

Dakota Walbeck

Mrs. Rutan

AP Literature and Composition

17 November 2016

### A Hairy Mess

Playoffs. The most prestigious and memorable moments of one's football career. I'm a junior, but for the seniors this is their last run; with the constant thought that each game could be their last. It is certain that an end will ultimately come one day, when adolescence is no more, and when all plans turn towards the future endeavors into the real world. But these thoughts could be put on the back burner for the time being, because the only thing that they need to worry about now is some good old fashioned high school football. Although, as a team begins to travel along this once in a lifetime playoff journey, there are some questions that need to be answered. This includes the most sacrificial and important decision of all— whether or not you get the esteemed playoff haircuts.

The tradition has been around for many years and is up to the players of the team to decide if they want to get their haircut if their team makes the state playoffs. For me, it was a no brainer. I am one of the most dedicated players to the team so of course I wanted to participate. Though the question was, what type of haircut should I get? The normal thing to do would be to just get a regular mohawk and then dye it blonde if one pleased. But I wasn't interested in being "normal." I wanted to get something that would really get someone's attention, something they'd always remember. So I figured that the best way to get people's attention would be to do the opposite of everyone. Thus birthed the idea... **the sideways mohawk.**

My friends and I had joked around with the idea for a while but nobody actually thought that I would follow through with it when the time came. They'd make these absurd bets about what they'd give me if I actually got it; things like, "I'll give you one hundred bucks" and "I'll love you forever" But I'm no whoosie; I knew that if I actually got this haircut that it would be considered legendary. So it happened. The first night of playoff week a few friends and I met up at my pole barn after practice and that's when the haircut ritual took place.

First they went and I gave them their mohawks that they asked for and then it was my turn. Not much skill was needed to give me the cut, seems how only a slim amount of hair would be left on my head.

Just a simple transverse strip of hair is all that was needed; almost like how the fifty yard line stretches across the field, except the field was my head.

So I handed over the buzzer to my good friend Hunter Kolassa and let him have at it. He's a bigger guy with broad meaty hand and sausage fingers, plus his hand eye coordination isn't necessarily "on point," so if I could go back and do it over i'm not sure if I would have picked him as the one to use the shaver. Thinking of this I began to hesitate and just before he went in for the first shave I abruptly told him to stop. I paused and began to think about what I was actually doing. Would it actually be worth going mostly bald? This is my hair we are talking about here. He then proceeded to say that he would just take a little off and then we'd see how it looked. Hesitantly agreeing, the insidious buzz continued to get louder and ever so closer to my head. But before I knew it, there was a massive bald spot on the side of my head. It then seemed that there was no turning back and the rest of the haircut proceeded.

The whole time that this was happening I had no idea what I looked like. There were no mirrors in our barn so the only thing that I could do was watch everyone's animated expressions and listen to their endless laughter. Once it was all over and I had a chance to clean up a little I was able to truly get a look at myself for the first time. It turned out just how I had imagined it, a thick pinstripe stretching from ear to ear with the rest of my head as smooth as a baby's bottom.

Then to top it off, once the sideways mohawk was already complete, I had decided to put the so called "icing on the cake" and dye it blonde. The funny thing was that since my hair is very dark, it ended up more of a pumpkin pie shade than anything. The look was officially complete, an orange sideways mohawk with a beard to go along with it, making it look like I had a lion's mane. Getting the haircut was only the beginning of the process, the real fun began when I had to show up to school with it.

Self public humiliation. If I had to choose one phrase to describe my experience with the cut that would be the one. It first began with my parents reactions. My dad was on board and gave me the ole "I'm proud of you son". My mom on the other hand was not so supportive. The first word she said when I showed her was, "NO!!!!". This wasn't exactly the confidence booster I was looking for, because if one of my parents reacted in such a negative way then there was no telling what the people at school would have to say. Since there is a no hat rule at Harper, I had no choice but to show off the new-do. As I was walking toward my first class, the anticipation was rapidly building, and as I sat down one of the best reactions of the day came from my teacher. She was busy doing things at her desk and hadn't notice me yet. Once she finally looked up, the shocked look on her face was priceless and she blurted out, "Oh my gosh, what did you do!?"

Most people interpret comments and stares that other people make toward them in a negative way. However, for me, it was my goal to get people to notice me. Whenever I would see someone laughing or making a comment it symbolized a small victory, and by the end of the entire ordeal I was confident in saying that everyone who saw my head would not soon be forgetting it for quite some time.

From this experience, I would highly recommend that any future Harper Creek football players should take advantage of the opportunity to shave his head for playoffs. They shouldn't be worried about what others think and should just be themselves and have fun with their playoff journey, haircut and all.