

Landon carter

6/24/2018

### Athena's Lessons to Aaron

Aaron Treveyon Robinson is 21 years old, born September 5th, 1996. He attended Southwestern University before transferring to Texas State after the fall of 2016. In his time at Texas State, Aaron played football for one season before deciding to return to his original university. Aaron still lives in San Marcos where he has been attending school until most recently, but he likes it so much he might stay and continue to commute to Georgetown. Outside of school and football, Aaron spends a lot of his free time socializing, like any other college student. On the weekends he likes to go out and drink with friends and let loose, and when he doesn't feel like going out he likes to kick back and relax watching movies or playing his favorite game, Fortnite.

On a typical day, the first thing that Aaron does when he wakes up is tend to his dog, Athena. She normally has to go outside, so he takes her on walks that usually last 10-15 minutes. When they get back from the walk, Aaron feeds Athena and jumps in the shower. On days where he has class, he gets in his car and makes the hour long trek to Georgetown, but he doesn't mind the drive. When Aaron doesn't have class you can find him in the gym during the offseason and on the field in the fall. After his day Aaron heads home around 7. When he gets home, he walks Athena and gives her a bowl of food. Aaron admits that these routines with his dog are consistent actions throughout the day when other plans can be sporadic.

Being a Student Athlete puts a smile on his face. But it isn't always fun and games. Aaron tells me about the pressures from teachers or coaches during the season but reminds me that he knew what he was signing up for. When I asked Aaron if there were any challenges that

he was not expecting, he quickly stated. "It's nothing you don't expect going on. You just need to handle all of the new free time in college effectively."

Aaron does not shy away from the spotlight that you get as a collegiate athlete. The support and acknowledgement that the Southwestern Football Team gets from the community inspires Aaron to be his best on and off the field. One of our conversations reflected this feeling. "Obviously it's amazing being able to play and maybe inspire a kid to follow their dream. You never know if someone in the crowd relates to you in their own way. It's really great seeing the impact we can make on a community. The games get crazy. There are people from Georgetown that come to watch and you can tell that it makes them happy." When Aaron describes the feeling he gets from inspiring kids, his love for the sport really shows.

\* \* \*

Aaron's Husky/German Shepherd mix, Athena, at two months old, is a recent addition to his life, and she keeps him on his toes throughout the day. When I asked Aaron about the name Athena he didn't hesitate to tell me. "I named her Athena because I am really into Greek mythology." Aaron agrees that she is always teaching him lessons, living up to her namesake. Although she's only been in the family for about a month she has made an impact on Aaron's everyday life.

We met one Wednesday after class when Aaron informed me that he brought Athena to campus and that she was in his friend Kory's room. Aaron and I went on a walk through campus and we often were swarmed by people. Athena had a magnetic attraction to all the people who passed by and it wasn't hard to guess why. She looks like a small black bear or an adorable wolf, but Aaron calls her monkey.

Once we get away from the crowds, he starts to tell me what it is was like owning a pet. "It's kind of similar to raising a kid. You have to be patient, loving, kind, and caring enough to put

your dog first.” He goes on and talks about how she teaches him patience because she can really get on his nerves. “I came back this weekend and she ate both of my headsets to my PS4. So I’m still pissed about that...but she’s still a puppy and she is still learning.”

Aaron may be Athena's support system, but the tables turn both ways. Watching the people's interactions to Aaron and Athena told me that Athena was a support system for Aaron too.

\* \* \*

As with many college students, Aaron's life has ups and downs. Aaron transferred to Texas State after the fall semester at Southwestern in 2016. He took summer courses in San Marcos and started prepping for the season. The city was amazing, diverse, and of course has a great river. When Aaron started playing football in the fall he was back into what he loved. As the season progressed Aaron thought about his old team frequently. The lights were brighter playing in San Marcos but the bonds he had made previously as well as promises kept his mind wondering. He felt like he was running away.

Aaron disclosed that he had a close friend on his high school football team pass away named Darren McClinton. Darren played on the opposite side of the ball from Aaron, so plays between them would get scrappy from time to time. At the end of the day, they both knew that the passion that they brought to practice was one of the many sparks that drove the team. In his writing, Aaron tells us how his friend's death affected him and how he started to turn away from football. He describes that during his transfer to Texas State he couldn't reactivate the same fire that was inside of him.

After Aaron completed his season at Texas State he realized the school wasn't for him. He decided that he wanted to return to his first university, Southwestern, to pursue his education and football dreams. Aaron transferred twice in pursuit of his dreams and has struggled along

his path. Aaron wasn't going to run away from anything anymore. No matter the challenge he is ready for whatever comes his way.

\* \* \*

As we start to walk back towards Aaron's car from our walk with Athena, we sparked up a conversation about close calls we have encountered. We had decided to discuss close calls, because we had both deemed those situations pure instinct. I asked Aaron if he had a close call with Athena, and he immediately looked at me and I could tell there was a story.

"I took Athena out without a leash, which was typical because she was a well behaved puppy." Aaron describes the day in detail. They were waiting for Athena to use the restroom, she seemed like she needed to go. But his assumption that she would use the restroom quickly soon vanished as she took her sweet time. Aaron found a bench to sit on.

Suddenly Athena ran out onto the street. Aaron looked up. Panic set in as he saw a huge Toyota Tundra coming down the road. The flip flops he had on stayed on the ground as Aaron ran into the road. He scooped up Athena and jumped on the other side of the street, safely in the grass, without a second to spare.

Like an angry parent, Aaron scolded, "what were you thinking!" He was pissed. But as the seconds passed Aaron's anger turns to gratitude. "I'm just glad nobody was hurt." The truck barely missed Aaron after he moved fast to save his dog. Athena didn't seem nearly as fazed. After the story, Aaron joked, "Yeah, let's just take a moment to thank football for letting me have that reaction time and athletic capability."

Although Athena certainly complicates Aaron's daily routine, she also gives additional meaning to Aaron's life. Caring for her every day is a new adventure, as he shows with his story, teaching him responsibility and helping to build his character.

\* \* \*

Comparing Aaron's writing to our conversations brings new light to his stories. He has the drive to motivate others but has had no issue playing a specific role for a team. His loyalty to his friends is strong and he does his best to uphold his word. The upcoming fall will be his first full semester back at Southwestern where he is looking forward to new opportunities.

Aaron is a young man who felt lost for a while. Even while he was confused, he did his best to influence those around him, keeping his head held high throughout challenges. Adopting Athena is one of Aaron's many ways of stating that he doesn't feel lost anymore. If he ever feels lost again he knows that his dog and teammate, Athena, will be there looking up to him every step of the way.

#### Authors Note

While writing the three articles that I was required to write for the summer semester I found that my writing was pretty rusty. We looked into journalistic forms of writing that would help us try and improve our storytelling. I did my best to write as unbiased as I can, even though I would end up adding myself into the story by accident.

The process that I deemed useful for writing, seemed to write segments in chunks. I was taking out pages of my assignment night after night, when some days I couldn't write anything in the day. My writing was almost stiff before I would go over it a final time because I had such a hard time creating a good narrative track in my stories.

The overall improvement I have felt as a writer from taking this course comes from having more confidence develop in my storytelling and overall working on my attention to detail. Having to sit back and observe was harder than it seems. I was constantly being torn between

something I felt and the direction of my writing. I wanted to convey truth, It just couldn't be my truth.

Personally, the skills that I refined and developed from the short amount of time in June term, give me a good footing for future assignments. I am a more well rounded writer now and I hope to continue learning about my skill sets.