

## Lewis Sheen's Journey

Parker Wednesday Community Connections – May 27, 2020

So, I graduated from Parker in 2011. I remember talking to my mom about college before I even graduated, and we both agreed that it probably wasn't the best option for me. I decided to just start working instead. From there I bounced around odd jobs. I worked in restaurants, grocery stores, more restaurants, I worked a job cutting rocks for like 3 days, then I ended up at Dunkin' Donuts. One night after I got home from work, my best friend James Dobson, who also was a part of the 2011 class, called and asked me if I wanted to try to sell motorcycles. He had a salesman that had just quit, and he wanted to give me a shot and see how I was at selling... This is where the story really starts.

I started selling motorcycles and fell in love with it. I loved selling. I've always been a social butterfly, so it was just so easy. I worked there for almost a year. In that time, I bought myself a motorcycle, a car, I was doing really well for myself. In a crazy turn of events, that dealership ended up closing down. I rode my motorcycle in one day expecting to work, and the owner of the dealership called me into the office and said it was all over. He took care of me immensely though, you could tell he felt bad, but that was the best thing to ever happen to me. James and I had each gotten laid off, with a severance, and we were able to collect unemployment. While I was looking for new work, James asked me about something we started talking about in my basement, in freshmen year. A road trip.

Within 2 months of being laid off, James and I were planning, and almost ready to go on the adventure of a lifetime. We left from my mom's house in Leominster, went to visit his sister in NYC, we went to Virginia beach, we saw Brandon Taylor, who was living in Georgia at the time, and we saw James' mom in North Carolina. My older sister was living in Denver, so we saw her, stopped in Breckinridge for a while where we ran into Matt Barbaro and Jimmie Olson, more 2011 Parker Alums, and I got to go to the world famous Comedy Store for a night in Hollywood to see one of my favorite comedians, Chris D'elia. I got to go to Nashville and experience what was probably the coolest nights of live music in my life. The high point of that for me was 2 things. I got to go to Seattle and see Jimi Hendrix's grave, and I finally got to go to Cleveland to see the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The trip lasted 2 months, we drove through 33 states, and logged 12,300 miles.

When I got back to Mass, I just felt lost. I moved back into my dad's house in Shirley, and after seeing and doing so much, small town life in the same town wasn't doing it for me anymore. About a week after we got home, my phone rang, it was James.... again. He told me that he was going through the exact same stuff and said he was planning a move. I asked where and we kind of agreed that Utah was a nice highpoint on the trip, it's close to Las Vegas, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, Hollywood is only an 8 hour drive, and they had a really affordable cost of living at the time, a very easy job market, and plus.... the views. We made the drive to SLC from Shirley at the end of November 2016. I found a job at a store called Dillard's selling woman's shoes. I loved living out here, but I hated the job. I met a girl at work, stopped caring about my job, started caring about her too much, and

got fired from Dillard's at the end of 2017. That was on a Saturday. Meanwhile, in my time out here, I had met a few people who worked for a call center owned by Guitar Center and Musicians Friend.

The Sunday after I got fired, I hopped online and filled out applications for a few jobs, one of them being Guitar Center. I had a few interviews lined up for the following day. I went to my first one for selling furniture and in the car, on the way, again, my phone rang. This time, it was the receptionist at the Guitar Center call center asking if I wanted to come in for an interview. Obviously, I said yes. I finished my interview at the furniture store where I was offered the job. I turned it down on the spot because I was going to Guitar Center, and I knew there was no way I was not getting that job, the mothership was finally calling me home. I went to the GC interview and told the interviewer all about my musical background, my time as the sound guy for all the Café Wednesdays, jazz band, the plays teachers would ask me to play guitar for, and just my love for music in general. I also told her that I had just turned down a job in anticipation of being offered the one I was interviewing for, she laughed and said, "Alright, I think I get it. The job is yours. When can you start?"

I started about a week later and spent 2 weeks in training. It was the most natural thing I've ever done for work. The almost 4 years in sales at that point, combined with my passion for music, made it feel less like a job and more like an opportunity. And I have to say, I'm 2 and a half years into this job, and I still feel that exact same way. In my first 2 weeks out of training, I sold \$80,000 dollars in music gear. In my first full fiscal year, which was 2018, I sold a million dollars for the company. I am still a sales agent for the company for now, but the opportunity for growth is constantly being discussed, and I am in no rush to leave a position that I am so passionate about just yet. The move to Utah was the second best thing to happen to me, getting my job at Guitar Center is easily the first. I have been the top sales guy since about 3 months into my time there, and I don't intend to slow down.

The job at Guitar Center also relit my passion to start playing again. I was always playing guitar but wasn't taking it as seriously as I did when I was younger. Being around it and talking about music all day made me miss the passion I had. I've written a ton of music in the last 2 years, some of which is in the process of being recorded right now, and I am hoping to have some released by the end of July. I wrote one song that I am particularly proud of, "The Long Road." It's all about the trip and the feeling that I needed to come to Utah, and what happened since. I'll post a link below in case anyone wants to check it out.

Anyway, if you've made it this far, thank you for caring enough to read what I've been up to. It's been a hell of a ride so far. For someone who never thought he would be able to get out of his dad's house, I'm not doing bad at all. I'll end this with what I say when anyone asks me how I'm doing. Because this phrase has adapted a connotation of being fake. But please know, that when I say it, I mean every single word of it. How is Lewis doing?

I'm living the dream.

<https://soundcloud.com/lewis-burleigh-sheen-iv/the-long-road>