

# David & Ryan: same class, different dreams

A feature story written by *Louise Denel and Noelia Enriquez*

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On his thirty-minute car journey towards Penn State Lehigh Valley, David likes to stop at the gas station and grab a hot chocolate before starting his school day. Meanwhile, 323 miles away, Ryan jumps in his light blue car, his window rolled completely down and stick his arm out towards Penn State Beaver.

Now, you may wonder who are they? Fair enough. David and Ryan do not know each other. They are two 22-year-old students at Penn State University, studying different majors. The only direct thread between them is an online communication course. But apart from this, David and Ryan have more in common than they might think.



*David and Breanne, his girlfriend*

David Reiser lives in Pittsburgh, a town that borders Western Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Usually he splits his time between being with his family and being at Rutgers, his girlfriend's university campus which is 61 miles away from Lehigh High Valley campus.

Currently David studies psychology. He chose to enter this field of medicine since some of his relatives have been struggling with mental illness in some ways and wants to help them.

"I feel compelled to get into that field of medicine and feel like I just wanted to help people [...] That's probably the biggest reason why I'm interested in psychology," he said.

David alludes to his family and girlfriend who try to overcome depression, anxiety and ADHD (Attention Definition Hyperactivity Disorder). For him, these types of mental illnesses are a characteristic feature of American society and the "culture of performance" that prevails in the United States.

"Here in America, it's work work work, there's no real time to just stop. And I think it contributes to a nationwide epidemic for mental health that's going on (...) People who need help do not get it when they really need it and I think that's very dangerous. That's terrible," he said.

Psychology is more than personal motivation for David. Apart from being committed to helping his relatives, he wants to contribute to making the US healthcare system change. By obtaining his Ph.D., he hopes to open his office one day and do the best he can to support people in any way. This includes having good communication and writing skills. That is why David has taken a minor in communication.

"For a psychology student, this is especially important when trying to communicate my opinions on mental health and also to be able to help people who need it," David said.

Besides David's interest in psychology, he's also passionate about video games and horror movies. He mostly likes psychological horror because of its reliance on symbolism. *Silent Hill 2* is his favorite video game since it has a scary art direction.

Now, what about Ryan? Ryan Lockhart lives in Monaca Township, a borough in Beaver County. He wants to become a journalist, so he decided to choose journalism as his major.



*Ryan and his family*

«One of the biggest moments that made me want to be a journalist was because I watched the movie *All the President's Men*. It's a fantastic movie about journalists, » he said.

Of course, Ryan has a clear idea about what type of subjects he wants to cover. He has a passion, a passion for video games. For him, since video game journalism is really motivating, and he wants to this part of his future career.

“I always hear my parents and people talking about how they hate their jobs and how eventually I'll hate mine as well, so I decided to shoot for a job that includes something I'm passionate about.” Ryan said.

In fact, in September 8th 2019 he started his own [blog](#) where he writes about popular video games and their impact on the industry.

Like David, Ryan took this online communication course to improve his writing skills. On top of that, it also helps him to stay on a schedule with his blog posts and helps him to develop his voice in those posts. Actually, Ryan loves writing. He even wrote a book full of horror based on short stories for his high school graduation project.

“I love anything horror based. I'm a huge fan of Halloween and scary movies. I always watch horror movies and TV shows, and I like haunted houses and scary stories,” he said.

Besides David and Ryan's common passions for video games and horror movies, they both hope to find a fulfilling job and be married within five years.

In the end, the stories of David and Ryan shows us that even if we don't know the people that surround us that well, we would be surprised by how much we have in common.



*Ryan playing video games*