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### My American ~~Dream~~ Struggle

In this country, the United States of America, many people of various backgrounds have come to live in freedom, freedom to pursue their own dreams. This has been called ‘living the American Dream’. I suggest to you, through my own experience, that through our efforts to make this achieving of dreams equally available to all that we have achieved the opposite.

Back in spring of 2002, I had just graduated from high school, I was green, so to speak, and looking at continuing my education by attending the University of Utah. As a fresh high school graduate I was invincible, we all were, and the absolute best I could be, *there isn't any way I should have a problem going to college*. Then the Mack Truck of all bills arrived at in my mail, my tuition. My dream was crushed by that truck as I discovered that while I had been accepted to the school, I wasn't able to afford it on my own.

A conversation with my father went something like this, “Dad, how was it you went to college?”

“Well, Grandma and Grandpa paid for it” my dad said adding, “I would love to be able to help you with your education but I just don't have the means supporting two families.”

My parents did not have the means to assist me and I knew that. Divorce had forced my dad into supporting two separate households and my mom had just graduated from college with her AAS (Associate of Applied Science).

Having watched my mother complete her college education through my senior year, I knew that the government offered grants to students whose needs were sufficient enough and so I thought, *surely my need fits*.

I went to the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) website and filled out my application. Somewhere along page three I think it was, I was informed that I was not considered an independent student. My parents' income would be taken into consideration while determining my eligibility for federal aid. This fact devastated my desire to get a college education in a timely manner, for I knew that my parents combined made enough to disqualify me for federal aid.

I discovered how old I needed to be in order for the government consider me an 'independent student' and it was the light I needed; a starting line which I thought would allow me to continue my education then. So I entered the workforce and became enrolled in the school of hard knocks, if you will.

When I became old enough that I was "independent" I again applied for federal aid for school and waited for my results. When the school called me to discuss my application, I was informed that I would not receive any aid as I was a white male, from a family in which both parents attended college, and I made too much money at my own job.

I was dumbfounded. There was not any way a person could afford to go to college and live on what I was making. Then when I discussed this with some of my friends I was outraged

to learn that someone in my same situation, with the exception that they would be first to attend college in their family or of a different race or weren't working to provide for themselves, received enough money for essentially a full ride.

How is it that this 'American Dream' escaped me and was given to someone because their need was judged to be greater? Is their dream not equal to my dream? Do I not deserve the same opportunities they receive? Thus began my own American Struggle.