

Introduction: My name is Eugene and I graduated class of 2015. My major was psychology and I am currently working as a paralegal right now.

Question 1: Can you tell us a little bit about your journey (and where your headspace was at) from your Emory graduation to your current role?

Response: After graduation, professionally, I worked a couple of odd end jobs at a call center. And then after that, I became a case assistant at a law firm. And then from there just continued working at that same law firm. Eventually got into being a paralegal and I've been doing that ever since. Creatively, I never really stopped writing. I've always been a writer. And while the types of writing I would do varied from time to time, writing itself was always a consistent thing. And throughout the job shifts, different types of odd jobs, time passing by from graduation to job after job, and now even with this job that I've been settled in, I've been continuously writing, continually growing with it. Not so much these days, but especially in college and coming right out of college and then outside of college while still a student, I did a lot of spoken word poetry, slam poetry, spoken word, stuff like that. Fortunately, I was able to find a community that was interested in it, they hosted an open mic. I did spoken word poetry pretty much every week for about two to three years. These days, I've been primarily working on screenwriting, short film projects. And that's evolved into helping out on sets, filmmaking in general, and as well as branched out to different things such as writing for other types of media forms, like comics, for instance. For me, at least, comic writing wasn't something I ever thought I would be able to do. But I guess, especially during the Coronavirus times, I figured why not just try various things and branch out a bit. And anytime I wanted to branch out, anytime I wanted to do stuff, of course, there's that level of self motivation where you have to put yourself forward and do stuff like that. But if you do so, there are lots of online resources, lots of online communities, and also, again, friends or new friends you could reach out to for stuff. And being able to do that, there's just a lot of opportunities for people wanting to branch out in whatever they want to do, to try something new.

What I do as a paralegal, I work in intellectual property. So in that way, that's always a little thing that's now in the back of my mind, is about the rights, copyrights, the trademarks, all the creative properties involved in intellectual properties and that has been more prevalent ever since I've worked as a paralegal. But generally, overall, it's been pretty separate. I work, I do what I need to do for my other projects, and I've been able to keep them, both of them, hopefully, well afloat, running well. But they've been pretty separate.

Question 2: What were things that were unplanned/unexpected but meaningful to your growth?

Response: In terms of unplanned and unexpected, probably meeting a lot of people who opened up opportunities. For instance, after I graduated, in my mind, I thought to myself like, *Okay, well, I'm not going to start out the gate working on film sets.* So in my mind, I thought that might be the end of working on sets in general. So you know, because once you step outside of that university bubble without student films or equipment being made available, opportunities made available to students, without that kind of setting, I thought to myself, *Well, it's going to be harder to be able to work on*

those types of projects anymore. And that did not turn out to be true. Two years of work into my job as a paralegal, at that point, I had done a lot of writing by that point and allowed progress through there, I hadn't really done much filmmaking. But then through, I was talking to a friend, we were talking about things we wanted to do, and he ended up introducing me to another Emory student, who, for some reason or the other our past never really crossed while we were in school, but it was only after graduation where we really connected. And throughout time, we've collaborated and worked on numerous film projects throughout the following two years. And that was something I never really expected. You know, a lot of times you think to yourself, *Well, the connections I make in college creatively, stuff like that, those are going to be the ones that I'll have to hold through.* But that's not necessarily the case. College isn't the end all, be all. There is always an opportunity to do something that you want to do, even if it's not part of your academic or professional field. It doesn't have to be tied in exactly. They can continue to exist separately. But you can just as much find it as fulfilling. For some people—maybe not for all people—but like, for some people, it's definitely something that you hear it. You hear people talk about it and you don't necessarily keep it in the back of your head, but you don't necessarily believe it, or you don't feel like it applies to you. I guess that's a big thing, is that you hear people talk about making these types of career choices or making career choices in the context of passion and everything like that. But you know, sometimes you think to yourself, *Well, yeah, I'm glad that worked out for you, but I don't see how that's gonna apply to me.* And I know I thought that absolutely back in the day, back while I was still a student, when I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do as a job and everything like that. I did absolutely think to myself, *Is it possible to balance it? Do I have to give something up?* And I think while sometimes sacrifices are unavoidable, that doesn't diminish any significance or importance from what you want to do. And if there is, upon graduation, most likely I would say... maybe it's a little too optimistic, but most likely I would say that there will always be opportunities that will present themselves or that are able for you to pursue and find.

Question 3: What advice do you have for your younger self?

Response: When I was in college, I looked around and saw, you know, these student clubs or these resources made available and people working together and collaborating. And it's just like, when you hit senior year, you don't have a job lined up in that field or something like that, you ask yourself, *Well, how am I supposed to find like minded people again? How am I supposed to get together with people again and collaborate and find a space to be able to do that?* And honestly, most of the hard work has already been done. When you get out of college, people have already been collaborating, people have already found spaces. As long as they're open minded, polite, and passionate, nine times out of 10, I find they're very welcoming of new people to come in. And I think that's probably the best thing you can do for yourself. Go out and find community, do your best to try to keep going out and branch out to whatever community events are going on. I have definitely met a lot of people, not from my college, not from my work, not even from the restaurants or bars I frequent or anything like that, just solely through those community events, those art events where like minded people get together and they meet each other and enjoy each other's presence, and then they collaborate. They exchange ideas. Wherever you go, there's always going to be creative people who want to get together and collaborate. And I met tons of people doing that. I got to know a lot of great people, got to work with a lot of great people, and I've gotten to have a lot of different opportunities because of them.