

“Alright dude, a little more and then we can head out if you want. I’m really feelin’ it right now”

Will slapped his hands together twice, causing a plume of powdery chalk to dissipate, clouding up everything around him. Anna, Will’s older sister and climbing partner, slowly lowered him after a feat that not many people at this climbing gym have done. The patternless array of tiny yellow holds ascending eighty-or-so feet up the wall that Will just climbed is rated as one of the hardest routes in the gym.

It took him around two tries to climb the route, and he was ready for more, even though we had all been climbing for two hours. I asked Will if he had a lot of homework left for tomorrow, because it was eight o’clock and it was a thirty-minute drive back.

“Nah, I kinda gave up on that a while ago. Plus, I learned exactly when I need to actually do work and when it’s just busy work, so i’m good I think...what do you think of that yellow route over there?”

I decided to mention the calculus test we had tomorrow:

“Oh, shit, yeah, I remember, can we maybe study together for a bit when after this?. It really shouldn’t be that hard I think...”

William H. Rhatigan is a unique and extraordinary individual. Aside from being the vice president of a prospering lawn-mowing company, a class officer and a previous member of the cross-country team at Newton South, Will holds an extremely strong academic record. When students with his arsenal of honors and AP classes are sitting at their desk and studying until sleep deprivation overrides their overloaded brains, he is somewhere out in the cold, skiing laps

with his cross-country skiing team around the Weston golf course until his knees grow weak. Only then would his coach let him leave practice and go home to start homework.

“I think in the winter season, on weekdays I would get picked up at around three, and then...um....practice lasted somewhere between two to four hours, depending on what the weather was. It was really fucking stressful sometimes, because I would always have a lot of homework, and I got home by eight, if I was lucky. There was one day when I had a six-page APUSH paper and a Lang paper due the next day. Actually, wait...it might even be the paper that you are writing now haha...after I got home, took a shower and ate dinner, it was already ten. I think that was the first true all-nighter I pulled, but it was worth it because I ended up with an A on both papers”

Mr. Kozuch, Will's APUSH (AP U.S. History) teacher from last year reflected upon his talents both in and out of school. As Will said that AP U.S. history was one of his favorite junior-year classes, I decided to interview Mr. Kozuch and get an insight on who Will was as a student.

“I actually wrote his recommendation letter for Harvard. All I can say, as a Harvard alumni myself, is that [Will] definitely deserved to be in that school. Will has always been prepared and attentive every time he came into class. His papers were also extraordinary. I actually quoted one of his papers in my recommendation. That's how impressive it was”

I asked Mr. Kozuch whether he knew anything about Will's involvement with competitive cross-country skiing and if it affected his response to Will's overall performance in the classroom, he responded immediately that “up until Will and I had started talking out sometime around the end of the year, I did not know about it...Even if I knew that Will had the potential to be recruited as an athlete for college, I would treat him just like all of my other students, and I

would not raise or lower certain expectations for him... I always expected the best from Will, and last year, he gave it his all in my class.

Will had also been involved in many events related to Mr. Kozuch's class aside from everything else, which somewhat justified Mr. Kozuch's bias towards him. But, nonetheless, the fact that Mr. Kozuch did not know anything about Will's potential outside of school for most of junior year is justification enough that he was never the average student. Judging by Mr. Kozuch's evaluation and my interactions with Will last year, he was a passionate and eager student who was always the top of his class.

It's 7:45 on a Friday morning, and Will bolts through the front entrance of Goldrick. Around three minutes later, he was in his physics classroom. Dr. Roychowdhury, his physics teacher, didn't seem to notice that Will was eight minutes late.

Will mentioned a few days later that "since I wake up at like 7:20 now, I always come in late. Or...well...at least I have been for the past month at least, I don't think she cares anymore"

Dr. Roychowdhury handed out a quiz on gravitation and banking. Fifteen minutes into the quiz, there were still a handful of students left who were scrambling to finish, obviously not prepared enough to get the two problems on the first try. Will was one of them.

He was at the climbing gym last night.

Will had an orchestra concert for B block. At exactly 8:38, he barged into the orchestra room, passing by a short and frail fellow freshman nemesis who Will ironically called "thug", on the way to the back of the orchestra room.

"yo thug...step out of line again...", Will murmurs with a deadpan expression.

Before the orchestra went up to play, Will and I went up to the seats at the back of the auditorium to watch the band and the chorus, as orchestra was that last one up. Will spotted one of his best friends, Jack Kenslea, also sitting in the back.

““ey, HAAVAAD boy!” Kenslea yells.

“Who’s sitting in those seats right now?” Will asks.

“Not really sure. Yo, I can’t really concentrate. I’m on four hours of sleep” Kenslea retorts.

“That really sucks dude, I get, like, eight hours!” Will says.

Will has recently been accepted to Harvard University as a cross-country skiing recruit, and this is a well-known fact throughout the whole school. I decided to walk around the school later that Friday and ask various seniors whether they knew about his recent achievement.

“Yeah, isn’t he that kid who got into Harvard?” one senior asks. “Yeah, him and Anthony I think” an adjacent senior replies. He is referring to Anthony Denitto, the other Harvard recruit. Seven out of the ten seniors I asked knew of Will’s acceptance to Harvard, and the hype behind this lived up to its word. As Will did not have to face the whole college process anymore, he had the potential to lessen his workload and cut down on some of the stress associated with school. That gave him the opportunity to get the much needed eight-hours of sleep, unlike many of his peers, such as Jack Kenslea, who were still struggling with the overflow of school work and college applications. According the the *Center for Advanced Health*, 33% of High School students get less than six hours of sleep, while eight hours is the recommended average for kids of this age. “Nearly 20% more 12-th grade students have sleep deficits than do those in ninth grade”. Will is one of the few upperclassmen at Newton South who manages to get enough sleep.

Will goes back to the orchestra room and drags his double-bass back to the auditorium, as it it time for the orchestra to play. When Will plays the double-bass, he really plays. Even from the back of the auditorium can you hear him, even though for half of the performance, he was the only Bass in the ensemble.

By 9:55, Will was back at the front entrance of the school, talking to a fellow cross-country skier, Joey Carleo. They discussed the terrible weather up north and where they were going for Christmas break, all while skipping advisory. Will was planning on heading out to Mont Saint-Anne for the beginning of break, and then flying over to Michigan to compete. Will would end up missing a week of school, and with his number of AP classes, that means many nights studying for most students. When I asked Will how he would deal with the amount of schoolwork that he is planning to miss, he responded, "I don't know man, I think I'll just see how bad it really is when I get back".

At 11:05, Will sat through first lunch with Anthony, Joey, and Andy Theall, Will's best friend, while they continued discussing the winter season. a few minutes later, Will got up and told me that he was heading out for the day because he had a race in Vermont. He told me that he was going to go home, wax his skis, and drive up the Cumberland Vermont to stay with his team for the night.

Will and I have been good friends for quite some time now. We have hiked, skied, and gone on mountain-biking trips together, but I have only come to know him outside of school....I need to figure out how to write a viable conclusion for this....