

Jimena: Hello

Emma: Hello

J: What's your name?

E: Emma Varela

J: Where are you from?

E: Honduras

J: Where do you live now?

E: Here.

J: Here? In Honduras?

E: No, I live here in New Orleans, on Carrollton.

J: And how long have you lived here, on Carrollton?

E: Oh, four years

J: Oh, you're the senior out of all my interviews. You've been here the longest. You're the veteran.

E: Ha ha ha

J: What's your neighborhood like, where you live now?

E: Oh, it's very quiet.

J: Quiet? No problems around there? You like it? And your neighbors?

E: Yes, it's quiet, I like my neighbors, I've never had any problems there.

J: Ok, can you tell me why you came to live in New Orleans?

E: Oh, well, my husband had already been living here for a long time.

J: How long?

E: Oh, for fifteen years he's lived here, in New Orleans. So I decided, we decided, that I would come here too, to New Orleans.

J: Mmm-hmm. Can you tell me about some of the differences between life here in New Orleans and your country?

E: You could say that, there's a lot of differences. Here we have many advantages, and disadvantages.

Advantages because some people get work here and in our country there isn't any work. Here you could say that we live better than we would in another situation.

J: How would you say that you "live better"?

E: Well, here I feel that I'm safer than I would be in my country.

J: Really?

E: Yes, right now there's a lot of, we call them "maras" (gangs)...

J: Oh, I understand...

E: Yes, and for that reason I think we're better off here.

J: Oh, okay. What do you miss most about Honduras?

E: My family.

J: Your family? Anyone in particular?

E: My son.

J: Can you tell me a little about your son? What's he like? What's his name?

E: His name is Steven, he's 12 years old, he's in the sixth grade. Well, you could say that he's very "educado" (well-behaved, well brought-up) because I left him with my sister and her husband. They're very well-prepared, educated people and they're raising him the way I would have raised him.

J: Very good. Do you have a lot of contact with them, with Steven?

E: Yes, a lot of contact.

J: What's something that impresses you about New Orleans?

E: Something that impresses me? Mmm....Many things. I like New Orleans.

J: Why? What do you like?

E: I like the food.

J: Really, thanks!

E: I think this is a beautiful place! I like the gumbo, I like the crawfish...

J: Gumbo and Crawfish! Very good! Uh...How do you feel here, as a new resident and as an immigrant in this city? What's your life like here?

E: Well, as an immigrant, I feel insecure, because I think any minute the Immigration could catch me.

I've never had any problems of any kind, but on the other hand if I had papers, and if I had my son with me, I'd feel like a "mujer realizada" (a fulfilled woman, completely satisfied) you could say...

J: You could say...In your opinion, what are the biggest problems facing New Orleans right now and what should we do to resolve them?

E: Well, first of all, the insecurity in so many places, not in all places. There are a lot of immigrants that maybe can't open a bank account, so they walk around with a lot of money in their pockets. And sometimes the "colored people" (this is a polite term in Spanish), they know which people are likely to have money and that's why they attack them...you could say...I think now you can open an account with just your passport...

J: Yeah, in some places you can.

E: In some banks. In my case, that's what I do, that's what I did, I opened an account. Now I don't walk around with money, just my bank card...I also don't walk around in dangerous areas.

J: You try to take care of yourself then.

E: Yes, I try to take care.

J: How long do you think you'll stay here?

E: Well, I don't think, I'm not planning to leave now, but if I was in a position where I could bring my son, then I think...

J: You'd stay for the rest of your life!

E: Mmm-hmm.

J: Well, while you're here, whether it's just for awhile or for the rest of your life, what do you hope to achieve? Can you tell us some of your dreams for the future?

E: Well if I can, I'll probably stay maybe three more years, if I can manage to stay, if not you know... And if I could go back in three years, to my country, then I'd set up my business in Honduras.

J: What kind of business?

E: Well, all my family are businesspeople and what they do is they have "juegos mecanicos" (rides, like for a carnival) and I said to my aunt if she could let me set up one or two rides, that I get here, and she told me sure, that she'd help me get started, no problem, they can install them with my aunt's. Because they have more or less 10 rides and like a small amusement park. This is the advantage that I would have when I got back to my country...

J: So, you'd like to buy a carnival ride and bring it back to Honduras?

E: Yes.

J: Okay. That's sounds fun to me. Any more comments?

E: No, that's it. Just up to now my life's been going well. I have muchos amigos, muchas amigas (male and female friends) and one special one named Jimena...that I love very much.

J: Thanks Emma! Kiss!