

Who tells your story?

I was in Mexico with my grandma for several years and it was just me with her. My parents were in the United States. I was sad when I had to go to the United States because my grandma couldn't come with me and had to stay in Mexico. My brothers and sisters came here with my parents by swimming through the river, that led them to the United States because they didn't have papers to get in.

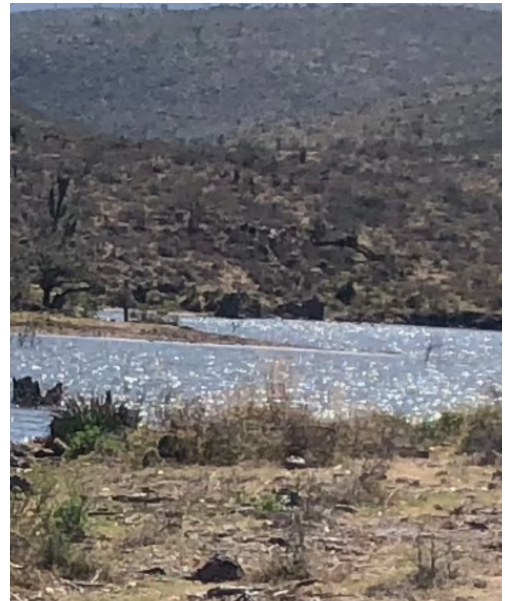
My favorite memory was when I was with my grandma. She would take me everywhere and I was so happy there. I didn't know my parents. Me and my grandma would go everywhere and to different towns to sell clothes to live and when we were done selling clothes we would come back to our little ranch.



On our ranch was a house that we lived in and adobe surrounded with rocks. Our house didn't have windows and there was dirt everywhere. My grandma had a lot of animals like horses, goats,

cows, chickens, and ducks. My grandma and I were very happy at the time. It smelled like a ranch with all the animals in it and my grandma would make fresh tortillas every single day with fresh beans and chili that were handmade. It was the best smell.

My favorite memories were when my grandpa would go to the city and he would come back on Sundays and he would come back with a box of fruits for all of his grandchildren. We were so happy because our grandpa would come on the bus to our home and the children would help him carry the box of fruits for us.



The best thing about my house was that I could go outside. There were no cars and we would go to the river to take a shower or a bath in the river, and my grandma would wash the clothes in the river and it was very fun.

When I was little, my brother and sisters were in the United States. I was very happy by myself. When I came to the United States I didn't know my brothers and sisters. I never knew them well. So when I came, I felt alone.

I didn't choose to leave my home, I was asked to go to the United States with my mom because they were going to get their residence papers to be a resident in the United States and all the family had to be here, so I was forced to be here.



There was no challenge for me when I was in Mexico. The challenge was when I had to go to America. I felt very uncomfortable around my brothers and sisters because I didn't know them and I was so depressed. When I came here I was so lonely because my grandma couldn't come with me. I wanted to go back with my grandma, but my mom said I couldn't go back and that I had to stay with them. When I went to school here I didn't know any English so when people would talk to me, I couldn't understand them. So I told my mom that I wanted to go back because I didn't understand anybody.

When I came here, I never saw so many cars at once. We had to stay inside and we had to ask my parents if we could go outside. It was very

different. When people talked to me, I couldn't understand them. When I came to America, I had never seen an African-American, and I asked my mom why are they like that? The first thing that I saw when I came to America was an African-American and I had never seen them before. I was scared of them because I had never seen someone like that because I was so used to the ranch, and there was nothing like this in Mexico.

When I went to my parents' house, there were windows everywhere and I asked my mom "Why are there windows?" and she said that it was normal to have windows. It was strange to me because before I moved to the United States we didn't have windows, just a door. There was also a refrigerator, and when I opened it, there was food. It was different and strange, and there was a heating system in the house to warm up the house and we didn't have that in Mexico, so I was like "What is that?" so my parents had to explain to me that it was safe. It also didn't smell like the ranch in Mexico at all.

The scariest part of America was the parks and there was grass on the park and we didn't have parks in Mexico, and there were museums that were very huge.

When I first came to America, there were people staring at me, and my mom said that these are my brothers and sisters. I didn't know what to say, and I was forced to get along with them because they were my siblings, and so I started growing up with them and trying to get along with them, and sometimes we would fight because we would not agree with each other. I would always get into trouble because it was all of them against me.

Sometimes I would tell my siblings that they were not doing something right, and they would say that I was doing it wrong and we had to follow rules here. My grandma would make everything from scratch and we would go outside, so I wanted to go outside, but my oldest brother said that we could not go outside, so I would ask "Why can't I go outside?" So I tried to go outside, but then he would stop me, so I would get into trouble for

trying to go outside. They would tell me that we didn't have papers to be in the United States, so if the police saw us, they would take us back to Mexico.

My life was harder in the United States because I had to adapt to people I didn't know. I had to learn that these people were my mom and dad, and I had to obey them. I had to learn to be comfortable with them, and it was hard. **I miss the freedom. I miss being the only child with my grandparents because they treated me like I was their daughter, and it was so much fun being with my grandparents because they treated me like I was a queen. I think what would make me happy is if my grandma was with me. It would make me very happy because she would support me and she would be guiding me, and I think it would make my life easier instead of me trying to figure out on my own how to adapt to a different family. I didn't want to be separated from my grandma because when I got to the United States, I never got to see her again. When she died I still couldn't go to see her. It was very depressing to not be with my grandma again.**

I want a house in Mexico and I want to be over there on my ranch again and go to the river and be free. I think it would be so much fun to have a house just like before.

I was forced to speak English, forced to go to school, I was the only one among my brothers and sisters to go to college and I felt very proud of myself because I pushed myself to do more than my brothers and sisters did in their life.

Once I was settled in the United States, I did the remaining on my sacraments at Annunciation church, and that's where I met my husband.

I think that I was able to succeed in life and I continued to go to school, even when I had kids, and I pushed myself and I forced myself to get a job with the government. From there I decided to

do my own business and in the business we had thirty employees and we had it for thirty years.

My American dream would be to be my own boss, and which I have achieved. My advice to immigrants would be that I would tell them if they want a job, or need money, they can go work at my company. I am proud of the family that I made, and that I live a peaceful life with my daughters caring for themselves and having their own families, and I am proud of them.



story told by: AJ