

Coming to the United States

[Redacted]

I remember it like it was yesterday; a dark day for me, three years and eleven months ago. My parents decided to come to the United States because things in Brazil were getting complicated - too much violence, crime, and daily misfortunes for ordinary people. But I didn't understand any of these things, because I was young and I never lacked anything in life in my home country. Everything was a bed of roses for me and I did not know that my father's plumbing business wasn't expanding very well, and he was earning very little money, and how worried my parents were all the time.

My parents decided to move to the U.S.A, but they didn't tell me and my siblings about it. After a while, when everything was settled, my dad told us that we were leaving Brazil and that they weren't going to leave anyone behind, which meant that we were all coming here to the U.S.A.

So we didn't have much of a choice. We went to visit my grandparents and uncles in another city. I still remember my grandfather making me promise him that I would come back to Brazil one day. I saw him cry so much it seemed like I would never see him again. That is one of my biggest fears, not arriving in time to give the people I love one last hug-because I learned that the law of life is to enjoy the time as much as you can, because nobody ever knows what tomorrow will bring. Anyways, soon after we finished meeting with our grandparents, it was time to go. I never cried so much in my life. I cried for almost three days and three nights. It was sad to leave everything behind: my school, my work, and especially my aunt and family. I still remember the tear-filled eyes of my relatives and my little cousin, and how badly I wanted to stay back with them.

We traveled in two cars. First, my father and I left. Then my mother and my siblings went, and we arrived at the bus station in São Paulo.

When we arrived in São Paulo, we went to the hotel where we took a shower and ate something. I was still crying and my face was redder than a chilli pepper. We slept a little and then got ready to go to the airport. It was our first time on a plane! We boarded the plane bound for Mexico-still crying and upset. It was my first Christmas away from my extended family. I never imagined that my Christmas would be like this, inside a plane eating the junk food they gave us. This was truly my worst Christmas. Soon after, we arrived in Mexico. We were detained in customs for a day, and all I could think about was how sad and hungry I was. There was no food there! But at the end of the day, we were released, and we boarded the plane to Guadalajara. After we arrived in Guadalajara, we went to a hotel. We stayed at the hotel for

three days. It was very hot! The hotel had a pool, but my father didn't want to let us go in because of the risk. My father and [name redacted] (my older brother) just went out to get food. The next day was the same routine: we got food and stayed in the room. On the third day, my father let us go to the pool because it was very hot. While he went to get food, my mother, my siblings, and I swam in the pool. The water was very cold, but we stayed in the pool. At night, we left for the airport. However, we had to return to the hotel soon after because the system didn't work for the ticketmaster. The next day we went back to the airport, and took a plane to Hermosillo with a layover in Mexico City. As soon as we arrived in Hermosillo, we began looking for a taxi to go to the bus station. Just as we were about to leave, some police officers took us all into a room. They called my father inside while we waited outside. Inside the room, those police officers confiscated all of my father's money. Luckily, we weren't completely broke because my parents had also kept some money elsewhere. After that, we took a taxi to connect to our bus ride to Reynosa. When we arrived at Reynosa airport, we took a taxi to a small hotel. After resting a bit, it was time to go again. A driver came to pick us up. We got into his car and waited for about six hours to cross the border into the United States. While we waited in the car, the authorities took my father to another place, where they tortured him for more money. My father said he didn't have any more, but they didn't believe him. So my father was forced to take the rest of the money we had and give it all to them so that our family would not get hurt. After they brought my father back, I noticed he was very quiet. He didn't say anything about what had happened so as not to worry us. Soon after, we got into a car that took us to the border. In the desert near the border, we quickly got out of the car and they guided us about 500 meters to the edge of a small river. As soon as we crossed the river, they said that we would have to continue alone to the border from that point. We walked as a family, wet and cold, for about 30 minutes and finally crossed the border. Then we walked for about an hour until we found an immigration police car. They told us "Welcome to the United States" and took us to the screening center. All of this happened overnight, and then we were separated from my father again. In the morning, a police officer arrived with my father shouting our names; it was kind of funny. Then we were transferred to another immigration office on a bus, where we stayed for about two days. After that, we were sent to a support house. When we arrived, we took a Covid-19 test and my father and I tested positive. We were then transferred to a hotel where we stayed for about twelve days. After that twelve-day period, we bought a ticket to Philadelphia. However, our check-in did not work and we had to return to the hotel for another night. Early next morning, we went to the airport again and took a plane to Philadelphia. Once we landed, we took a taxi that took us to a friends' house in Douglasville. We arrived with only the clothes on our backs. The very next day my parents started working non-stop, and within three weeks they managed to have enough money to rent an apartment in Spring City and settle in as a family.

This is the story of my chaotic yet exciting journey to the United States. Today, after three years and eleven months, we are well settled in the U.S.A., but we miss our family in Brazil constantly. I have beautiful plans for my future in this country. My story about my life in the United States will be for another day.

This is a true story written by me- [name redacted], with the help of my beloved father. This story tells a little about my trip to the United States with my loving and crazy family: [name redacted] (Father), [name redacted] (Mother), [name redacted] (older brother) & [name redacted] (younger brother)