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Brad D. Rowe interview for a Wright State University History Course

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Brad D. Rowe

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This interview is of Wright State University student Brad Rowe. Brad is a senior Social Sciences Education major here at the school and he talks at length about his life in the area.

Brad begins the interview by saying a few words about his family and their whereabouts. He talks about living in Troy, Ohio and says that his commute of twenty or thirty minutes is probably average for a commuting Wright State student. Brad talks about growing up in the tiny town of West Milton, Ohio and relates that there really isn't much to do in a small town except ride a bike and play sports. He tells about his success with sports and how a love of track and field took him to Columbus State College for a brief season. Before college, however, Brad switched high schools his senior, a brave move he says, and tells about the effects of his transfer.

Brad also talks about his life after high school and how a job in Dayton brought him back from Columbus to the Dayton area. He says how he ended up at Wright State and talks about the aspects of this university that he finds favorable, and the ones he doesn't quite like. The interview deals with Brad's plans for being a high school history teacher and beyond. He has a special slant he wants to use to teach history to high school students and he explains it in detail.

The interviewer also discovers Brad's take on what it's like to be a young, poor student trying to work and pay rent and attend classes, along with the other million tasks college students have to do. He talks about seeing live bands and the places he travels to do just that. He complains about the lack of musical venues in Dayton, as compared with cities like Detroit, Chicago, and even Cincinnati. Brad discusses the things he does in

downtown Dayton and talks about the cinema that not only shows good films, but also sells beer.

Most refreshingly, Brad talks about his future and rattles off the many big plans he has for himself. Any one of them would be enough for most people to tackle but Brad isn't selling himself short. Best of all, Brad says that his plans, though big, aren't set in stone and whatever happens happens. He concludes the interview by talking about staying in Dayton for at least a little while after finishing college, but that after he is settled into his career a bit, he wouldn't mind moving somewhere warm.

This interview was done on a lazy Friday afternoon in the Student Union lounge across from the bookstore at Wright State University. The atmosphere was quiet and relaxed, as most students had gone home for the weekend. Brad was candid and funny and does a nice job relating a college student's life in Dayton Ohio.

Alright Brad, why don't you start by telling me a little bit about yourself.

My name is brad Rowe. I'm twenty-two years old. I attend Wright State University, social sciences education major, which is a fancy term for history teacher. And, I have about a year left in my undergraduate work and then I've got to get my masters degree and then I'll be ready to look for a job.

Alright, where are you living now?

I live in Troy. It's about twenty, thirty minutes north of Wright State. I would consider it a medium to small size town. And, I live with one of my friends, but I will be moving in back with my mom in about a month.

Alright. Speaking of your mom, what about your parents? Are they in the area?

Yeah, my mom lives in Troy also. My dad lives in Columbus with my sister and my brother. My brother is thirty, sister is twenty-six. Yeah, and they all live in Columbus. Me and my mom are here in Troy.

What's your sister do?

She, she went to OU, communications major and she works for a business in Columbus. Dad works for Bank One, and my brother works for a golf course.

So why don't you tell me about where you grew up.

I grew up in West Milton, which is a very, very small town.. North of here, ten minutes away from where I presently live. [It's a] small conservative community. That about it.

What kind of things did you do for fun in West Milton?

What did I do for fun in West Milton? There wasn't much to do . Rode my bike a lot, played sports, had a dog. When, yeah there wasn't much to do.

What kind of sports did you play?

Really everything until I got into junior High. I played basketball and football and soccer and baseball. And then when I got into junior high you start focusing on school sports so it was really just track and soccer. Then, once I got into high school, soccer for my freshman and sophomore year, track all four years, cross country junior and senior year.

What were your events in track?

Middle distance. 400 meters, 800 meters, mile. And then, my senior year, we actually placed second in state in the 4 by 800 meter relay.

Alright.

I was pretty proud of that.

Well congratulations.

Thank you.

So what year did you graduate from West Milton?

Well actually I move to Covington my senior year. My mom moved to Troy that year and I wanted to go to a school with different and a better running program. I saw Covington was a great place for opportunity, and I went there and it was one of the best decisions I've ever made because I've met a lot of new people. Some of my best friends now are from Covington. I just wanted a change. It was actually a pretty...pretty, I want to say daring move for somebody their senior year to just pack up and move high schools, but you know, I still remain friends with people I knew from Milton and I made a lot of new friends so it was a good move.

Do you see a lot of those people still?

From Covington or Milton?

Both.

Yeah. Like I said some of my best friends are form Covington and from Milton. And one of my best friends from Milton I live with now, so yeah I still keep in touch with a lot of them.

Did you have any odd jobs growing up?

Odd jobs, yeah. I worked for my grandpa and my uncle. Me and my friend Mitchell would lay cement every now and again for my grandpa and bale hay. My first job was at the Pearson House, a little country type kitchen restaurant in downtown West Milton. (laughter) Well downtown, the main street.

What did you do at the Pearson House?

I washed dishes. For about \$4.30 an hour. And in the summer I probably worked fifteen, twenty hours a week and I thought that was pretty rough at the time.

Well, what were your plans for after high school?

Well, my freshman, well I guess my freshman, sophomore, and junior year I planned on going to a university and running track and cross country. And then I had some offers from a couple division three schools my senior year, but I wasn't sure if that's what I wanted to do so I just went to Columbus. I moved to Columbus with my dad and went to Columbus State Community College. I just took some classes because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. And I did end up running track for them. But, it wasn't as enjoyable as I thought it would be. I mean I ran some of my best times and did well, but something just changed from high school, you know, to college t where it just wasn't as fun, as enjoyable. So, that's not what I wanted to do, and I ended up moving back here.

How did you decide to come to Wright State then?

Well, I wanted to came back. I had a good job in the Dayton area at Cooper Tire, so I wanted to come back here and work as much as I could. I wanted to come back and live with my mom. And Wright State was cheap and a commuting college, so I just decided to come here.

What do you like most about Wright State?

What do I like most about Wright State? That a good question because I really don't know how much different it is than any other college campus and I would just....people are nice, the professors are nice. Like I said it's a commuting college so a lot of the students are in the same predicament I am, have to drive twenty or thirty minutes away.

What don't you like about it?

What don't I like about it? It's on a military base which, so it tends to be very conservative, as opposed to any other college campus. The students here seem the most apolitical. Very, very, just very conservative. I mean, I don't think there's been one, you know one major anti-war rally or any kind of progressive demonstration since I've been here so that's kind of discouraging.

So you said you were a Social Sciences Education major.

Right.

How did you decide that's what you wanted to do?

Really it was just an interest in history and wanting to teach history from a different point of view. Whether I'll be able to do that in high school or not is a different story, but...

What point of view is that?

It's umm, it would be from, I would almost say a subjective point of view, which is from, you could say the oppressed people of, well just take America for example. Labor struggles, civil rights movement, African Americans, Women's movements. Because in high school now it's just, the textbooks now just focus on what America, what American leaders were doing with German leaders, for instance in World War One. You know, I would want to focus on what was the labor movement thinking about in World War One. So, you know, kind of, kind of a different approach, it's becoming more common in college, but as far as high school, it's being neglected and I would like to take that kind of approach to teaching.

I see. And how much longer do you have to go to school here?

I have about a year left and then I graduate with my bachelors, and I'll go straight in to my master's program.. And that will be about another year. Then throughout my masters I will be working on my certification and after that I should be able to find a job.

Speaking of finding a job, what are your work plans for the future? Where do you want to work, where do you see yourself working? What kind of school? High school did you say?

High school, secondary yeah. And within high school I would prefer to teach juniors and seniors, buy we'll see how that works out. Well, growing up in a small town made me want to not teach in a small town. So, I'd like to teach at a bigger school with a couple thousand students. A division one school. Something like Centerville, Beavercreek, Northmont, you know, a big school like that. Just, the small town atmosphere tends to be, you know, you see the same people everyday, you just know every person. I guess in a way that's good, but you know, in a way I want to see somebody new, meet somebody new every day. You know, and I hear stories about when I was growing up in high school about people that went to high school and said 'yeah there was people in my high school I didn't even know and I could meet new people everyday.' So I think that would be a positive thing to, to be able to see a new face everyday.

Well, where are you working now? What are you doing for money?

(laughter) Well, that's a good question because right now, well I'm employed right now with Tipp City district, I work at the (inaudible) Junior High, track coach. We just started up this week. The problem with that is I get one lump sum. I thought I could get paid biweekly, I was wrong. So I get one lump sum at the very end, which is mid May. And it'll be a sufficient amount so that'll be nice, but until then I have to find something, a part time job because I'm currently unemployed. Well, I'm employed but I need to find something else.

I see.

But, I'll be moving back in with my mom within a month so I might be able to pull it off.

Okay, you say now you're living with a friend from high school?

Yeah, Mitchell. We've been friends since second or third grade. I dated his sister for four years.

Is that allowed? Are you supposed to do that?

Well, when you're in, when it's second through sixth grade, it's not that big of a deal. I think I kissed her knee one time. So, you know it wasn't that big of a deal.

Not really hot and heavy.

It wasn't very hot and heavy so things didn't get rough between me and Mitchell, because I know that's one of the rules. You can't date you best friend's sister. But everything went okay and me and Mackenzie, I don't know if I mentioned her name. Her name's Mackenzie. Me and Mackenzie are still good friends now so that's worked out well. But yeah, me and Mitchell have a good relationship. He's just moving out because he's kind of financially in a rut, like I am. So, he needs to move back home, save some money until we graduate.

Well what do you do for fun now?

For fun...

There's got to be more to do now than there was in high school.

Yeah, there is. I hang out with my friends a lot. I try to go out to eat as much as I can even though it costs money, but when you go to place like Taco Bell it's OK. I run. And I play guitar, yeah. I play guitar. I have two guitars, electric and acoustic, and actually I played last night for about two hours when I should have been studying for an exam today so I don't know if that's...

I know how that goes.

Yeah, so I do that for fun, so...

Ever think about starting up a band?

Yeah, actually me and one of my buddies wanted to start one up, but then I think that, that feeling goes away after a while when you realize...

Nothing's ever going to happen?

Yeah, and it might be a lot, a lot of work. I mean practicing three times a week and worrying about getting gigs. It's umm, wasn't in the cards.

Do you ever go see live shows?

Yeah, I try to do that as much as I can.

Mostly here in town or...

Uh, no. because no one comes to Dayton. That's the bad thing about the Miami Valley, the Dayton area, is there's not a good, not a good venue to see concerts, or we call them shows, for the bands that me and my friends like around here. It's kind of a hard rock, hardcore punk genre of music, and very few bands come into this region. There's not a big following and there's not a good venue to play at so when we do go to show it's either in Cincinnati, Columbus. Sometimes we'll go as far as Detroit, Chicago, and spend a night or two up there. Yeah, when we go to see live bands it's usually not in this area. Which is something that is frustrating because it's one of the major things I like to do to have fun.

Do you go to movies often anywhere in Dayton?

No I don't and I would like to see more movies. But I do like the Neon Movies in downtown Dayton. That a great place to see films. A lot of good art is at that. A lot of good independent films, plus you can buy beer while you watch a movie. You know, that never hurts.

So do you go downtown often?

Not as much as I should.

When you do go what do you do down there?

We usually go to the Oregon District and have coffee, or go to the Neon, and just kind of walk around and look at all the drunk people stumbling around in the Oregon District, or you know, fun things.

Right. Besides better music venues, is there anything else you'd like to see downtown?

More people. They need things downtown that attract more people. You know I guess they just opened that Schuster Center, so that'll help. But, it still doesn't attract young people, like yourself and I, in their mid, you know, low to mid

twenties. I think they need more places like, like I said, like some smaller concert venues, or just have more things that young people want to go to.

Well, let's see, what are some of your working or career goals in the future. Besides just landing a job when you get out of college?

Well...

Do you want to stay at the high school level?

That's one of the major things I'm thinking right now, because I have, I think there's too much I want to tackle. I do want to teach at the high school level and then I would like to eventually earn m Ph.D. and progress and teach in college. But I don't see that until, I would really like to get some experience in high school first. And then move to college. So I'd like to be a professor, eh thirties, mid thirties but you know, who knows, that changes. I may want to stick with high school, I may want to get out of high school after one year. So, you know, I don't know, I can't put a time frame on when I can do that. Then I would also like to write, whether it's for a magazine or a novel. See I kind of want to do both. I want to do some type of writing. I also want to write a screenplay for a movie. So I have that (laughter). I have a lot of things that...

You've got a pretty full plate.

I got to get to work. And you know, I kind of want to go back to school for that too. I would like to earn my Ph.D. in history, but then I would also like to go back to school to learn how to professionally write and maybe get some kind of degree in that field.. Or maybe not a degree, just take enough classes to get a good amount of experience, so that's a lot to think about now. But those are just kind of thought I'm thinking about.

Maybe you could just be a professional student from here on out.

(laughter) That would be my ideal life actually, to not really work and just go to school. And maybe you know, write a screenplay, give it to Steven Spielberg, make a couple million, and then...

Right, which that works out for most people.

Yeah, it does (laughter). That's usually how it works doesn't it?

Where do you think you'd like to live after college? Like where you want to teach. You said a school the size of Centerville or Beavercreek. Does it necessarily have to be something in the Miami Valley, or would you rather stay here?

No it doesn't. I would like to stay somewhat close to the Dayton area. Within a half-hour of where I live now. At least for a couple years to save up some money, see if that's what I want to do, uh teaching high school, before I move away. So, if I want to go back to school I can just come to Wright State. Because I have experience here, it's cheap. No, I can see myself moving away.

Where?

Wow. Anywhere. Nowhere north. I'd say if I moved it would be south or west. California maybe, Florida.

You want some warm weather don't you?

Yeah, this winters been rough. It's March and there's still a lot of snow on the ground and it's still really, really cold. It would be nice to get away from that, but who knows. Southern California would be nice, San Diego.

What are some of your favorite places that you've been to in the U.S.?

Well, I haven't done much traveling, but I've been to New York City, and even thought it's cold there, that was a great time. I was only there four or five days, but it was very enjoyable. I just love the way the people were there, the way they treat each other. I know everyone says 'eh, New Yorkers are rude,' but it's kind of not that way. It's just, everyone does their own thing and there's so many people and you can just sit there on the street and just watch people and be entertained. Well, at least that's the way it is for someone from a small town, like me. And Chicago, I've been to Chicago. It seems a little cold. I was there in March, but it was windy and cold. Florida, I've been to Florida a lot. I haven't been in a couple of year, but it's very enjoyable down there. The weather, the people, the Panama area. Panama City, that's probably my favorite part of Florida.

Do you see yourself married in five or ten years?

Wow.

With a family?

Not with a family. Maybe, well I don't see myself married in five years because I would need to find a girlfriend first and then date for at least a couple years. So, I don't know. Definitely not a family, but I see myself married ten years from now. And I'm not even sure if I want children. So, I don't know yet.

They are kind of loud.

Yeah, I go see, I'm out shopping, or I go to Meijer or something, and I see a family and I see two or three children and it's enough to drive you crazy. Plus I

have two younger half brothers. Joshua's six and Jesse eight and they're a handful. I can't even imagine trying to raise children now. But, I'm getting ahead of myself now thinking about children. So, ten years from now I see myself married, maybe have some kids, I don't know.

Alright, well when you graduate and you get a job and you get a real paycheck, what's going to be the first things you will buy?

The first thing I'll buy... Well, I'd like to day I would save it, but since...

That's not going to happen.

Yeah, it won't because by then I won't have had a decent paycheck for like four years, so what I would dot with it...umm. Well, I plan to move into my own apartment right away. I know a lot of people when they first get a job out of high school they like to stay home and save some money, but I would rather just move in and worry about paying bills and rent after I move in. So, you know, that's always the smart thing to do. To not think ahead and just dive into something and then find yourself screwed. So it would probably be, my first paycheck I would probably buy stuff for my apartment. Or pay gas bills, energy bills (laughter). You know, that kind of stuff. So that's probably what I'll do with my first paycheck.

Alright, well thanks for your time today, and good luck in your rest of your time here at Wright State.

You're welcome.

Alright, thanks.