

And so, the two months are over “sob”.

This week I didn't really show up to work, for the exception of Thursday. All the other days, the other interns and I, were occupied helping out at the Director's meeting. That Monday, the first day of the Director's meeting I had a strong realization on how I had changed since the beginning of this summer. It all started when my Director called me out during the afternoon to go visit several Congressional and Senate offices, in their bid to promote CAMP. It just felt so great to be able to escort them around like it was my own house. I knew where most of the offices were, and when my Director asked about Senator Flake's office, I responded with “Oh yeah, I know where that is, I was in his office last week, we got to ask him some questions on his stance on the health care plan.” Compared to the beginning of the internship, when I felt very awkward, out of place, and too timid to even knock on the door of another congressional office, now I was walking down the halls of Capitol Hill, confidently knocking on doors, boldly introducing my director and the program.

At the end of the day, I realized that somehow, slowly but surely, a part of me had come to learn that despite being just another intern, interns are what makes Capitol Hill work. And that regardless, of my lack of knowledge or background when it comes to government politics, this is the very reason why I am here to learn, and what I've learnt is that all those offices in Capitol Hill are there to serve *me*. Therefore, I shouldn't shy away from knocking on doors, I shouldn't come into the offices with my eyes cast low because I feel intimidated. This internship has empowered me to be confident, outspoken, and firm, when it comes to exploring and owning new spaces.

Backtracking a bit to that Monday morning, the other interns and I did not know that we were going to introduce ourselves and say a few words on stage in front of all the Directors. I was so nervous that no matter what I tried to focus on, as a subject I could talk about, I couldn't even begin to imagine what I was going to say when it finally came my turn to speak. More so, since what the other interns were saying was extremely thoughtful and deep, I felt that they set a bar, and I had no idea how I was going to reach said bar. My time came up, I started speaking, cracked a few jokes in between, people laughed, but curiously, if you were to ask me about what I said or what jokes I cracked, I wouldn't know. As soon as I stepped off that platform everything went blank again... I can't recall anything I said, I only remember the laughter of the audience, my shaking knees, and the loud drum of my heartbeat in my ears. When I told my Director and the other interns about my overwhelming nerves upstage, I was very surprised to hear that they hadn't even noticed my nervousness. Apparently, I am very good at faking it.

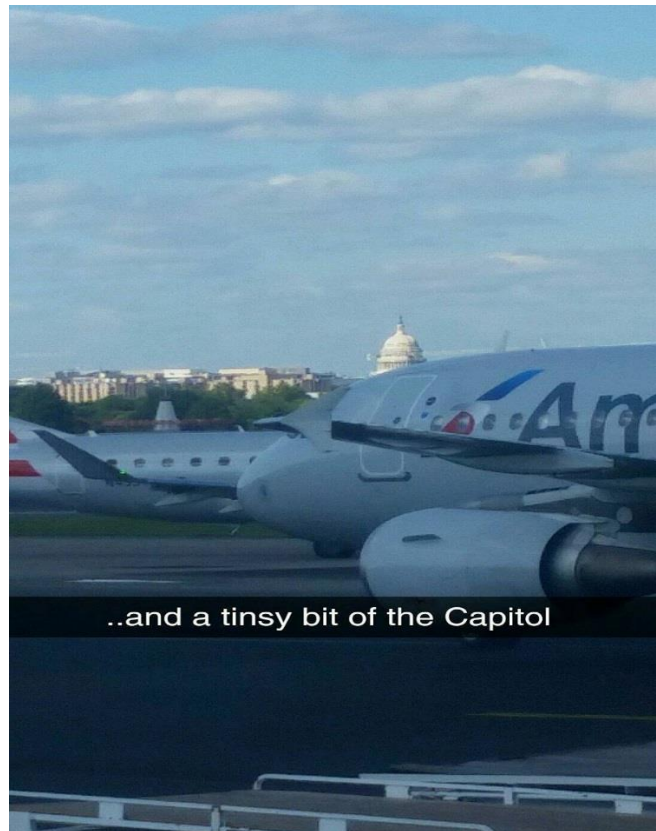
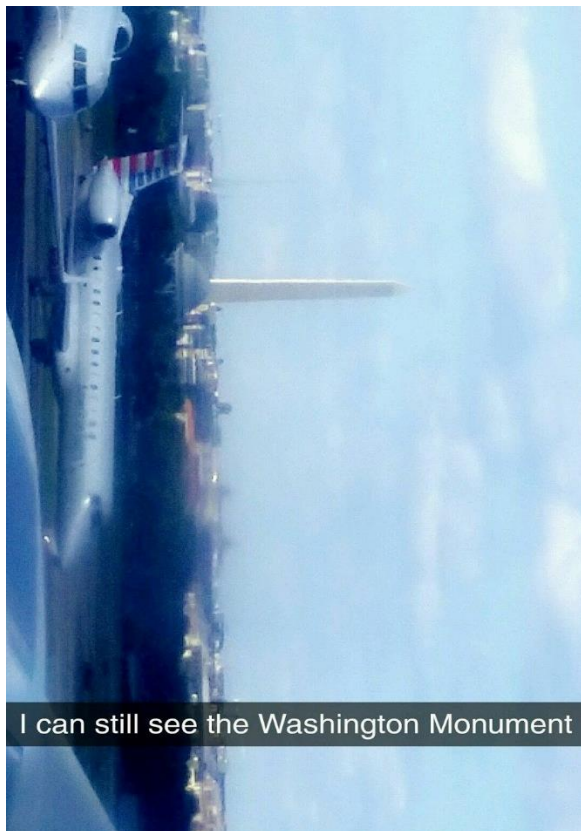
Thursday was my official last day. I worked as fast as I could to finish my last task. Then, the office sang “For being a jolly good fellow...” to Christina and me, as it's their tradition. Once again, they bought a delicious farewell cake. Sadly, we missed the chance to say goodbye directly to our congressman since he was actually already back in Arizona taking care of some matters. He left for Christina and I two very creative drawings that kind of resembled a cross between a tikki and a Mayan drawing, that he drew himself. We also got a hard-shell folder with the US emblem, two certificates, and several other goodies. We used our last few minutes of work to reminisce the last two months and our favorite parts of the whole experience. The clock struck 5 and it was time for me to go for real. I profoundly thanked the staff, and made my way to the subway for my last ride back to the dorm from Capitol Hill.

Saturday came very early that morning. I think we maybe slept around 2 and a half hours. Lupe who had her flight early that morning woke me up to say goodbye and so that Gloria and I could help her load up the bags into the taxi. We hugged goodbye, promising to

stay in contact with each other, and thanking one another for being an awesome roommate. For a moment it kind of didn't seem real that I was probably not going to see her again in person for a very long time, Lupe being from Michigan, and I from Arizona. It only hit me after saying goodbye to Rebeca and then lastly Gloria who spent all day at the airport with me pretty much until it was almost time to go. I boarded the plane and I could still see the capitol and the Washington Monument, and at that moment it caught up with me that I was leaving, that my friends had already left, and that I was already missing them just as much as I would miss DC. I started crying, don't worry I was not bawling. It was basically me with my face plastered to airplane window with big fat silent tears rolling down my cheeks.

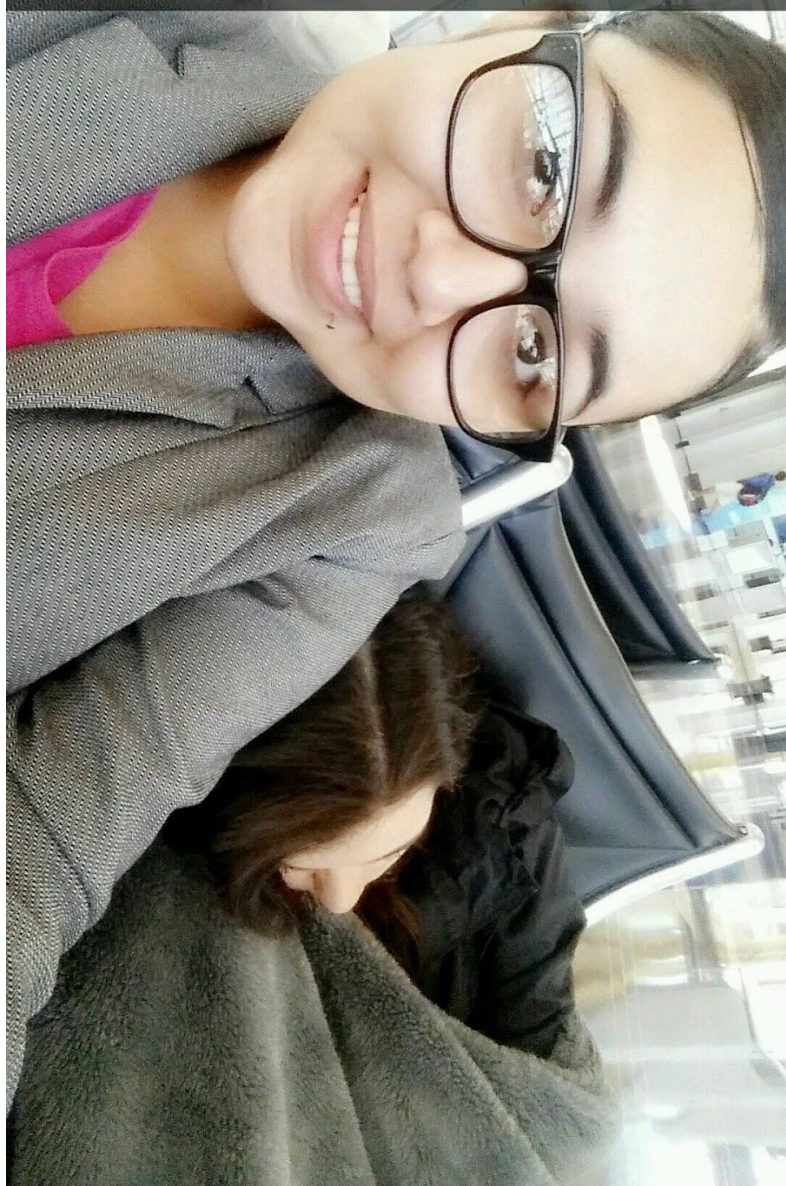
And then after 13 hours of waiting, I finally landed in Yuma where my mom and the rest of my family was waiting for me. I had worn my business formal attire one last time, because I really wanted my family to see me looking professional at least once before the clothes got put away, marking the end of this journey. I got to spend the exactly one week with my family before I had to haul all my things into the car, ready to go at it for the new school term.

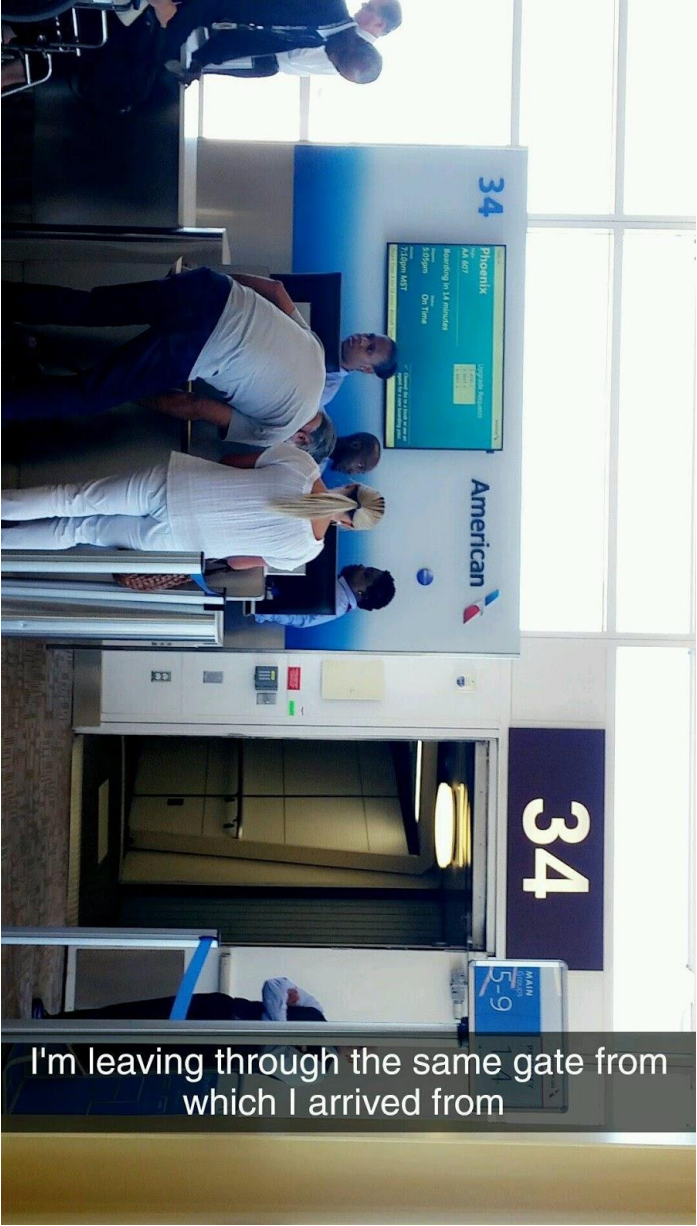
Last pics:





Gloria is already down for the count tho...





I'm leaving through the same gate from which I arrived from



