



blot

Chasing a dream

A football player's
road to Moscow

Behind an RA's door

Students find a balance
with work and school



HUMANS OF MOSCOW

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The Fine Print

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Editor's note

The path to college is neither easy nor assumed for many. In this edition, we feature two of those stories.

One from New Orleans, where a dedicated football player overcomes homelessness, Hurricane Katrina, poverty and the loss of his father to attend college. After all that, he finds himself at the University of Idaho working toward his dream of playing college football.

The other comes from the city of Lapwai, where attending college is far from expected. The UI junior tells her story of working hard in school and finding the funds to continue her education.

These stories serve as sobering reminders of the struggle faced by students from underprivileged backgrounds.

They are also a reminder that time spent in college is valuable and should be respected as a time to progress as an individual and prepare for the world.

— RT

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Story by Amber Emery
Photography courtesy of Teresa Benz

FROM IDAHO

● Teresa Benz didn't know the woman well. She was African-American, about 65 years old, didn't know how to read and had a son serving a life sentence for shooting a police officer.

The two sat on the woman's front porch in an underprivileged Detroit neighborhood one evening in the summer of 2014. Benz probed the woman's memories to acquire an opinion: what did she think about guns? "She wanted to create a machine to vaporize the guns so they'd be all gone," Benz said. "Meanwhile, she was pro-gun because she realized that was a dream, a fantasy. She realized there was never going to be a machine that could do that, even though she would really like it. She knew guns were necessary."

Benz, a sociology professor at the University of Idaho, recently completed field research on how Detroit locals protect themselves.

As she would come to realize, and what she hopes to publish in a book someday, is that many Detroit residents take security into their own hands.

Benz, who specializes in criminology, said she initially began to look into Detroit as a case study in 2012, when she heard of a graffiti gang that had frequent encounters with violence. But after a short visit to the city, her project took a different direction.

"I looked into law enforcement, because the graffiti kids weren't worried about police," she said. "The people I talked to kind of chuckled about considering calling the police when they needed help."

Benz said she looked at the Detroit Police Department and found that it was underfunded and understaffed, which she thought may be related to the city's high crime rate and gun use. Benz focused her project on the use of firearms in the city and surrounding suburbs.

Benz received \$12,000 through UI's Kurt O. Olsson Early Career Research Fellowship in 2014. She temporarily moved to Detroit in the summer of 2014 to immerse herself in the city. Once there, she described Detroit as "post-apocalyptic," with decaying skeletons of homes, businesses boarded up and streets overgrown with brush.

"A lot of stuff was started there and now it's fallen into such ruin, such disrepair," Benz said. "... It just seemed like this sort



TERESSA BENZ



TO DETROIT

Studying violence and guns in underprivileged Detroit neighborhoods

of perfect living laboratory for this kind of study. And plus the people that are still there, they're tough as nails."

During one month, Benz took a course to receive a Concealed Pistol License, rode alongside Detroit police officers and firefighters and conducted interviews with 31 people. Of those interviews, 26 were usable for Benz's research project.

Benz asked interviewees about their upbringing, political leanings and if they ever associated with firearms or weapons growing up.

"If they didn't carry a gun, or even if they did, what else did they do because a gun isn't always going to protect you," she said.

"People talked about dogs and security systems and most everybody, in some way or another, talked about how their per-

sonal safety was their own responsibility."

After further research, Benz found Detroit residents fended for themselves partially because of the long response time for local police — a creditor's report in 2013 showed the average response time for the most serious calls was 58 minutes.

While Benz said most of her interviewees were pro-gun — in the sense they either owned guns or recognized the importance of them — there was one outlier in her study.

A white woman in her late 30s who spent all of her life in Detroit was anti-gun, Benz said, even though she had every reason in the world not to be.

According to Benz, the woman was robbed in daylight one afternoon as she was unloading groceries from her car. A man

walked up the alley alongside the house and held a gun to the woman's head until she let him inside.

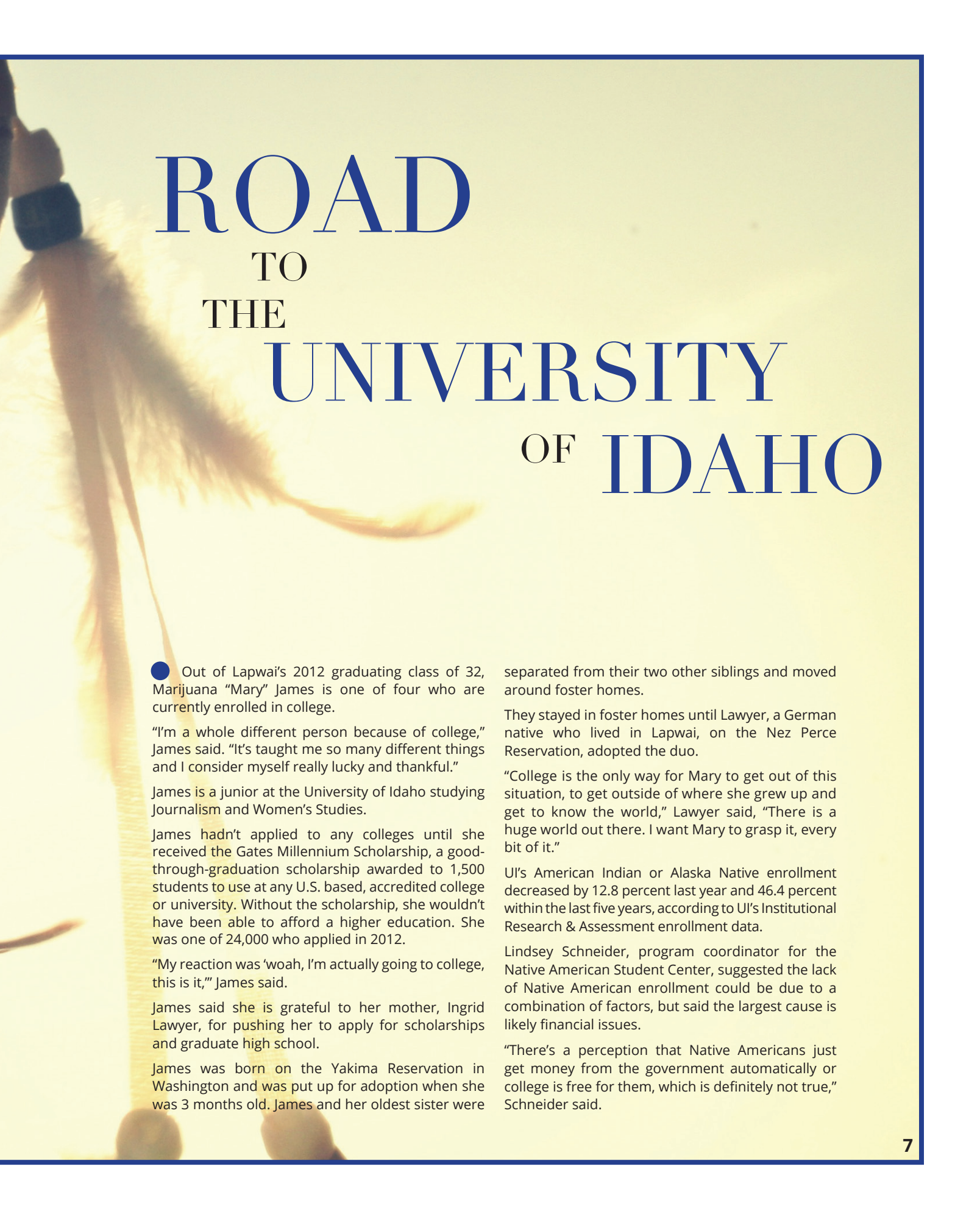
"He tied her up in the living room while he just emptied her house out and filled up her own car with all of her stuff," she said.

Benz said the woman managed to get untied while the man carried a load of her belongings to the car, and when he came back she offered to help if he would leave without hurting her.

"And that's what she did," Benz said. "You would think that an experience like that would make you want to get a gun. But she was one of the only people I talked to who was completely anti-gun — she didn't want them on her or in the home and she didn't think they solved anything." ●



*Story by Arianna Anchustegui
Photography by Amelia C. Warden*



ROAD TO THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

● Out of Lapwai's 2012 graduating class of 32, Marijuana "Mary" James is one of four who are currently enrolled in college.

"I'm a whole different person because of college," James said. "It's taught me so many different things and I consider myself really lucky and thankful."

James is a junior at the University of Idaho studying Journalism and Women's Studies.

James hadn't applied to any colleges until she received the Gates Millennium Scholarship, a good-through-graduation scholarship awarded to 1,500 students to use at any U.S. based, accredited college or university. Without the scholarship, she wouldn't have been able to afford a higher education. She was one of 24,000 who applied in 2012.

"My reaction was 'woah, I'm actually going to college, this is it,'" James said.

James said she is grateful to her mother, Ingrid Lawyer, for pushing her to apply for scholarships and graduate high school.

James was born on the Yakima Reservation in Washington and was put up for adoption when she was 3 months old. James and her oldest sister were

separated from their two other siblings and moved around foster homes.

They stayed in foster homes until Lawyer, a German native who lived in Lapwai, on the Nez Perce Reservation, adopted the duo.

"College is the only way for Mary to get out of this situation, to get outside of where she grew up and get to know the world," Lawyer said, "There is a huge world out there. I want Mary to grasp it, every bit of it."

UI's American Indian or Alaska Native enrollment decreased by 12.8 percent last year and 46.4 percent within the last five years, according to UI's Institutional Research & Assessment enrollment data.

Lindsey Schneider, program coordinator for the Native American Student Center, suggested the lack of Native American enrollment could be due to a combination of factors, but said the largest cause is likely financial issues.

"There's a perception that Native Americans just get money from the government automatically or college is free for them, which is definitely not true," Schneider said.



Mary James is a junior at the University of Idaho. She is one of four college students from the 2012 Lapwai High School graduating class.

Schneider said she thinks Native American students are held back from higher education due to cultural expectations.

"If your parents didn't go to college, there won't necessarily be that family culture of 'this is what's expected of you,' so you're not thinking about it as much. Whereas if your parents went to college, it's more likely that you're going to go because you're raised thinking that's the expectation," Schneider said.

James said although there are many students in Lapwai who wish to pursue a higher level of education, Native American college attendance rates are low because students choose to go into the army, work or start a family.

"I think that motivation comes from the people around them, and if there's not that much hope around them, how can they build hope?" Lawyer said.

Within a tribe, Native Americans are taught many cultural traditions. James said when on the reservation she enjoys praying, attending powwows, huckleberry picking, fishing and spending time outside.

She said it's difficult to leave for college and set her culture aside. She described it as living two separate lives, one at UI where she participates in her sorority — Delta Delta Delta — the Native American Student Center and academics, versus her life in Lapwai with her family and traditions.

"There were times where I just wanted to go home and give up, because I miss my family so much," James said.

"But my mom reminded me that once I'm out of college, all of that stuff will still be there. My cultural ties aren't just going to disappear."

James is the first of her biological family to attend college.

After her sister saw James' college success, she decided to get her Clinical Nursing Assistant's license. James hopes to be a role model and motivate her younger brother to attend college as well.

She said students who skip class and don't put effort into academics are taking college for granted.

"I remind myself that not everybody is as lucky as I am. There are so many people who would love to go to school but who can't afford it, or deserve to come to school but are put in a situation where they can't," James said.

But James is not wasting any time at UI. She recently broke her shoulder blade in an ATV accident and was advised to take a semester off for medical leave by psychologists and doctors. She refused and instead pushed through her classes, despite her injury.

For James, the most rewarding part of her college experience has been motivating others from Lapwai to attend college. She hopes to attend graduate school in Hawaii and write about environmental and cultural issues someday.

"Even though I am Native American, every race and every age, every culture, different religion and values, white and black people, everybody will face struggles — not just Native Americans," James said. ●

— “ —
There is a huge world out there. I want Mary to grasp it, every bit of it.
Ingrid Lawyer

HUMANS OF MOSCOW

*Photography by
Jackson Flynn*

If you've been in Moscow for even a short period of time, you'll know that the people here are sometimes ... well, different. They're hipsters, cowboys, bookworms and adrenaline junkies. They're young and old. They come from every walk of life, and they carry with them unique stories and perspectives. An homage to Brandon Stanton's "Humans of New York," this photo essay seeks to tell their stories.

"The plan right now is to get my degree, move back to Seattle, because despite the fact that I love Moscow, there's just no place like home. And my idea is to get a job at one of the broadcast companies back there, possibly a publishing house, get up a little money and open a business. I'm thinking a recording studio or something having to do with the publishing business. And we'll see from there. The plan is to make a lot of money, basically."

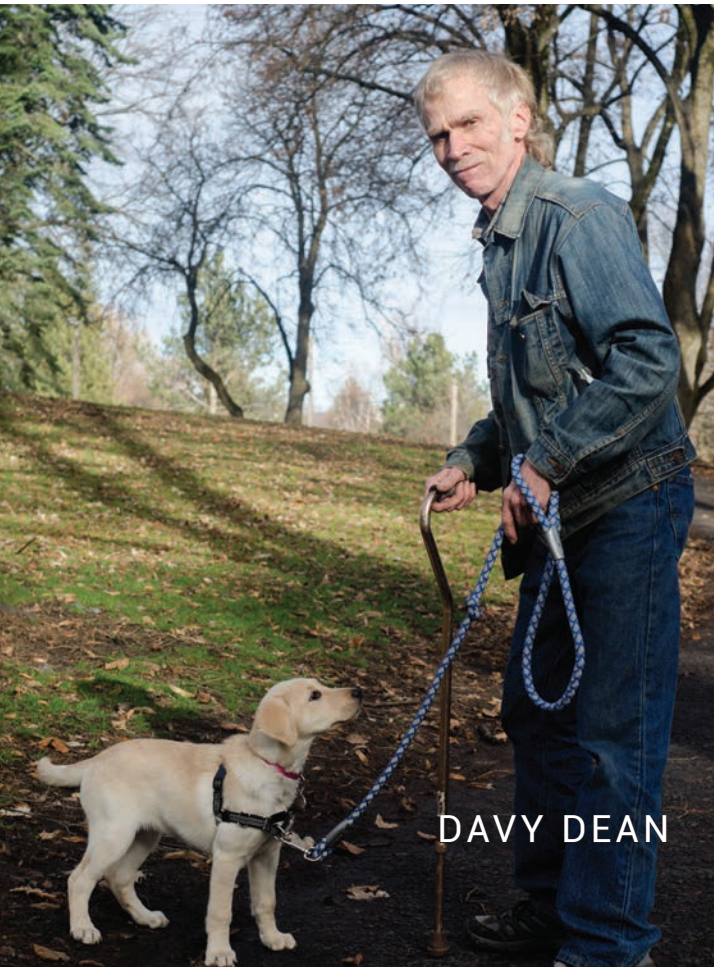
NATE HANSEN

"I have all my grad school applications in and I'm just waiting to hear back. I took one year off, cause I was like, 'no, haha I'm not going straight to grad school.'

I'm really hoping to go to Portland State University for physical anthropology. I had people tell me I should look at more prestigious schools or whatever. But I'm trying really hard to stay in the area, in hopes that he'll be staying in the area too. But neither of us really know where the heck we'll be in the next few years."



DANIELLE HARTMANN



DAVY DEAN

"I retired from there. My boss walked up to me one day and said 'You can retire today and keep your (benefits).' I left my shoes in a garbage can as I walked out. Everybody there knew what I feel about shoes. But I wear them when I have to. Period."



JOSH EDWARDS

"What's your biggest goal right now?"

"My biggest goal, huh. Getting back into school's kinda been taking up my time lately ... I want to get into the (Armored) Combat League."



MARYANNE GREEN

"Knowing that eventually we'll slow down and face health issues. We're both active people and it's hard to think about what you may not be able to do."


"What keeps you going?"

"Oh, just loving life. And Grandchildren."



Chasing a dream

*Story by Korbin McDonald
Photography by David Betts
Illustration by Cydnie Gray*



● Growing up in a neighborhood where chasing dreams seems impossible, Quincy Smith persisted.

The 22-year-old University of Idaho student has endured a life full of obstacles and setbacks — the loss of his father, Hurricane Katrina and even being homeless on more than one occasion — all while growing up in a crime-ridden, New Orleans neighborhood.

“Things just never went my way,” Smith said. “I just never gave up. I don’t care how hard something is, I’ve never been a quitter ... I can’t ever get content because the sky is the limit. But I don’t even think the sky is the limit — they say we went to the moon.”

On the word of a coach he had never met, Smith and his childhood friend Terry Johnson moved to Moscow — a place both had never been. They risked everything for a shot at their lifelong dream of playing collegiate football.

Back home

It was more than two years ago when Smith sat in his New Orleans home, hungry. Hungry for food, hungry for an opportunity.

“There was a point I’d look in my refrigerator, and for two weeks straight, we didn’t have food,” Smith said. “They only gave me and my mom \$50 for food stamps ... that’s not going to last.”

He had just returned home from Louisiana College in Central Louisiana, where it wasn’t any better. Smith said he was homeless and had to sleep on a friend’s couch, just so he could collect a \$1,500 check to send home to his mother.

With his mother at home by herself, Smith decided to drop out of college and put his dreams on hold.

Smith’s mother Betty Smith said Quincy never gave up hope in the midst of all their family’s struggles.

“I wasn’t able to afford him everything, but he didn’t let that stop him,” she said. “He just kept pushing for what he wanted in life.”

With his stomach growling for food, Smith sat at his computer looking for opportunities to play college football. He estimated he sent 100 emails a day to coaches around the country.

Smith said he and Johnson finally found a coach after trying an alternative method.

“With Idaho, we tried something different. We called,” Smith said.

Bobby Daly, an Idaho graduate assistant, told them to send game tape so the coaching staff could determine if they were qualified to join the UI football program.

It wasn’t too long before Daly sent an email and invited both to try out as preferred walk-ons.

“At that moment, my whole life changed,” Smith said. “I cried when he sent me that email ... I just always felt if I got this opportunity, I’d get an opportunity to change my mom’s life and give her a different style of living.”

This spring, Smith is preparing for what could be the last shot at his dream. Joined by Johnson, the two will attempt to earn a spot on the Vandal football team as preferred walk-ons.

The storm and the aftermath

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina battered the Gulf Coast and forced an estimated 1.2 million people to flee their homes.

“We lost everything,” Betty Smith said. “Our house flooded out.”

Smith’s former coach Jeff Curtis, an assistant football coach at John Curtis Christian High School, described the aftermath as a weird time for the community.



“For two weeks, all communication was very, very difficult,” he said. “Cell phones didn’t work, we had no landlines, it was all down — all communication was down.”

With the lack of communication, Lee Edmunds, who coached Smith throughout his childhood, said there was uncertainty on which families, if any, would return to the neighborhood.

“It was really tough,” he said. “You didn’t know who was coming back ... or if everybody was just going to stay where they ended up.”

Thirteen years old at the time, Quincy said he and his parents were forced to evacuate and head to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where they would spend the next three months living in a small hotel room.

“I was upset,” Smith said, at the thought of not seeing his friends again.

Smith said when his family went back to their New Orleans home, they walked into an unlivable house. With extensive damage, the luxury of a home would have to wait.

“We had to remodel our whole house,” he said. “We had about two feet of water ... it had mold, mildew — we had to remodel everything.”

For an additional four months, Betty Smith said they moved from hotels to staying with friends and family until their house was repaired.

When things started to get back to normal, a different kind of storm rolled into Smith’s life. Betty Smith said as soon as their home was fixed, her husband’s health started to worsen.

“His daddy had a heart attack,” she said. “Everything started to change again in his life.”

Smith’s father Larry Smith spent the next several years going in and out of the hospital. Just over two years ago, Smith lost his father to a heart attack.

“That was one of the toughest days of my life,” Smith said. “That was the big turning point ... I knew I wanted to be like my dad. I wanted to be the person he was.”

The loss came when Smith was away for his first year of college at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. It was the second of three times he was forced to drop out of school to move back home and be with his mother.

“By me losing my father, I lost everything,” Smith said. “Me and my mom, we went through a tough time ... I had to put

my dreams on pause.”

Smith said his father always wanted him to attend college and play football. When the doctor told him the news of his father, Smith said he was more determined than he had ever been.

“I knew if I’m going to play ball, I was going to be the best that I can be at doing it,” he said. “I’m going to make sure the whole nation knows my name. Regardless if I’m sitting on the bench, or whatever position I’m playing, I’m just going to try and be the best I can be.”

The South

Smith and Johnson grew up in Metairie, Louisiana, a metropolitan area of New Orleans. Smith said while some parts of Metairie are white-dominant and upper class, his neighborhood was the opposite.

“Growing up there was kinda rough,” he said. “A lot of people that were close to me are either dead or in jail.”

When Smith was 17, he said he was caught in the middle of a shootout on Fourth of July. Smith said he was walking with some friends when they heard the rapid gunfire.

“It’s the norm down there,” he said. “We just took off running.”

Calling the cops was out of the question, too. Smith chuckled at the suggestion.

“You don’t do that, oh no,” he said. “Ain’t calling no cops down South. That’s not what you do. That’s the wrong thing to do actually.”

Smith said local law enforcement almost killed their chances of playing college football.

“Me and Terry got racial profiled the day before we came to UI,” Smith said.

It was the first week of January 2014. The two, joined by a friend who Smith described as a white-blonde female, were sitting in a car outside of Smith’s house telling her about the upcoming tryout at Idaho.

All of a sudden, a police officer hopped out of his car, drew his gun and pointed it right at them.

“He asked, ‘What’re y’all doing in the car’ and had the gun drawn on me,” Smith said. “He grabs Terry out the car, slams him on the car, throws handcuffs on him.”

The cop looked at Johnson’s identification and because of his dreadlocks, the color of his skin and where he lived, assumed he had been to jail, Smith said.

— “ —
I’m going to make sure the whole nation knows my name. Regardless if I’m sitting on the bench, or whatever position I’m playing, I’m just going to try and be the best I can be

Quincy Smith

Johnson denied the claim and Smith said the officer told him he was lying. Both pleaded with the cop and said they were in the car talking about their future at Idaho — he didn't believe them.

"He said, 'You ain't going to no University of Idaho,'" Smith said in his best impression of the officer. "Thanking god that Terry's friend was Caucasian ... That's what saved our lives."

Both had grown accustomed to this kind of treatment, as Smith said this was a common occurrence and racism is still prevalent in the South.

When him and Johnson go back home, Smith said people don't believe what they're trying to accomplish in Moscow.

"People look down on us because they think we've changed," he said. "We haven't changed, we're just chasing our dream."

A bright future

Smith, fresh after a workout, attempted to catch his breath as he walked into the dark conference room.

As he sat down, his cellphone vibrated — it was a text.

It had been a year since Smith first arrived at Idaho, and because the NCAA ruled him ineligible. It was just another obstacle Smith had to hurdle. He attended school without playing football.

Still out of breath, he took out his phone to read what it said. As he stared at the message, the light from the screen hit his face and revealed a wide-eyed look of relief.

"I've been cleared by the NCAA," Smith said as if he was trying to hold back the emotion. "I'm just thankful I never gave up." ●



QUINCY SMITH

One match



One passion

Grounded in history with a bright future

*Story by Cara Pantone
Photography by Caden Fields*

— “ —

She'll listen to you and
try to help you with
all your problems or
just be the comfort
that you need

*Sarah
Herrmann*

● “I can start a fire with one match.”

It's said with a smile, but Camilla Van Natter is serious. She was a Girl Scouts counselor, after all, and knows her way around a campsite.

The Priest River, Idaho, native is set to graduate in May from University of Idaho with a bachelor's degree in History and a minor in Asian Studies.

Van Natter came to UI as a self-described “Vandal baby.” However, she is not crazy about the hills that roll over Moscow's campus

Van Natter has dwarfism, defined by the Little People of America advocacy group as a condition of short stature, in which an adult has a height of 4 feet 10 inches or under. Though it can be physically challenging at times, Van Natter said the condition doesn't define her.

“It is definitely a part of me and who I am, because it is who and what I am, but I'm more than that,” Van Natter said. “I've had frustrations with mobility, maybe, and getting around campus, but overall with my classes and my studies it hasn't hindered me. I just had to drop my yoga class because my body doesn't work like that — my legs are too short.”

Van Natter said she is open to talking about her condition — something that has helped her socially and academically.

“I have a great group of friends,” she said. “I'm loud and like to think that I'm funny, so I like being around people with a good sense of humor.”

Sarah Herrmann, a fellow UI senior, said she and Van Natter bonded over common interests while they lived in

Theophilus Tower freshman year.

“She is an incredibly caring person — almost to the point of being self-sacrificing,” Herrmann said. “She's a great emotional support. She'll listen to you and try to help you with all your problems or just be the comfort that you need.”

Along with her friends, Van Natter said her professors have encouraged her to further her knowledge, confidence and passion.

“They're invaluable resources, because they help encourage you to do what you want to do and provide the resources and tools to do it,” Van Natter said.

Becky Jager, a UI history professor, mentored Van Natter's senior capstone project on the rise of celebrity culture in America in the 1920s. According to Jager, Van Natter made the experience easy.

“She has a passion for intellectual discovery,” Jager said. “She's kind of a joy to sit with and talk to about her ideas and what she's interested in examining.”

Despite her commitment to history, Van Natter isn't certain about her future. She would like to work in museums, possibly as a curator, travel extensively and live on the West Coast. Van Natter said she feels prepared from her education at UI, but more importantly, knows she has grown — something she hopes other students experience.

“College is our own journey of self-exploration, growing up in all ways,” Van Natter said. “Honestly, take care of yourself ... it's something we don't put a lot of emphasis on. It's always academics come first, but it's important to make sure you're OK. That you're in a mental, emotional and physical state. Be passionate and do things.” ●

The PERKS
of BARTENDING
in a COLLEGE TOWN



Story by Christopher Dempsey
Photography by David Betts

— “ —

He's a real good bartender. He's quick. He's thorough and he's a lot of fun

Tom Scott

● The light decorates the walls behind the bar Jordan Purkapile tends at John's Alley Tavern. He moves quickly, but pauses briefly to engage patrons and receives compliments for his attentiveness.

"He's a real good bartender. He's quick. He's thorough and he's a lot of fun," said Tom Scott, co-owner of the Tavern.

Purkapile, 32, has responded to the nickname "Purk" for most of his life. He started bartending 11 years ago at a bar in his hometown of Pierre, South Dakota where learned to pour a drink from a left-handed bartender and still uses the left-handed pour.

Purkapile has been in situations that are inevitable for many experienced bartenders. He has been covered in vomit. He's broken up fights and been swung at.

One time a patron of the bar fell off a stool and hit his head and started bleeding. The guitarist saw the blood and fainted off of the stage as Purkapile was on the phone requesting medical services. He has crowd surfed around the Tavern on a busy night encouraging others to do the same.

He started filling in at the Tavern eight years ago, when university students were on break and has since become well known at the Tavern.

Purkapile said he enjoys working as a bartender in a college town. The scene changes as students graduate and others turn 21.

"It's a lot more fun and diverse in a college town," Purkapile said.

While at the bar, Purkapile said he likes experimenting with

new cocktails for patrons at the Tavern.

Purkapile first visited Moscow 10 years ago to spend time with his friend backpacking around The Seven Devils Mountains, rafting the North Fork Payette River and touring University of Idaho's campus. He fell in love with the area and moved to Moscow shortly after his visit.

Purkapile started visiting the Tavern regularly when he moved to Moscow because of the live music. An idea embodied on a mural outside of the bar, said manager Jesse Stone.

Purkapile trained Stone as a bar-back and then became a bartender before he was offered the manager's position at the Tavern. Stone said he has admired and tried to match Purkapile's work ethic since meeting him. Purkapile's presence contributes to the welcoming atmosphere of the Tavern.

"When you walk into a bar, you want to feel that you're welcome and [Purkapile] always does that," said Tammy Bennett, a patron of the Tavern.

Bennett has known Purkapile for eight years and she considers him her son.

Purkapile enjoys working full-time, co-running a department for Northwest River Supply. NRS is an employee-owned company based in Moscow that supplies water sports equipment and apparel worldwide.

He spends his free time white water rafting, canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding in the area, and bartends on the weekends. He doesn't think he'd like bartending in a non-college town after his experiences bartending in Moscow. ●



Purkapile is a bartender at John's Alley Tavern. He has 11 years of experience.

facilitate programs

on call 24/7

be a resource

incident reports

role model

minimum 2.5 GPA

resident checks

leadership

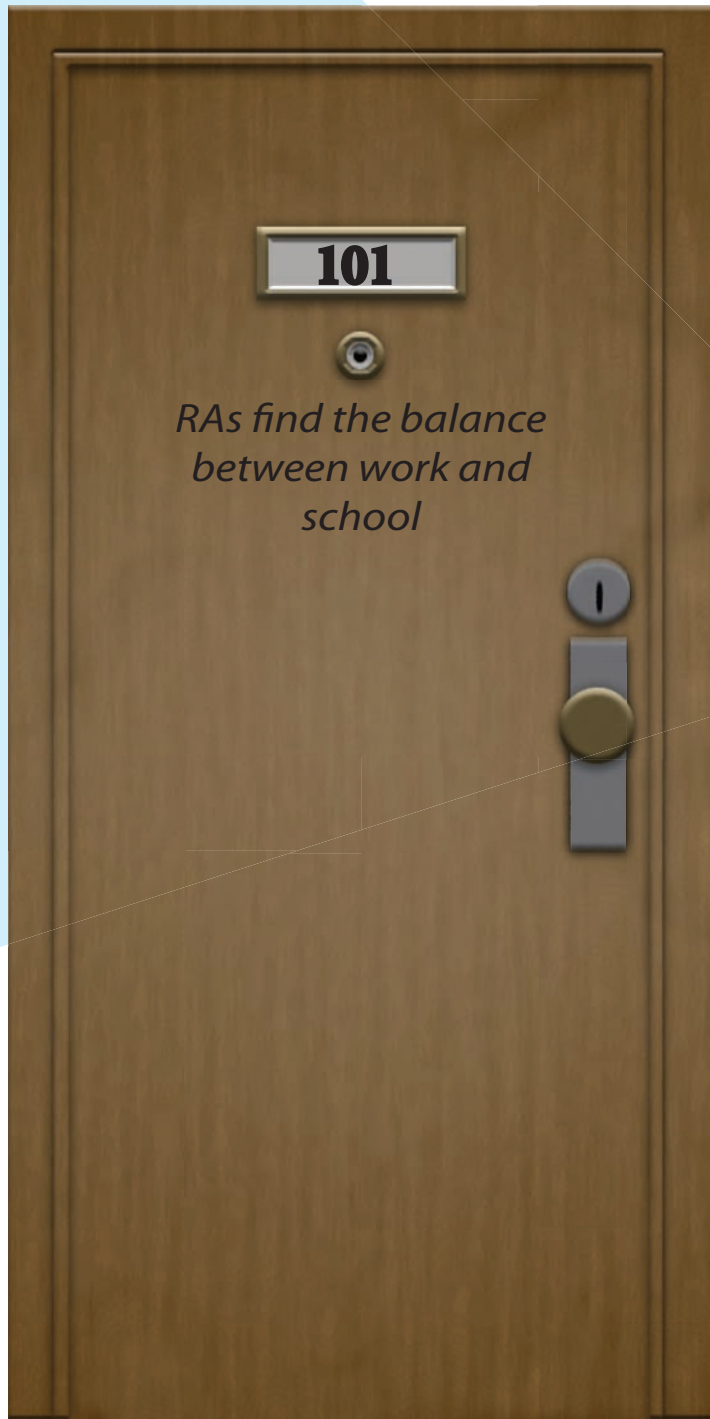
duty logs

hall meetings

nightly rounds

duty phone

Behind an RA's door



*RAs find the balance
between work and
school*

● They knock on doors, give warnings and plan events for halls. They do their rounds, mostly unseen, until they bust a party in the dorms. Resident Assistants, better known as RAs, have a large responsibility.

Dan Roach and Taylor Smith, former RAs at the University of Idaho, said it is hard to work where you live. There is never any off time where RAs can relax and not worry about how they are presenting themselves, Smith said. RAs know they are representatives of University Housing going into the job, but after a while it just gets tiring, Smith said.

While the job is demanding, Roach said the experience is worth it. When it is all calculated out with room and board, Roach said he suspects RAs are a bit underpaid. Smith agreed, but said most of it came back in the form of leadership, job experience and organizational skills.

Regardless, Roach said the housing staff is supportive in the stressful environment.

"They make an effort to know how you're doing, academically and mentally," Roach said. "They want to help, because they know it is demanding."

Smith's adviser had an open door policy where he and other RAs reporting to her could come and

visit about anything from residence halls to grades to life.

Smith, a senior psychology student, left after his first year as an RA because he wanted to move on with his life, he said. He moved in with his girlfriend off campus. Smith said

the politics often involved within the housing system wears down RAs after one or two years.

Roach, a senior material science major, was an RA from 2012 to 2014. Roach left after two years of

being an RA, because he knew his senior year was going to be rough academically. He also said he wanted time to himself and it was time for him to move on.

Corey Ray, associate director at University Housing, said RAs leave the job due to several reasons. But Ray said burnout is a main factor. RAs just get tired of living in a fishbowl where everyone can see their actions and judge them, Ray said. Of the RAs who do quit during the school year, it is most common for them to relinquish their positions halfway through their junior year.

Other reasons RAs leave are due to graduation, study abroad opportunities or they were let go. RAs are let go due to policy violations such as drinking or doing drugs. Anyone who is let go or who chooses to leave can always reapply.

"The best RAs are the ones with experience," Ray said. "Who better to tell you about the consequences than someone who has been through it?"

There are 50 student positions within the housing department at UI, and 40 of those are RA positions.

Although it can be stressful, retention rates of RAs are high most of the time, Ray said. Since 2009, fall to spring semester retention rates are about 90 percent. Fall 2011 to spring 2012 showed a 100 percent retention, while fall 2012 and 2014 to spring 2013 and 2015 showed a drop to 86 and 88 percent, respectively.

RAs have to plan a certain number of programs a year, keep a GPA above 2.5 if they are an undergraduate student and be a policy enforcer, Ray said. RAs also do rounds during the weekend and are on call at least two weekends a semester.

One responsibility RAs have is programming for their residents. RAs have to gain a certain amount of points each semester off of programming. Roach said this is harder in some communities than in others.

RAs are responsible for their academics, Ray said. They have to come up with an academic plan if they intend to take more than 16 credits per semester or if their semester GPA dips below 2.5. In those cases, RAs are on academic probation and are required to meet with their housing adviser and with a tutor.

"The thing that trumps housing is academics," Ray said.

Free room and board in addition

— “ —
The best RAs are the ones with experience. Who better to tell you about the consequences than someone who has been through it?
Corey Ray



to a \$50 to \$100 textbook scholarship are compensation for an RA's work. This compensation can affect a student's financial aid, Ray said, because it is a monetary value of assistance toward a college education.

Roach would not recommend a student take an RA position just for the compensation. He said the people who should be RAs are the ones that genuinely want to help people.

The reason for the larger drops in 2012 and 2014 Ray attributes to people who took the RA position just for the room and board.

"It takes a rare person to be an RA," Smith said.

Current Theophilus Tower RA, Ryan Franz, said he loves his job. Franz, a second-year operations management major and first year RA, said he enjoys planning programs

with his eighth-floor residents.

While Franz would never say the job is bad or too hard, he does admit it can be hectic and stressful at times. RAs decorate bulletin boards in their halls, program events with other RAs and have to be an emergency responder in certain situations.

Through all the stress, Franz said being an RA is great. The room and board was an incentive for him to join, but he also wanted to help people. Franz hopes to come back again next year as an area assistant within University Housing, or even as an RA.

Ray said RAs give up a lot for nine months. He said he wished residents could see how much work RAs do, because most of the time they are just seen as RoboCop policy enforcers.

"(RAs) don't get the credit they deserve," Ray said. "I respect them." ●

By the numbers

50

Number of student positions within University Housing

40

Number of Resident Assistants at UI

100

Retention rate of Resident Assistants from fall 2011 to spring 2013

86

Retention rate of RA's from fall 2012 to spring 2013

2.5

Minimum GPA for resident assistants

Q&A



KADIN
MCGREEVY

Age: 21
Major: Bachelor of Fine Arts
Performance and Directing
Hometown: Moscow, population
24,534

Favorite food?

Padeceu with tofu.

Pet peeve?

There was this guy wearing a Gonzaga sweatshirt. I really like Gonzaga, and I was making all these references This guy had no idea. You can't wear the memorabilia of a team and not be able to understand references to it.

Dream job?

I think to be a director of theater worth seeing. Innovative theater. Not Broadway Something that challenges the way we see theater today.

What is your motto?

Surround yourself with really good people. I think that's why I'm at the right place in life.

Are you spiritual?

I don't think I'm spiritual to anything in particular. For example, I'm wearing these Indian beads my mom got me. They're on my body, I love them, but there's no religious purpose besides family. I'm more interested in humans than I am heaven.

Age: 23
Major: Environmental Science
Hometown: Beijing, China,
population 21,150,000

Favorite food?

Seafood.

Pet peeve?

Disturbing sounds.

Dream job?

Become a researcher in the field of ecology.

What is your motto?

I don't really have a motto.

Are you spiritual?

I believe in the existence of some form of higher beings, but do not have faith in any specific religion. Or maybe my answer should be something like I believe in proletarian internationalism? This is a joke.

What kind of mark has your hometown left on you?

I think the most obvious thing is that I found all so-called Chinese food in the United States annoying, because the yeast is wrong. Also, it is hard for me to talk to people in a very straightforward manner, and address people with their first name.



BINGBING
XU

Are you spiritual?

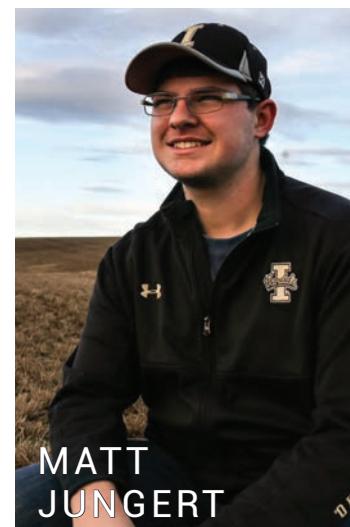
I am very spiritual. I was raised in a pretty religious family, but once I got into my teens my parents let me explore my own beliefs. I am a strong believer in being a good, kind, giving person. I believe that if I have good morals and values, and if I'm a good person, I will be rewarded. Whether that's in this life or another one.

What kind of mark has your hometown left on you?

Portland will always be my favorite place on earth. It's not just the place that I love, but I truly believe that it's the people that make it so special to me. Everyone in Portland is so kind, generous and laid back. I also love Portland, because it has pretty much everything. It has delicious food, great music, it's close to the ocean and so much more. Portland is so unique, I've never been anywhere that compares. It will always be home sweet home.

What kind of mark has your hometown left on you?

Moscow has given me great patience in life. Moscow is small, diverse, but not too small. It gives you the opportunity to really see people, and that will serve me wherever I go.



MATT
JUNGERT

Age: 19
Major: Agriculture Engineering
Hometown: Cottonwood, Idaho,
population 910

Favorite food?

Pork chops.

Pet peeve?

I don't have one. I'm pretty easy going about everything.

Dream job?

Working for a big irrigation company.

What is your motto?

Don't give up. I live on a farm, so if anything doesn't work, you have to keep going at it until you make it work.

Are you spiritual?

My parents kind of are. When I was little, we went to church. But then there was a change in pastors, and my parents didn't like the pastor. We never really picked it up again.

What kind of mark has your hometown left on you?

I'm simple. I don't wear super fancy, fabulous clothes. And when I meet someone, I like to get to know them.



KHELEN
HAROLD

Age: 20
Major: Public Relations, minor in
Music
Hometown: Portland, population
609,546

Favorite food?

Any and all fruit.

Pet peeve?

When people don't smile.

Dream job?

Owning/managing my own music venue.

What is your motto?

What is the point of being alive, if you don't at least try to do something remarkable?

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