

## Thiago Heilman Transcription

### “DREAMER”

*On-screen text: The following is a true story based on actual events...*

On April 27, 1996 I boarded a plane from Belo Horizonte, Brazil headed for New York City. This was intended to be a temporary trip, long enough for my mother to save some money and then return to our native land and live the life of a promised dream. We wanted to own our own home and live life comfortably.

I still remember the first time I saw the World Trade Center and the beautiful New York City skyline. It transcended any expectations I ever had. This was the new world, and the new world was shiny, big, and full of endless opportunities. As a child growing up in the United States, this became my country.

My dream was no longer to go back, but to remain here with the new life I had forged for myself. My family's plans, however, remained intact and eventually they all returned except for me. I stayed behind and continued striving for the American Dream. I wanted to have an education and eventually a stable family. There was only one thing holding me back – my status in the country. Because my family had originally come to the US with visitors' visas and we had overstayed those visas, we were now out of status and were undocumented. Many things like health insurance, going to college, getting a proper ID, and so forth were unattainable. All the dreams and drive to succeed were there, but the opportunities to achieve those were all locked behind closed doors. I was like 11 million other undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Everything seemed so simple yet unattainable, that is until June 15, 2012 when President Barack Obama announced an executive action that gave me, and hundreds of thousands more like me, the key to open those doors and become a new type of resident: DREAMERS.

After collecting all the data necessary my first legal U.S. document arrived in the mail – my employment authorization card and social security card. The feeling was beyond ecstatic. It felt like this giant rubber band that had been stretched across my chest snapped and I catapulted to achieving my dreams.

It took a while, but my American dream is finally coming true. Many things that natural born citizens take for granted are finally happening to me. I didn't get my driver's license when I was 16, but getting it at 30 makes me feel like a teenager all over again. My time is now, and I'm enjoying this freedom every day, and every day I am grateful that it's finally come true.

*On-screen text: My story didn't end there.*

*On May 14, 2013 Minnesota became the 12<sup>th</sup> State to recognize same-sex Marriages. On June 26, 2013, The US Supreme Court struck down DOMA. Same sex couples now have equal immigration rights.*

*Dedicated to my grandparents – the hardest part of being a dreamer was never not being able to say goodbye.*