

Danielle Hanvey

Dr. Jim Hepworth

English 101-03

24 September 2006

### The Gist of Being Tall

Mark Diaz has not always been a tall man. In his younger years he was average size for a young boy and he grew just like all of the others did, but once the others stopped, he kept growing. I on the other hand, was the exact opposite. I grew with all of the other girls when I was younger, but when I stopped; they all grew. I have many pros and cons to my height and I wanted to know what it was like to see through the eyes of someone who is tall. Mark is now a 6'6" adult who views being tall as a confidence booster, but also a self-esteem issue. As I interviewed Mark he explained the pros and cons to his height and how his activities are limited. He also described the relationship troubles that he has due to his height and the stereotype that comes along with his height.

I went to Mark's house to conduct the interview, but he suggested that we should walk down to Walker Field and let his dog, Maggie, run around while we talked. As we walked I watched Mark's movements and how he carried himself. He slouched, a lot. Mark slouched as if he had come down with Spina Bifida. I figured that this height has affected him that he feels the need to slouch to be more average. It led me to think that he was self-conscious about his height. I began the interview and I asked him if his height has affected his confidence level. He replied with a yes and no answer. Mark finds that people seem to notice him a lot more due to his height. "I get a lot of attention and I think that if I wasn't so tall that I wouldn't have a lot of the friends that I have." People

want to go out of their way to talk to you when you're tall, replied Mark. He also told me that when you are tall, you also have bigger extremities such as hands and feet. He has a big self-esteem issue with his size 17 feet. People always seem to comment on how big they are. Usually, he doesn't mind the comments unless a girl or group of girls comments on them. Mark described them as not being able to attract the ladies.

We continued with the interview and I had asked the question "What are the pros and cons of being tall?" The look he gave me was priceless because he knew he could go on forever about the pros and cons. I went ahead and decided to narrow the question to his inconveniences with his height. As Mark talked about his inconveniences with his height, I saw a look in his face that showed a bit of sadness. There are a lot of inconveniences that limit his activities. Mark can't really fit into cars that well; he hits his head on things. Mark can't find clothes that fit him. If he does find clothes that fit they're usually for tall, fat men. Mark is unable to find a tux that will fit him correctly which limited his formal dance experience in high school. Mark said that he loves to hunt and being tall is a big dilemma. "Your not very stealthy," says Mark. He says that when he hunts he can't really hide that well from the animals. These are just to name a few. Listening to him talk about his inconveniences was not fun because I could hear the frustration and sadness in his voice. Although Mark is capable of doing many things, these things that most people take for granted every day have taken a part of an experience away from his life.

I had a few more questions to ask Mark before I concluded the interview. Throughout the previous questions that I had asked Mark his answers to them always had some sort of relationship type things in them. "Do you feel like you have a hard time

attracting girls?” I asked. Mark looked at me with this wicked face. I asked him if that was an inappropriate question to ask and he reevaluated his thoughts and proceeded to answer. I could hear the embarrassment in his answer. “I feel like I attract the wrong attention from girls. They only talk to me because I am tall not because they want to know me,” Mark said. As he continued, I could see that he was struggling with this subject. Mark let me know that all he really wanted was a genuine girlfriend who was interested in him because of his personality not because she interested in how tall he is.

“Do you feel like you have a stereotype being tall?” was my last interview question. He replied with a yes. His yes was a very firm and almost angry yes. He told me that people expect a lot out of you when you’re tall. Mark played basketball in high school and he loves to play. “People automatically think that you’re playing in college and when I have to tell them I’m not they always tend to say why not, you’re so tall. Well besides being tall you need some talent to do that,” said Mark. He explained that it sucks to hear people say well you should be a basketball player because he would love to be one, but when you don’t have the opportunity you kind of feel like a loser when people make those kinds of comments.

I’m only 5’1” and I find my height to be very appealing yet very discouraging. I made the assumption that being tall would make things a little easier and little less discouraging. For example, people would not mistake you for a twelve year old when you are really nineteen years old. Mark Diaz is 6’6” adult who finds that being tall is not so easy. Height is an issue no matter how tall or how short you are. I’ve come to the conclusion that the statement “The grass isn’t any greener on the other side” is definitely

a statement that should be more focused on when wishing for something that you think will make life just a little easier.