My name is Cristobal and I an aspiring frontend dev. This is my story and what I have learned so far.

It all started one day, which the exact date I cannot seem to remember, I was given access to the company I work for C-Panel and started to look around. My task was simple, change the permissions for the authorized users for WordPress. Easy enough I thought, I just have to delete the user information from the database, this will be a breeze. I deleted the user without much thought and bam, with it went the company’s website. Panic ensued. My first reaction was to contact our hosting’s support team to restore a previous backup, but the minor detail was that that particular service had been cancelled and there were no backups to restore from.

I thought long and hard about a solution before sharing the news, since I am not the kind to just bring problems, I have to have a solution at hand. My options were somewhat limited since I did not have any programming experience. I scouted the web and found some very enticing web-page builders, after reading through the details I decided to go with Elementor, which has some very solid features and most importantly, flexibility. After a 3 hour tutorial from Web Monkey, some couple of more hours reading, I was all set to amend my mistake. I started building the website and it felt very natural. Just insert a new row, separate it by columns, and add the element you please. It took me about 8 hours of work to get it up and running, which considering it was my first time building a website, isn’t bad at all. With that little achievement I was able to control the company’s website, and so I just started building some more.

The process was great but at some point it starts to be limiting. You want to go this way, but the framework can only do it this other way. Also, you can only build static sites with it and I wanted to give my sites something more. This is when I decided to join Codecademy. The day was December 1st, 2019. I started with a couple of free modules to try it out and after some test runs I decided to go pro and pay for the subscription and follow the Web Development Career Path. I breezed through the HTML and CSS modules pretty fast and got them down. The next module was an introduction to JavaScript. Before starting this module I had already done some homework on the language and read some many nasty comments on it, probably from some angry devs who have their roots in other programming languages and have been forced to use JavaScript. Anyway, considering the language’s popularity and the fact that it powers the web, I still decided to go on with learning it. The syntax was very foreign at first, I mean, who the hell chooses to print something to the screen by saying console.log… Anyway, I stuck with it and kept going through the tutorial. The fact that you have an IDE set up in the same page where you are reading the module is pretty sweet. It took me a little over a month to go through the vanilla JS modules. Meanwhile, I signed up for Coderbyte and Codewars to sharpen my problem solving skills. Also, I got a Medium subscription and followed the top coding blogs to get some curated content. I read at least 5 articles a day and would research anything I couldn’t understand. Also, I set a goal to solve at least one exercise per day. After some time, JS was starting to feel natural already.

Then I came across one of the many frontend roadmaps out there. Boy was I far from becoming one. I was moderately comfortable, or at least I thought at the moment, with 3 topics of a list of more than 50. Although this is probably an over exaggeration of what is actually required to become a Frontend developer, it is good to at least have a grasp of many of the subjects therein.

This made me realize that it would take me years to get to a comfortable level by myself. I decided to look for options. What seemed most attractive was a bootcamp so I spent a couple of days scouting the internet. My main criteria was:

1. Tech-Stack and Curriculum
2. Reputation
3. Career Advice
4. Price
5. Location

I focused my search efforts on USA and Europe. The price difference between USA and Europe is considerable and, when factoring in living expenses, this makes it even more so. I was ready to invest my life savings into this new career path, but the fact that I wasn’t going to have an income for the duration of the course, plus who knows how many additional months of job hunting, made me reconsider my position. I completely discarded the idea going to the USA, also, the visa requirements might become a hassle. Europe it was, since I am also a German citizen, I was able to pretty much go anywhere.

As per most of the websites out there, the top bootcamp at the moment was Le Wagon, but I wasn’t sold on the idea of having to do Ruby on Rails. Also, they have so many campuses that it makes it impossible to get a more specialized attention. I kept searching until I came across Codeworks. I read every review there is on the internet about the bootcamp. There are not nearly enough as with other bootcamps but reviews made it seem very special. They were very candid about the course and they all boiled down to: the experience is delightful, but probably the most demanding thing you will do in your life. Spending 12 hrs a day coding for three months is not for the light-hearted. This is exactly what I needed to get up to par. I am aware you can get up that level by yourself, but I don’t have the time or dedication to do so, and also, setting up a curriculum as that one is not going to happen without some professional help.

Well, I decided to have a call and chat some more about the course. Their answers were exactly what I was looking for. A bootcamp that takes you from 20 to 80 rather than from 0 to 50. This was my goal, since you can definitely learn the basics on your own. But when it comes to consolidating all your knowledge, I find it will cut some hours of self-learning by doing a bootcamp. after a pre-screening, a live coding session and a take home exercise, I got accepted. The application process was challenging, they take the admissions very seriously and will not accept just any candidate.

Then the bootcamp’s pre-course came. The theoretical part was reinforcing and helpful. But oh the exercises. There were three assignments and one was to recreate many of the methods in a functional JS library from scratch. This part was a bitch to say the least. I struggled for days just to get the reduce function to pass all the tests. Memoize? Pluck? Throttle? WTF are these??? Well, after a couple of live sessions with instructors, many hours of reading and frustration, I got all the tests to pass and was done with it.

However, I was not satisfied. I did not have a total grasp of some of the concepts and did not fully understand why some of the functions were actually working. Since the course includes a GitHub Student Pack, I signed up for it and got free 6-month access to Frontend Masters. This is definitely the next step if you are coming from Codecademy or something like Freecode-Camp. The courses are top-notch and the instructors are some of the most savvy engineers I have seen. I decided to consolidate my knowledge of vanilla JS before moving to anything else so I took Kyle Simpson’s JS course. All I have to say is WOW. Everything I hadn’t understood in his