

July 15th, 2017 was a bad morning.

But it started well. My dad was accepted to teach at Princeton over the summer. His first class began 8AM sharp. We hopped on the road at 5AM, excited for the wonders that waited. Bronx New York to Princeton, New Jersey is a good 62 miles. The first 10 were amazing; we saw miles of farmland and exotic animals. The next 20 miles were knocked me off my seat! We saw cows, flamingoes, and chickens that stretched for fields. But all hell broke loose on the 55th mile. Rain trampled the hood of the car. But the gas was worse. The fuel tank was nearing empty. The constant bleep, bleep, bleep of the fuel indicator drowned the rain and the wipers. Psssssssssssh. We all feared that sound. But my dad feared it worst. The tire popped. We had no spare. The car was all but useless. No gas. No tire. And blistering rain. It wasn't looking good. There was no other car for miles, and all but one home next to us. Immediately, my dad said "Ask them nicely if they have gas." My big brother and I walked to the house. It was quaint. A One-family, with a lawn decorated with the traditional American garden. We arrived on the doorstep. My finger approached the doorbell. And I rang. I wracked that bell 'till it screamed. But then I saw. I saw -- the Mexican flag planted in the window of the house. I tried to run, but my brother held tight. "Too late", he whispered. "Bad hombres", "Kidnappers, drug dealers, and murderers" all came to mind. We were about to get kidnapped, drugged, **and** murdered. In that order. But I was wrong. *We* were all wrong. The mexican family fixed us a spare tire, and the father took my dad to Princeton. But then, my fear returned. The mother insisted she drive my brother, my mom, and I to a

tire shop. My dad was gone, so we had no choice but to accept. As soon as we got in the car, I regretted it. I desperately called my dad. But there was no service. Did they kill him? And then, the doors locked. The windows closed. And my fear came back. The kidnapping had begun. I grabbed the phone and dialed 9-1-1. “No! We can only hope”, she whispered and pulled back the phone. And then, the sun returned. The rain parted and best of all, the phone rang. It was dad! The father *had* dropped him off at Princeton. Only then did I realize how wrong I was. Shrrrrrrrk. The mother pulled the break, and the car pulled over next to an auto shop surrounded by a mall. We weren’t being kidnapped! She really was taking us to a tire shop.

We are forever indebted to that family, not only for helping us that morbid day, but for breaking our prejudices of Mexican people. It’s been 3 years since. Everytime I remember that family, my heart warms, and I realize just how considerate they were.