

Carolina

Working as a translator with tourists fueled Carolina's interest in foreign travel and foreign cultures. "I was convinced that I wanted to pack and go, but I did not know where. I could have gone to Europe perhaps. I had a friend at that time in Spain and I have a friend in Germany, from the university. But no, it was here." Carolina was born in Mendoza, Argentina. She was thirty-five at the time of this interview.

C: I was always interested in knowing different cultures. I always found it interesting to meet people who not only had a story different from mine, but who had another language, who told me about their countries, their places. In Argentina, I loved to meet people from other provinces. It seemed to me that everyone hides something, the northern ones because they are from the north, the southerners because they are southerners, those from the mountains because they are from the mountains and the same from those from the coast. I have always been very interested in socializing and meeting other people from other cultures who shared with me, and I shared a little bit of Argentina.

ML: How did this idea, this dream of meeting people, opening horizons, start to take shape in your head and that you ended up emigrating to the United States?

C: I think one of the last convictions was that—before I came, I already had a practically full-time job in Argentina. I had already finished the three-year career.

ML: What were you doing?

C: At work I was an interpreter, I interpreted the tourists, I was a translator from English to Spanish, and I worked in a tourist place, that many tourists came for the Aconcagua, which is the most important peak in South America and in America after Everest, and I began to meet people, and that made me even more passionate. I met people from Europe, Australia, Africa, from all the places they came. And I remember that as they left, I was thinking, "What will they think when they leave us?" Surely, they were wondering the same about me and other people they met.

But during the time I worked on my thesis, the thesis was about a theater production, staging a work, and to my delight, the director is a New Yorker, travels from the United States to Mendoza. He was a gringo who spoke a little Spanish, spoke a lot and his English was clear, he made it easy for me, and he had a rare technique, a Japanese technique, and as I did not like it, I was not very convinced of the staging, and as he did not figure out where to put me. I ended up being the assistant director and his personal translator.

So I accompanied him, it was an important trip because I had to translate everything, even things said in anger. Things that were not nice. I translated everything, orders, staging, how he wanted the lights, how he wanted the actors, who was first. It was stressful because sometimes I did not know how to translate the words and I remember that I searched in two dictionaries and asked

my sister. I used my sister's help a lot at the time. Because my English was British, the one I had learned it was from Cambridge and it did not help me because he spoke pure American English. I said "Oh, my God," but we managed to do it.

The staging was done. It reopened a theater that was closed, the Mendoza theater, it was a success. It was in the newspaper, received very good reviews. As I finished I came to believe that my time in Argentina was over. I wanted something more. Having met him—although it was not as if I would have better chances with respect to theater—I never come to New York or a big city—I wanted something more. After his visit and the experience that I had with the thesis, which obviously I approved and was a success, but still I had to pass four more classes to graduate with the title of actress, drama, I decided to get on a plane and come.

ML: Why Charleston?

C: Because initially, my best friend, Carina's sister was here. I was an aimless boomerang. I was convinced that I wanted to pack and go, but I did not know where. I could have gone to Europe perhaps. I had a friend at that time in Spain and I have a friend in Germany, from the university. But no, it was here, it was a mixture between the American dream that one had heard a little—I had heard little because my mind was in the arts, it was heard more from Central America, perhaps from Mexico, but not as much from the United States. But after the relationship I had with this American director, I thought why not?

Carolina, Interview by Marina López, May 25, 2012