblings because it's really just where I work out a lot of things that I'm processing in my life as the mom of three and wife of my husband, Nathan, and a fur baby mom of Nala. And this is basically where I kind of work out our process as a traveling family. As a family that lived on the sailing catamaran, the Dawn Treader.

[00:01:18] But today is going to be something different and a treat, I think. And that's, I had a captive audience just a minute ago where I was driving my daughter, Ahava, who is 14 to a American Red Cross CPR class that she signed up for on her own. She's been wanting to take partially because she wants to start doing some babysitting and wants to have those skills, and partially because she just is interested in the medical field in general, and so she wants to have those skills.

[00:01:52] So, I decided, I brought my little Zoom handy, 4H, something like that, recorder. And I was just going to kind of document where we are in our lives and just kind of talk with her just for the sake of recording because if you guys know me at all, you know I record everything and to great an annoyance of my family, but I do record a lot of things and so I was like, "Oh, let me just record where we are because there's a lot going on in our lives in general and her life specifically."

[00:02:21] And so I just turned on the recorder and started talking with her. Well, because she grew up with me recording, and especially, while we were living on the sailing catamaran, I recorded a lot of audio podcasts, a lot of audio sound, and she's very comfortable. And so, she just took it away and she started sharing her story a little bit.

[00:02:39] And I think it is New Mexi-Castaways worthy, an episode you guys have heard a lot about them from me, and I know you've heard them from time to time on this podcast, but this is mostly going to be an episode where Ahava shares what she's going through here in Austin, Texas, no longer living on the boat. She is a competitive gymnast. You need to know that for the purposes of understanding why it is so, you know, the significance of what she's talking about. She's been competitive gymnast for years. It's a big part of what has kind of shaped our decisions as a family on where we're going to be and what we're going to do. A big part of why we are here in Texas is because she really likes the gym that she has been training at.

[00:03:24] And so, now that she just had a terrible injury, which she's going to talk about and you can listen to, now, she has some big choices to have to make. And it's probably too soon to make those decisions, but I thought you might find it interesting to kind of listen to the process. So, without further ado, here is an interview with 14-year-old Ahava.

[00:03:51] All right. I'm in the car with, who Am I here with?

[00:03:53] **Ahava:** Ahava.

[00:03:54] **Rosa Linda Román:** And where are we heading?

[00:03:55] **Ahava:** To a American Red Cross course. It's a CPR, AED, and adult and pediatric first aid course.

[00:04:04] **Rosa Linda Román:** Awesome. Why are you taking that course?

[00:04:06] **Ahava:** Well, I want to start babysitting and also, it'll be good just to know those things, so, yeah.

[00:04:10] **Rosa Linda Román:** Are you excited about the class?

[00:04:11] **Ahava:** Yes, I'm excited, but also nervous.

[00:04:15] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah. We're not sure if there's like an age requirement or anything liked that, right?

[00:04:19] **Ahava:** I looked a lot and I didn't see anything. And also, I'm on crutches right now because I just had knee surgery, like I can walk without them, but right now they're kind of like a safety thing maybe. So, I don't know like how much they'll let me do if they think I can't walk or something like that. But I can walk without them now.

[00:04:37] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, so your leg is in a brace.

[00:04:40] **Ahava:** My whole leg is in a brace, yes.

[00:04:42] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, tell me about why and what kind of, take us back why you had surgery.

[00:04:47] **Ahava:** So, about two months ago, it was four days before my first actual competition in Austin, Texas. And my last turn, on our last event of the day, it was bars. And so, we have two coaches, right? One of them is the main coach for like each take events, but only, like one coach usually goes to meets. So, the coach that usually takes bars wasn't going to be the one going to the meet. And sometimes I needed a spot on the dismount called a flyaway.

[00:05:20] And so she was going to try like spotting me just to practice. And then for the first time, like, just practice for the meet. And I did the flyaway and I badly, it hurt a lot. I felt a pop, and I just knew it wasn't right. I never cry at gym. Like, a bunch of other people, it's not saying that there's something wrong with that, I just never cry at gym. But this was the first time I ever cried at gym.

[00:05:48] **Rosa Linda Román:** And you've been there solidly since August.

[00:05:51] **Ahava:** Yeah.

[00:05:52] **Rosa Linda Román:** And two other months before that.

[00:05:55] **Ahava:** And it's March right now, so...

[00:05:57] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah. Were they shocked to see you crying?

[00:05:58] **Ahava:** Yeah. And it was just not good. So, my dad came and picked me up and then two days later we got MRI and then on my birthday, which was that Monday, the day after I was supposed to compete, I found out that I would have to get surgery because I completely tore my ACL. And-

[00:06:17] **Rosa Linda Román:** It was your 14th birthday?

[00:06:18] **Ahava:** Yeah, my golden birthday. And I found out that I was going to get surgery and that my whole competition season was shot.

[00:06:25] **Rosa Linda Román:** Before it even started.

[00:06:26] **Ahava:** Yeah.

[00:06:27] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, it was such a bummer.

[00:06:28] **Ahava:** Yeah. Anyway, that's the story behind... so it was like two months ago that I got the surgery because after I found-

[00:06:34] **Rosa Linda Román:** Two months ago that you got injured.

[00:06:36] **Ahava:** Two months that I got injured, one month ago that I got the surgery. And I've been doing physical therapy twice a week and-

[00:06:43] **Rosa Linda Román:** And how's that? What does physical therapy mean? Well, first of all, the surgery went well, right?

[00:06:48] **Ahava:** Yeah. They didn't know whether I had a, like torn meniscus or not would've changed it. So, my teammate, about a month before, or a month and a half, had a similar injury except hers was worse. So, like she tore her ACL, which these are all like ligaments or just stuff in your knee.

[00:06:43] **Rosa Linda Román:** In her [indiscernible 00:07:08] of your knee.

[00:07:09] **Ahava:** So, she tore her ACL and partially tore her MCL and she tore her meniscus where I just tore my ACL and I like pulled my MCL and they didn't know whether I tore my meniscus or not because they couldn't tell from the MRI. But luckily it turns out

that wasn't torn because if it had been torn because then you're not allowed to bear weight for like six weeks versus it's like one week if it's just the ACL.

[00:07:33] **Rosa Linda Román:** What happened to your teammate versus what happened for you?

[00:07:37] **Ahava:** Yes.

[00:07:38] **Rosa Linda Román:** Wow, and so then after the surgery... during the surgery they figured out you didn't tear your meniscus and they repaired the ACL.

[00:07:46] **Ahava:** Yeah, they used a hamstring graft.

[00:07:50] **Rosa Linda Román:** Which...

[00:07:50] **Ahava:** Because your ACL won't repair itself, but your hamstring will like regenerate. So, they took a little piece of my hamstring, and then they kind of made it into my new ACL.

[00:08:02] **Rosa Linda Román:** Which is wild that they can do that.

[00:08:04] **Ahava:** Yeah.

[00:08:04] **Rosa Linda Román:** So then, after that, you started PT, that's physical therapy.

[00:08:07] **Ahava:** Yeah, two days later after the surgery I started physical therapy. I really like my physical therapist.

[00:08:12] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, he's really good.

[00:08:14] **Ahava:** But it's getting harder and more painful. I mean, we work on a bunch of different stuff like strengthening it, and bending it, and straightening it because I think it was six weeks if you don't have the full range of motion, it'll be like you might never get it back, or it'll just be so hard to get that full range of motion back if you don't have it by that six-week mark and right now I'm getting to like 134 degrees.

[00:08:36] **Rosa Linda Román:** And what is the goal?

[00:08:40] **Ahava:** I don't know, 157 maybe. They just measured how far my other knee, like the normal knee could bend and straighten. And then, those were the goals. So, like, straight for most people is normally zero, but I can go to negative six.

[00:08:36] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, they're just trying to make sure that the-

[00:08:40] **Ahava:** Like, that it's even.

[00:08:57] **Rosa Linda Román:** Repaired knee matches the other knee.

[00:08:59] **Ahava:** Yeah.

[00:08:59] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, it's going well.

[00:09:01] **Ahava:** It's painful.

[00:09:02] **Rosa Linda Román:** Oh, in the beginning, you had to take some serious pain meds. You've weaned yourself off that pretty much.

[00:09:07] **Ahava:** Yeah, that was just pain from the surgery and stuff like that. The first week and a half was really bad, but it got better, and then...

[00:09:14] **Rosa Linda Román:** Okay, so now what are you thinking? Because now... it's not just a couple of weeks of-

[00:09:18] **Ahava:** Yeah, it's like six to eight months before I can, like where I'm allowed to get back to doing what I was doing. And so, I was a level six, which there's a whole different story behind that, but-

[00:09:30] **Rosa Linda Román:** What is the story?

[00:09:31] **Ahava:** No, I'll say that a different time.

[00:09:32] **Rosa Linda Román:** You don't have to tell the whole, but basically, part of it is you were living on a boat. And so, you didn't train during that time as much as you would like to have, right?

[00:09:43] **Ahava:** Yeah, anyway-

[00:09:43] **Rosa Linda Román:** But you'll talk about that another time. Go ahead.

[00:09:47] **Ahava:** I don't even remember what I was going to say.

[00:09:49] **Rosa Linda Román:** No, no, no, don't do that. I'm sorry I made you mad so...

[00:09:56] Okay, hang on a second. Let me pause right here. And as you can hear, all of a sudden Ahava stopped talking and got into a little bit, not really an argument, but she decided she didn't want to talk about what I asked about, and she has that right and prerogative. And part of the challenge of being a broadcast-minded mommy is knowing when to stop and when to push. And really, as a reporter in general, even if she wasn't my kid, you know, trying not to kill the interview and being aware of the moments where you need to back off. So, I just kind of regrouped, paused, shifted, and got her back to talking again. So, that's what you just heard. It was a little awkwardness between us and I was really worried because I'm going to be totally honest, having a teenager is completely new territory to me.

[00:10:46] Ahava is our first, and I've never experienced what it's like to go from basically being the center of her world to, you know, being able to annoy her in 0.5 seconds flat or less. And just really what that process has been like. It's new to all of us and it's new to her, so even I'm sure she wouldn't be aware of the moment when to expect the conflict, but you know, I try to roll with it.

[00:11:12] I definitely take things too personally sometimes because I am very much involved with my kids and I'm a full-time mom. And so, yeah, it's been a journey where we are learning together how to navigate communication in a whole new way and since I'm all about communication, it is not easy for me. It's not, I'm sure, easy for them, but this was a perfect example of where it wasn't going to go where we wanted it to go, and if I pushed I knew we were about to get into a fight, or it would just ruin that moment. So, I eased back. I pulled back and pivoted to quote Jenny Blake, one of the podcasts I really enjoy listening to, I saw that I needed to pivot.

[00:11:49] And I pivoted in the interview with Ahava. So, now, let's continue, because gratefully, she did not get upset, and she shifted, and we continued for another good part of the conversation. So, here's that part.

[00:12:12] **Ahava:** I don't know whether I want to go back or not because it's a lot of work. Gymnastics is not like a sport like softball or something where you could just take a bunch of time off and then you'll still be able to play. If you take a bunch of time off in gymnastics, you're going to lose your skill. And this time off, I guess it's unavoidable. I think some of my teammates are even competing right now.

[00:12:36] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, I think you're right.

[00:12:37] **Ahava:** And I don't know, it's a lot of work to get back to where I was and then, my goal, I don't know is or was collegiate level gymnastic. So, to get where I would need to be for that, I would have to move up two levels from where I am now in addition to like getting back to where I was, then I would have to work two levels up.

[00:12:55] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, do you feel like you're not sure if you can or you're not sure if you want to? Yeah, what are your coaches saying?

[00:13:01] **Ahava:** I mean, they think I can do it, but I just don't know. And we don't even know where we're going to be living within the next few months and...

[00:13:08] **Rosa Linda Román:** Well, there is that, but that's kind of always a thing.

[00:13:09] **Ahava:** Yeah, we never know where we're going to be. It's just crazy and...

[00:13:16] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, if you did work back to it, it would be next season, so basically, a year from now that you would start competing again?

[00:13:24] **Ahava:** Yes, and I would compete as a level eight.

[00:13:26] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, that's a top work.

[00:13:28] **Ahava:** And in Texas, like, the standards are a lot higher than in, say like New Mexico or Florida and it's a lot different.

[00:13:35] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah.

[00:13:36] **Ahava:** They have much higher standard and much more competition, I guess.

[00:13:35] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah and the thing that strikes me about Texas is you are not just competing in Austin. Most of your teammates are competing all over the state, right?

[00:13:47] **Ahava:** Well, that's the way it was in New Mexico.

[00:13:49] **Rosa Linda Román:** Maybe at the higher levels, yeah.

[00:13:51] **Ahava:** No, they're not just competing all over the state, like the regionals and national. They'll compete out of state too.

[00:13:58] **Rosa Linda Román:** So, anyway, the question is whether you want to do it, and if you do it-

[00:14:02] **Ahava:** Yeah, I talked to the physical therapist about that and he said that he thinks it's too early to decide. Like, for example, say you talk to a mom that has like just given birth or something and ask her when she's going to have her next kid, she's not going to...

[00:14:18] **Rosa Linda Román:** They'd punch you.

[00:14:20] **Ahava:** Yeah, she's not going to want to decide that right after she like just went through the trauma of having the first kid.

[00:14:25] **Rosa Linda Román:** That's a really good analogy. Yeah, that's exactly right. You can't tell. Like, honestly, you're not in a place where you can even think about it yet, yeah. But you feel like you need to think about it, right?

[00:14:34] **Ahava:** Yeah.

[00:14:36] **Rosa Linda Román:** Mixed feeling.

[00:14:37] **Ahava:** Anyway.

[00:14:37] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah. Well thanks for sharing that. And the other question that you brought up is we don't know where we're going to move or if we're going to stay here. Do you have a preference?

[00:14:46] **Ahava:** I don't know.

[00:14:48] **Rosa Linda Román:** What would be the argument for staying here?

[00:14:49] **Ahava:** I really like Texas and we found like a really good neighborhood. I mean, most of us have friends here.

[00:14:58] **Rosa Linda Román:** But Ziva because she doesn't want to be here.

[00:15:00] **Ahava:** Ziva doesn't want be here, so she refuses to like try and make friends or like it in any way. But all the rest of our family has friends here and it's much easier for people to come and visit us. Like, for example, just my aunt just came in and she works at United. So, she just out of the blue decided like that same day. So, she got off of work at noon. So, she caught a 12:45 flight to come and see us and she's here right now.

[00:15:28] **Rosa Linda Román:** And that's because there are more flights to Austin from Chicago. Trying to get to Albuquerque would is very difficult.

[00:15:35] **Ahava:** Yeah and we didn't even live in Albuquerque.

[00:15:36] **Rosa Linda Román:** Right.

[00:15:38] **Ahava:** So...

[00:15:39] **Rosa Linda Román:** Well, and then we just came from New Mexico. How was that for you? Did that make you think you might want to move back there in any way? Because you did see a friend of yours.

[00:15:48] **Ahava:** Yeah, it was really pretty there. But I don't miss it. It's not that I don't like it, it's just the schools and the sports aren't as good. So, here with my teammates, I'm like, we're really close and like we always go out and randomly just do something.

[00:16:06] **Rosa Linda Román:** Like, go to San Antonio.

[00:16:08] **Ahava:** To Six Flags, or go to a movie, or just random stuff, or go wander around IKEA.

[00:16:13] **Rosa Linda Román:** That's great.

[00:16:13] **Ahava:** Yeah, but I could never do that in New Mexico because here everyone, like you can easily drive. And if my parents can't drive me, then they could pick me up. But in New Mexico, we're like 45 minutes from Albuquerque depending on the traffic.

[00:16:27] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, your teammates would not be living near you if you did.

[00:16:19] **Ahava:** Yeah, they wouldn't be living near me. And even if, like we couldn't just go out and go somewhere because everything is so spread out. You know what I mean?

[00:16:37] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah. I had not thought about that actually.

[00:16:39] **Ahava:** And you couldn't just go across-

[00:16:41] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, that I know about.

[00:16:42] **Ahava:** And talk to your neighbors about that, because she had a girl's night out with our neighbors. We live in a cul-de-sac and everyone's really nice there. And she had like a lady's night out with them and had a really good time. But you couldn't really just go sit out in the middle of the cul-de-sac because a lot of the time, like, we have a fire pit that we like to take out and you can do that in New Mexico.

[00:17:04] **Rosa Linda Román:** Unless I want to hang out with the coyotes or the mountain lions, but not a lot of girlfriend times. And I did have great girlfriends there.

[00:17:10] **Ahava:** I mean, I do wish it snowed here a lot so that it wasn't gross snow.

[00:17:17] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, I know.

[00:17:18] **Ahava:** But mommy doesn't feel that way.

[00:17:18] **Rosa Linda Román:** Not at all.

[00:17:20] **Ahava:** But anyway, so those are my thoughts.

[00:17:22] **Rosa Linda Román:** Is there anything that would make you want to move back there?

[00:17:25] **Ahava:** It'd be cool to design, so we're thinking of building a new house because we have like a bunch of land in the mountains outside of Albuquerque in [indiscernible 00:17:32]. And it'd be cool to design a house the way we wanted.

[00:17:37] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, well it's a lot to consider.

[00:17:38] **Ahava:** There's plenty of other options too, but we can talk about that later.

[00:17:42] **Rosa Linda Román:** Like Tucson is an option?

[00:17:43] **Ahava:** Yeah, moving to Tucson, traveling.

[00:17:46] **Rosa Linda Román:** No house at all and travel the world.

[00:17:53] **Ahava:** Mm-hmm (affirmative), that's another [00:17:49] for me. Yeah, we just don't know, there's so many things to think about and unknown, and yeah, just people's opinions, and hopes, and dreams, and stuff like that. I mean, I do like that in our family we actually consider that and we don't just like... the parents don't just make a decision. I mean, they obviously get final say, but they take into account that's done.

[00:18:11] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yeah, because, you know, it affects you guys just as much as it affects us or maybe more so because you're the ones that are, you know, at school, A. And the other factor that we didn't talk about is you're talking about going to homeschool currently in about-

[00:18:22] **Ahava:** Yeah, I want to go to like a regular, I guess, public high school school-

[00:18:29] **Rosa Linda Román:** Brick and mortar...

[00:18:30] **Ahava:** Because I like, since I didn't go to a public middle school, I don't want to go straight from just being homeschooled to a college kind of setting. I'm going to, we should wrap this up because we're almost there.

[00:18:44] **Rosa Linda Román:** Yes, sure, sure.

[00:18:45] **Ahava:** So, awesome, thank you.

[00:18:50] **Rosa Linda Román:** Well, there you have it, an episode of Ahava's thoughts. And she's such a cool kid, isn't she? She's really very thoughtful, well spoken. Yes, I know, I'm biased, but it's fun for me to listen to her process the things out loud the way that we've all been processing these things as a family. I think she appreciates our family's, you know, quirks, and obviously, she's feeling some frustration, something we didn't really get into too much, but part of why she's struggling right now is that her friends are all relating to gymnastics. Her teammates, as she talked about, they go do things, they have a lot of fun. She doesn't see them five hours, I mean, five and a half hours, five days a week like she was when she was training.

[00:19:32] And so, that's part of the healing process and feeling like, you know, it's been hard because she homeschools, meaning she does an online school and then she doesn't see her teammates. So, it's been a lonely time since she injured herself, and we've done what we can to kind of help her connect with her friends. But I know she misses them terribly.

[00:19:52] Gratefully, they're super sweet girls. They were coming over twice a week. I think we need to rekindle that. They're busy with competitions this weekend, but I'll make a priority to get them together again. And yeah, trying to figure out where she's going to go to high school.

[00:20:04] The school's here where we live in Round Rock are exceptional, by all accounts. Everybody who goes to these schools speaks so highly of them, and everyone who, you know, just like on all the metrics or whatever they measure very highly and they're very well

regarded, but that's not everything, obviously, for Ziva, and she kind of alluded to that, Ahava talked a little bit about that, about Ziva and her not wanting to make friends here.

[00:20:27] Well, the reason for that is that her best friend lives in New Mexico and we just went on a skiing trip to New Mexico last weekend and Ziva's best friend Presley went with us. Well, went with Nathan, and Samuel, and Ziva to go skiing and they had so much fun for two days in a row of great skiing. And it just reinforced the fact that Ziva wants to move back to New Mexico.

[00:20:52] So, we've got that dilemma that we're still working out with my sister here visiting as Ahava mentioned. It was funny because she's like, "You should want to move to Texas." And she was trying to talk to Ziva into it because it is easier for her to get to and she likes it here. But we'll have to decide. We've got some choices to make.

[00:21:12] An update on our house, our tenant, the guy that's renting our house, he is a pretty well-known drummer in a band called Symphony X and he's about to go on tour. He has been renting our house in New Mexico since we moved out to move on to the boat two years ago.

[00:21:25] And so, he is about to go on tour with his band and so he's going to be moving out of our house and we're going to do some work on it. It needs some like structural work and just kind of a general overhaul. So, that leaves the possibility that we could move back to New Mexico. But we don't know if that's where we want to go or what we want to do.

[00:21:44] So, at the very least, we'll fix up the house, maybe put it in VRBO because it is on 75 acres in the mountains outside of Albuquerque. It's a beautiful space. We'll see. Lots of we'll see going on, but for now, I just wanted to say thanks for listening. I hope you enjoyed the episode with Ahava as much as I enjoyed chatting with her and I will check in soon.

[00:22:05] Thanks for listening to New Mexi-Castaways. If you want to join the New Mexi-Castaways crew, that's where I will share more pictures and videos and whatnot. You can go to newmexicast.com for all the information. Thanks again Rosa Linda Román.