

My Thank You to My Paternoville Family

July 27, 2012

I wrote this the night we were picked to go to the 2010 Capital One Bowl, the culmination of my senior season and 4 years at Gate A with the best group of people I've ever met. Apologize for the length/inconsistent capitalization/potential bad grammar. Other than that, enjoy.

“every story has a back story, and i think it's important to include how i became the person i am today. now as with any memory that's 15 years old, some parts of the day are pretty fuzzy, but ill do my best to recount what i do remember of what i still consider to be one of the best days of my life.

it was september of 1994, and my dad had told me about a month ago that he was going to take me to a penn state game. to this point, i had heard of penn state and knew of their football team, but hadn't really processed that attending a game was a possibility. after convincing myself NOT to go because of the ridiculous 3+ hour drive and wake-up time, my mom changed my mind back into going. i laid my clothes out on my toybox the night before, and man, was i going to look good: my favorite purple shirt with the “cool” design on the front that looked like something the fresh prince of bel air would wear. The morning came and the drive must've not been so bad because I have no memory of it. Just like that...i was walking around campus and college avenue getting the whirlwind tour. The two memories that stick out in my mind the most would be heading into what used to be family clothesline, an underground dump of a store with hardly any merchandise at all...but they had jerseys. i wanted ki-jana carter's, they didn't have it...but they could make it! But i also liked bobby engram...and they had his already. So i was forced to make the first REALLY hard decision in my life...a #10 jersey now, or wait around for a #32. my inherent impatience as a 6 year old triumphed, and the #10 jersey was purchased. We then found our way in front of old main where i asked what i still consider to be the most intelligent question ive ever asked in my life. my dad points up to the engraving in the front of the building and says “buddy, this is old main, penn state's central building”, to which i responded “when it was first built, did they just call it ‘main’?”

before i knew it, it was gametime. i don't remember hardly anything about the game other then the view, the sunset, and that we kicked ass. After the game, we walked circumference of the stadium and found some members of the blue band standing around. i knew of the blue band but only from TV, so at this point these people were basically celebrities to me. i couldn't believe it when my dad actually went up, talked to them, AND asked for a picture. they pulled me over and held me up so i'd be in the frame, and they held up a trumpet right next to me. apparently they put it there just for the photo, but no one bothered to inform me of this, so i took a deep breath and wailed out my first musical note ever. the band members immediately pulled the trumpet away, laughing and saying “no, no, its just for the picture.” they put the trumpet back in the picture, and it took all of my will to smile for the camera and not try to play it again. these 3 or so minutes i still cite as the reason i took up saxophone in 4th grade. Fast forward to the ride home, stuck in traffic for what seemed like an eternity, and for the first time, i was allowed to lay down across the backseat WITHOUT my seat belt, making the ride way more comfortable. as i started to fall asleep, i looked out the window and saw the big dipper for the first time in my life. cheesy? probably. memorable? absolutely. after looking for it for two years, there it was without me even trying. and it was at that point, after the perfect ending to the perfect day, i thought to myself “I can't wait to come here.”

after 12 years of attending more games and getting grades just good enough to produce a rather anticlimactic acceptance into main campus, i spent the entire summer practicing for my blue band audition. i picked a song i had played before in high school for a recital so i would be extra-ready. The day of the audition came, and the pressure of “the-next-five-minutes-are-the-entire-reason-you-started-playing-music” fell upon me like an iron hammer. i played the entire piece almost flawlessly except for one problem...I forgot to breathe. i had played the entire piece in one breath...except for the last 3 notes, where i ran out of air, had to take a huge pause and then play the last three notes out of time and off beat. im still not sure they were even the right 3 notes anyway. needless to say, after bombing the audition, and an audition class of 40 or so being narrowed down to the band taking 4, my journey in the penn state student section began. it turned out that being cut from the blue band turned out to be a blessing in disguise. sometimes what you think you want for the longest time ends up being the 2nd best choice, but you don't know until you try the other option.

since that amazing september day in 1994, penn state football has been one of the biggest components in my life. yea, the diploma looks pretty on my wall when i get a job/office/cubicle, and i am absolutely proud of everything my university does, but if my parents haven't figured out by now that i came here for the white helmets with the blue stripe, the black shoes, and the highwater khaki pants, they might have some brain issues. my life up to this point was in preparation for these 4 years in beaver stadium, and i was going to make the most of them.

paternoville started for me with michigan that year, and man did we go all out. we were there early enough to get front row (though the ticket booth screwed up and gave us row 7), i skipped about half of my classes that week and at least hung out for a few hours there every night. i got involved in the drumline thanks to some very patient upperclassmen, and from then on i was addicted to the whole experience. screw blue band, there was no way i could give paternoville up the next year. i did nearly every game sophomore year, 4 games junior year, and finally committed and did every game my senior year. Over these four years, ive met all of you through penn state football, and we now come to the entire reason for writing this note: to thank you.

whether you've been with me since that first game against michigan in 2006, or if i just met you this past year, you are the reason i was able to make the most of it. we've been thru heartbreakers and heartstoppers; we've been thru 7 white outs or whitehouses, and we persevered thru some of the worst weather imaginable while sitting at gate A at beaver stadium. but whatever we had to do, no matter how incredulous the circumstances, we did it together. words cannot begin to describe how thankful and grateful that all of you became such a big part of my life, and i want to thank each and every one of you with the utmost sincerity for becoming a part of my family away from home. these truly, unequivocally, were the 4 best years of my life and the memories ive made with all of you i will carry with me forever.

see you in orlando. physically or spiritually.

your faithful cowbeller,
bud

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Tags: capital one bowl, cowbell, family, football, Gate A, Paternoville, penn state football paternoville cowbell 1994 2009 capital one bowl, Section, student