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English Composition I (ENG 100)

Professor Mangini

Formal Assignment #2: Narrative Project, Draft # Final Draft

Due Date: 11:59 pm on Monday, May 11.

Memphis Drags

“What do you think about us going to Memphis for the “Pump Gas Drags?”

My girlfriend replied, “Um, sure. That’s a really long trip. How are we going to do this? Trailer the car I guess?”

I said, “Yep, how else are we going to get it there, load it on a plane?”

She replied, “Ok smart ass. I guess your parents would go too? I mean I guess they would definitely want to go. How are they going to feel about it?”

I replied, “Well, I’ll have to talk to them about it. I don’t think I’ll be chosen by Hot Rod Magazine to go, so it’s probably not going to happen.”

Later, I went to my parent’s house, and I spoke to Mom and Pop about it. They were on board with the idea. My mom was excited to go; it was somewhere she hadn’t been. My dad was thinking like me, and said, “You won’t get invited to go.”

In early Spring of 2008, I was at work and we were on lunch and a friend of mine handed me the *Hot Rod Magazine* from January ‘08 and saw the advertisement for *Hot Rod Magazine’s Pump Gas Drags*. That started me thinking: what would be like to actually participate in the *Pump Gas Drags*. I thought to myself, “I should send in the application and see if I get invited. What do I have to lose?”

Only 75 racers are invited, and in my mind, it was a long shot for me to be invited. For me at this time, if you were into drag racing, this was the event that you dreamed of going to, if for nothing else, the fact that your car would be on the pages of *Hot Rod Magazine* -- let alone, if you won the event, the chance to be crowned the fastest street car around.

This was an event that I had dreamed about participating in, even before I had a car I could compete with. I've been around drag racing since before I can remember, from the time I was an infant and all through my childhood I would watch it on T.V. with my father, which is where I think my passion for drag racing started. To be invited would make me proud, knowing that all the late nights in the garage, all the time and money spent on my car was worth it. It would also make me proud to share this achievement with my father--our life-long passions for drag-car racing might now also lead us both to such a great moment of recognition.

I knew I could not pursue this goal alone, so I decided to talk to my girlfriend and my parents, (racing is a family thing for me) about going, before I sent the application in, to make sure we all were willing to put in the work, and drive the almost a thousand-miles to Memphis.

Hot Rod Magazine's Pump Gas Drags were held every year in Memphis, TN. The rules were simple, the cars had to be production cars with very little modification to the frame and front and rear suspensions. The cars also had to be tagged and insured so you could drive them on the street. There was also a 30-mile drive that you had to navigate through to even be able to race on Saturday. The biggest thing, and the reason the event got its name the "Pump Gas Drags" is that you had to run a spec fuel that was 93 octane, at the time 93 octane was available at gas stations, and you only got 10 gallons of gas, for the entire event.

I filled out the lengthy two-page application, plus I had to send pictures of my car, the car itself, the front and rear suspensions, the interior and engine. Everything had to be emailed to

Hot Rod Magazine by the end of March, 2008. After my girlfriend emailed the application, all that was left was the anxiety of having to wait for the magazine's response email to us, with the news of whether or not I was invited. I really wasn't too hopeful that I'd hear back from them, it's just the way my luck runs, so I just went on about life, and just kept telling myself that no news was good news.

Until one morning, while I was at work, my girlfriend texted me. The text read, "call me as soon as you can." Of course, when I saw the text, I thought something work related was happening with her, little did I know what followed was going to be a huge shock to me. My girlfriend, in an excited but quiet voice, said, "DUDE, WE'RE GOING TO MEMPHIS!"

I wasn't sure if what I thought I heard was in fact what she said. In my state of shock, I asked, "Seriously? No way!"

She replied, "I'm dead serious Bill. I'll read you the email."

As she's reading me the email, I was still in disbelief. She's reading off deadlines for submitting this and that, and of course there's a deadline to accept the invitation. When my head stopped spinning from all the dead-lines she was throwing at me, I hung up with her and I said to a friend of mine, "I am one of the 75 people who were picked to race in the *Pump Gas Drags at Memphis Motorsports Park*." As the words were coming out of my mouth, I still couldn't believe what I was saying. I was ecstatic at the chance to go and race in Tennessee. I don't think words could have described how I was feeling. I had to call my parents and tell them the news. First, I called my mom, she was excited for me, and the chance to go to Memphis. Then I called my dad and told him.

I said, "Dad I got the invitation to go to Memphis."

He replied, "Are we going, we're not going, are we?"

I was almost yelling when I said, “Damn right we are. When was the last time you raced in Tennessee?”

“Never.”

Emphatically I replied, “And that’s one reason why we’re going. We’ve never been and I’ve wanted to race in the *Pump Gas Drags* since I first heard about it.”

After that I could hear him telling some of his friends that we were going to Memphis to race. Hearing him telling his friends that we were going to Memphis made the already huge smile on my face even bigger. The pride in my father’s voice probably outpaced the pride I felt in myself.