

The Best Laid Plans ^[1]

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Three disgruntled flyers

A brief recounting of my short foray into New York housing caused by the UPR student strike and the events that followed thereafter. Special guest appearance by professor Ilona Kretzchmar from the City College of New York.

I had been looking forward to celebrating my birthday with my family and friends for the first time in three years and comfortably working on finishing the paper I'd been writing for the last 5 months, but due to the strike I had somehow ended up on a plane to New York with no place to stay for the next two months. My job for the last two weeks had been frantically searching for a place to fit me and my two companions for our impromptu stay in New York. I thought I had

figured it all out until the graduate student who would be lending us his apartment called me two days before my trip to let me know his roommate had rented out the room without telling him...

I started getting the messages as I neared the end of the TSA line. "Se acabo la huelga", they all said. I let out a wry laugh as the lady at the end of the line asked for my identification and plane ticket. It was much too late to sprint out of the line now, and a few hours later I found myself on a very squeaky bed in the West Side YMCA of Manhattan, sharing a room with two more disgruntled flyers. We met with professor Kretzchmar around 2pm the next day, the main conclusion of the meeting being that we should focus on finding a place to stay for the next two months. At 6pm we set out to check on the only decent housing prospect I'd found after several hours of searching on Craigslist. The negotiation didn't take long, they wanted \$7200 by the next day for two months in the apartment, and I was almost desperate enough to accept it. After a long talk with my father, and a small bout of hysteria on my mother's part, my parents concluded that buying tickets back to Puerto Rico for my companions and I would be a much safer bet than handing such a large sum of money to complete strangers.

The day after arriving back in Puerto Rico one thing became very clear, this summer wasn't going to be an easy one. Due to the end of the strike, all my professors were now trying to stuff the 5 weeks of exams, projects, and presentations into a measly 3 weeks; forcing me to drop a course and request an incomplete in another. At the same time my PI was waiting for me to submit the draft for my paper and to extend my research into new territory during the summer. Despite many sleepless nights and working on the weekends, I had a hard time accomplishing either of my tasks with satisfying results. The two exams I took went badly by my standards, and the writing of my paper had grinded to a halt as I spent most of my time studying and finishing all the projects previously due for the end of the semester in a matter of days. Then came the finals, and my research continued to be neglected as I dedicated entire days to relearning the last 6 months of class. There wasn't much time to relax after finishing my last final, as I had studied at the expense of a deadline for a presentation I needed to make.

Despite the relentless workload, it all seemed worth it upon seeing the 'A's on my grade sheet and receiving the grudging approval of my PI for the presentation I submitted. It has been an interesting summer, with many unexpected twists, and rather painful turns; but I feel more confident than ever in my ability to deal with the wrenches that life enjoys throwing into our best laid plans.

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