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## Gett'n Over

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Exavier Viramontez

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### Gett'n Over

I come from a pretty special place where the sun is never far away and the air is always thin, where the soil is red and the sky changes it's color to suit it's mood. I come from New Mexico and it is truly the land of enchantment, something that I did not recognize until I returned to it, after living in Iowa for a year. Even though now it doesn't seem very relevant to my time at Iowa State I promise you it will make sense in the end, the important concept you should leave with is simple, the land, terrain, and scenery can be just as influential as the people on and within it.

But I digress, Albuquerque is a moderately populated but well spaced city full of everything you would expect and even some things you wouldn't. I come from the South Valley which is one of the many hoods located in Albuquerque and I love it with all my heart. This is the womb if you will of the city, it is the valley within the valley, full of life that the Rio Grande brings as it weaves around the mesa, the culture that can only come from people who know suffering. A place that bridges the gap between Mexican and American, where Chile is a way of life not something to sustain it. Where the children still play outside even though it's not safe, and where sometimes the valley reminds you how dangerous it can really be. This is my home and it has shaped me, molded me into the man that I am today, it is because of this place that I made it to Iowa in the first place. It prepared me for things that you shouldn't have to prepare for and this is why I remain in Iowa.

So with that being said we will pick up in Ames, where I currently live, as I write this paper in hopes that maybe someone who comes after me will read it and not feel so alone. I refuse to sugar coat the fact that college is hard and gritty and not what you think it is, but at the same time not all that bad. Let's go back in time to move in day August 2011 as I stand bewildered at the notion of living in Iowa and even more bewildered at the thought of living in a dorm. It was my father and I lugging all my things up ten flights of stairs because the elevator was far too slow and he was far too intent on working me like a dog! Once my guitars are unpacked and the inaugural jam has taken place the room is officially mine and my father takes me out for breakfast. As time goes on I become familiar with the other people on my floor especially the ladies for obvious reasons and it was fantastic for about a month. This is what I like to call the honeymoon period where everyone is still getting to know everyone else. You feel like you have so much in common with everyone when in reality it's probably just the homesickness. This is the period when the women become sexual deviants because they are high on freedom, and the men get in trouble for capitalizing on it, and it's great because it is unique to the college experience. But it gets old fast and when it gets old I'm talking so old you have to completely remove yourself from said situation in order to retain your own character and that's what happened to me.

I have never been one for the superficial but I have to admit that after living in the dorms for a year it was definitely confirmed but I now understand the allure behind it. For the month and a half that I consider the dark period, I can honestly say that I lost sight of what it really meant to be me. I stopped thinking, I forgot to look

deeper, and I flung myself into a situation that would test my character in a way I would have never expected. The test came in the form of a woman and man did I fail... big time! When the time came to be man up and be a friend I let the superficial take me and instead we crossed lines we couldn't uncross. Consequently I lost a friend that day, and I finally realized just how deep of a wound this really was. Not only had I betrayed the trust of a friend but I had betrayed everything I had been taught. The shame I felt was incredible but brought me back from a last place.

In response to the incident I moved and I took a different friend with me. He felt similarly about the way people were living and in all honesty just was not feeling the vibe that the rest of the floor was giving off. From here I began to rebuild the man I know to be Exavier and start to build some meaningful relationships. From that point on the second semester was pretty uneventful so we will jump ahead a little bit to the beginning of this semester.

It is my Sophomore year and I have successfully moved my best friend, bassist, and brother from New Mexico out here in order to chase the dream, and let me tell you that drive was no joke, but that's another story for another time. I have also (with the help of that friend I had made my great escape with) found the perfect apartment that in my opinion is the suave-ist joint in all of Ames. Now this is for the students reading this, I cannot stress this enough, if you live in the dorms GET OUT NOW!!!!!! There are so many more benefits to living off campus than there are hindrances so long as you maintain your focus. Which in some cases is easier said than done, but I have faith in you. Which brings me to my next point, faith, or better yet faith in ones self.

This semester I took on a heavy load, in terms of being out on my own, trying to get the band up and running and the looming threat that is 18 credit hours and it got to me. Something about the monotony of it all really brought me down towards the 5<sup>th</sup> week of classes and worsened up until about thanksgiving. It was a feeling of hopelessness for sure, my grades were about average but a few of my classes were slipping and I felt completely alienated from the people around me with exceptions of my roommates. There was this sense of being singled out and disconnected from my fellow classmates because I cannot relate to the Midwest's ideals, or it's conservative nature (not saying they are bad, just foreign). I think what it boiled down to was an innate restlessness that I had ignored for too long that transformed itself into this sadness, and it took a trip back home to shake me out of it.

I left on the Monday of thanksgiving break headed back to New Mexico in order to see my family and I wasn't excited, which is not like me at all. But I remember that flight because the closer I got to Albuquerque the deeper the sadness became. The whole experience was surreal in the sense that the sunset lasted about 3 hours because we were chasing the sun. If you've never seen a sunset from 30,000 feet imagine a landscape made up of clouds, filled with changing faces and painted bright purples, reds, and oranges; it was incredible. When I finally got there I was reminded of how much my family loved and supported me. I was also reminded of the responsibility I have to my family to finish college, not to fail in the pursuit of my dreams and continue the legacy that the people before me fought so hard to create. I was given my late grandfathers watch. It is a one of a kind timepiece of turquoise set in silver and it was this artifact that he wore almost everyday of his adult life. It is

the signature of a man that I have never heard to be anything less than amazing, and for my grandmother to pass it on to me and not one of the other grandchildren or even her daughters was a big deal. It was in that moment that I reaffirmed why I was here, what I have to do and how I have to do it and now every time I check the time I am reminded. I returned from that trip the man I knew myself to be, and I am determined to keep myself that way.

When it's all said and done I am a product of my environment, forever changing and incorporating new things into my being. I have my ups and downs but I will always overcome the obstacles in my way not for me but for my family, my home, and anyone who comes from the wrong side of the tracks. I refuse to be suppressed in any form and I will not be satisfied until I have accomplished what I have set out to do. I have made mistakes and learned from them and I fully intend to make however many more it takes to get me where I want to be. So if you get anything from this account it should be resilience. Never stop striving for something greater, or better no matter what the circumstance and always remember where you come from regardless of where that may be.