

Navigations: A First-Year College Composite

Volume 1
Issue 1 *Beginnings*

Article 1

Yǒng Bù Fàngqì

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Recommended Citation

Owens, Briana () "Yǒng Bù Fàngqì," *Navigations: A First-Year College Composite*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/navigations/vol1/iss1/1>

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Damn, is all I could think. Do I still go on with my life or end it? Do I lose if I don't try or lose because I tried and fail? Some say February 12th, 2016 was a regular day, but that is the day that changed my life. I will never forget that day.

Not many people can say that their mom, dad, or both are police officers. With me, yeah, try the whole family. Having police officers as family has a positive and negative side. Now don't get me wrong I love both sides...just not all the time. "Let me tell you about Lieutenant Lewis and what his sorry ass did today!" "Who do you think is going to be the new chief?" "Boyfriend? Oh no, BACKGROUND CHECK!" If you have ever seen the movie *Bad Boys*, you know what I'm talking about.

Growing up with just my mother was dangerous and stressful, but also interesting. When my mom was young, she had a full ride scholarship to Tuskegee University, but declined because she got sick a lot. She went to Georgia Southern University for two years, but had to drop out because of financial difficulties. I love my mother to death; however, she is a handful (like every mom in this world).

My dad was never around and he still isn't. Some people would cry and others would hold a grudge. I take it as a relief. I know my dad, but he does not know me. Knowing your kid's birthday is not something to be proud of—you are supposed to know that. Knowing what school your kid goes to is not something to brag about—you are supposed to know. Knowing my phone number is nothing extraordinary, but you could not tell my dad that.

My father is probably one of the cheapest, arrogant, and materialist people I know. Kind of harsh? Yeah I know. My dad and I got into this huge argument when I was sixteen years old. It was about him not being there in my life and do you know what he told me? "You will never amount to nothing! You will never be successful, worthy, and entitled! Why the hell would I love someone like that?"

Yeah, and you thought what I said was harsh?

That moment I broke down inside, but only for a brief second. I could not let him win the war that had been going on for as long as I could remember. I simply said, "Okay...okay...you want to see me fail? Don't worry because you won't. When I succeed in life don't contact me, ever." I hung up.

My godparents have always been my "dad." Anything I needed from them I got it. Their love is so unconditional, that it is almost like you're in a fake world where everything is perfect and you can't believe it. Now we do have those days where everyone "hates" each other for a moment; however, we get back to the loving times quick. I just know they love me to death and I love them to the moon and back.

My junior year of high school is when I knew I wanted to go to Kennesaw State University. I also knew that in order to make that happen, I needed to ace my

SAT and ACT. For the past two years, all I talked about was attending KSU. I talked about it so much that at one point I believed I could not attend. Have you ever thought of something, someplace, or someone so much that it starts to feel like it is just a dream? Like never in a million years could you get it? I was even questioning college in general! “College is too expensive! How would my mother afford that? Should I join the military? Am I even smart enough to try college?” I would think this all the time. I never gave up though.

In early January, I got my test scores back from my ACT. Kennesaw requires you to have a composite score of at least twenty. I was so nervous logging into my ACT account that I could not remember my password. After I changed my passwords a million times, I saw my score and cried. I felt like an idiot! I received a composite score of nineteen on my test. People would tell me to retake the test and make a better score; however, I had already taken the test four times. Each test is about fifty-four dollars so that means I spent over two-hundred dollars on testing! I don’t know about you, but that is a lot of money for a high school student, especially if you don’t even know what college is going to accept you. Financial Aid? Yeah right, they basically laughed in my face. Apparently, you got to be dirt poor to get any assistance. I never gave up though.

I applied to KSU with my low score thinking “maybe.” I had the academic grades, extracurricular activities, and recommendations so I thought I could get in. Not even a full two days later, I got a letter saying I did not get accepted. I cried for days. January through February was a stressful time for me: I did not know what college I was going to, I failed a class, and I was trying to hide the fact I did not get accepted to KSU from my family. I had other things going on too like high school drama, boys, and other unnecessary issues. But my main focus was trying to get my next “chapter” together.

February 12th started like a regular day: the fresh scent of a test, girl drama, and bad teacher’s breath. By the end of the day, I had failed a test in a class that I was already failing, got caught up in a big scandal, and was trying to think of a way to start my senior paper because I suck at writing. At 3:40 P.M., students are racing to the parking lot, trying to beat that lovely “Effingham traffic.” I am running to my car trying to do the same, but when I go to start the engine it doesn’t turn on. I’m thinking to myself, “No! Come on! Don’t do this to me now!” I watch everyone leaving the parking lot trying to get out of pris—I mean school. Fifteen minutes later, I’m by myself in the parking lot crying. I was thinking, “Why me? Why do I have to suffer like this?” Dramatic much? Yeah, I know, but I just sat there in the parking lot, thinking of every mistake I had ever made. That is when I knew I needed to change something.

I looked up the number for the Kennesaw Admissions Office and called it. I cannot remember the name of the man who answered, but he did say someone

would call me back Monday about my problem. I just knew there had to be a way I could get into this school.

After I hung up, a restricted number called me back five minutes later. It was lady named Meredith Head. I will never forget that name because she helped me get my life together. Ms. Head told me about an appeal process, which consisted of a cover letter explaining why you want to be a KSU Owl, two recommendations from anyone other than family, and a transcript. I did not find that difficult at all, until she said I had a week to do it. My immediate thought was, “How the hell am I going to do this?”

Monday morning I already had two of my Gulfstream bosses working on my recommendations. Tuesday, I stayed after school so my British Literature teacher, Mrs. Roberts, could help me write my cover letter. The rest of the week, I tried to do better in school and got an A+ on a test in the class I was failing. By Friday, I had four recommendations, a brilliant cover letter, and a transcript. I sent everything in to be reviewed that following Monday.

The following Friday, I got an email saying the appeal committee could not review my application because of a missing transcript. I could not catch a break! Turns out my school did not update my transcript; therefore, the committee would not be able to review my appeal until the following month.

Ms. Head did some digging and she told me to send in a progress report. March 25th, I got an email from Kate Mickey stating, “Your request for an exception to the entry standards for KSU has been considered. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform you of your conditional acceptance to KSU...”

I was driving when I got the email and almost crashed. Words cannot express how blessed and grateful I felt. By the way, I still had not told my family about this whole situation. While in the car, I called my godparents first, then sped to the mall to tell my mom and grandma the exciting news. The look on their faces was priceless, and in that moment I felt so accomplished. Let me tell you something, when your parents are proud and happy for something you’ve accomplished it is one of the best feelings in the world. No money can buy that. But even better is when you believe in yourself and achieve what you set out to do. That feeling is unbelievable.

Standing on Kennesaw’s campus, I never felt so empowered to work so hard in all my life. I have 8AM classes every day, but I do not complain because I’m just grateful to be here. I’m grateful that I can be the first person in my family to go to college, long distance at that. I’m grateful that I have a supportive police family that has my back and gives me the determination to do anything I want. Most important, I’m grateful that I believed in myself. If you do not believe in yourself, no one will. Trust me, I have learned from experience. February 12th changed my life and I will never forget it. I never gave up.