

Dominican republic personalassignment assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I was born October 4th, 1992 in Hartford, Connecticut. I have spent the past fifteen years growing up as a typical American girl. I go to school, I listen to music, and I go shopping with friends. I had never once stopped to think twice about the privileges that I had living as an upper class citizen of the United States- it was just the way life was. On a particular July day, an American Airlines Boeing 737 aircraft landed at the Gregorio Luperon International Airport in Puerto Plata. My American family was now in the Dominican Republic. My grandparents had planned for our family to vacation to the Dominican Republic.

Every three years we took a family vacation together, generally to an extravagant location where we were to spend a week as royalty. As I sat in my large first class seat I pondered how my week would unfold. From soaks in the Jacuzzi to glasses of Don Perrion, I could not contain my excitement. Puerta Plata airport was unique in an unexpected way. The tiny shabby shacks that were selling bottles of Presidente and serving up plates of La Bandera Dominica were nearly as bewildering as the numerous russet colored people treading by hectically.

Outside of the unknown walls of Gregorio Luperon lies not only the true beauty of the country, but furthermore its greatest weaknesses. Outside the safe windows of the unair-conditioned taxicab was something incomprehensible to the typical American. Human beings housed in actual straw huts for a home, women were selling fruit from grimy wicker baskets street side just to scrape up enough coins to feed her children that night. Clotheslines held the few garments families were proud to own, and the half

naked bodies of small children were running barefoot through the dirt. All I could do was hold on safely to the door handle of the cab.

My vacation was a weeklong. Their poverty was a lifetime. Cabrera was where our villa home was located. Cabrera is known as one of the most stunning areas of the country, but tourism is not common here. We were about to venture into the heart of the Dominican. The town of Cabrera was not anything that you could picture. It was indisputably the poorest area I have ever resided. As tourists were not often in this section of the country, we had to discover our own ways to experience the culture. With the help of our staff at Villa Castellamonte, we had compiled a list of activities to complete for the week.

The first day we went to a Cigar factory in town. Unlike any American factory, this particular one was located in an old rotting home with dirt floors and a robust aroma of tobacco. A little girl about the age of ten was barefoot standing by her mother's side terrified as us Americans piled into what little space they could call home. That little girl would never in her lifetime see the inside of a shopping mall. She would never go to prom. She would probably never even get experience the taste of a Ben and Jerry's ice-cream cone. The next day, we had planned to go to a ranch for a day of horse back riding.

Riding horses is one of my passions so I was excited to get to experience the beauty of the Dominican while on the back of a horse. When we arrived at the ranch all that was in sight was two Dominican men, an old red stable, and a few scrawny looking horses. We all walked up to take a closer look at the animals. Without saying a word we all knew that we were thinking the

same thing. You could count every single rib on each of these miserable looking creatures. Their eyes appeared droopy and their legs were wobbling as they could barely hold their undersized bodies up any longer.

We could not put these animals through any more pain. The weight of our bodies upon their backs could be the last straw. We thanked the two men, returned to our cab and left. Our last day in town we traveled twenty minutes south to Playa Grande, one of the most stunning beaches in the area. Snorkeling gear was packed up in the cab. When we arrived, I unpacked my snorkel, flippers, and dive mask ready to explore the waters. Standing by my side at the edge of the water was two small Dominican boys. They stared up at me and marveled over the sight of my flippers and snorkel. They pointed and smiled.

I already had several chances to observe the corals and fish by means of a snorkel mask. These boys never had the chance. I handed over my gear and they didn't know what to do except shout " gracias, gracias" over and over again. I wanted nothing more than to look them in the eye and say, " No, thank you. " My vacation was a mere weeklong. But the images of the boarded up decaying houses, long dirt roads, and half naked children have stayed with me. And as I go back to enjoying my Ben and Jerry's ice-cream cone during a trip to the mall, I can still picture the eyes of the little boys at Playa Grande, an encounter that will last forever.