



## **Randall Barnes, Fort Valley State University- c/o 2019, Media Studies**



**Name :** Randall Barnes

**Your HBCU :** Fort Valley State University

**Graduation Year :** 2019

**Major :** Media Studies

### **1. Where are you from? Who introduced you to HBCUs?\***

I'm from Macon, Georgia! I've always wanted to attend an HBCU! My realization that college was in my immediate future was in 7th grade. I knew I wanted to attend a black institution like Tom Joyner and Terrence J. I was looking at schools like Morehouse, Howard and FAMU. However, Fort Valley State University took my heart from the moment I saw the history it produced and how close it was to Macon.



Cover of Randall's Newest Book "A Queen's Pain" released November 23rd

### **2. Why did you choose an HBCU over a pwi?\***

I wanted to be at a institution where I felt safe. Not only physically safe but mentally safe. I wanted to be free to think and express my views as a black man. I wanted to learn more about my people and network amongst like-minded individuals. Plus, the opportunities you get being at an HBCU are invaluable. From being the first student to have a book-signing on campus my Freshman year to representing FVSU as a White House HBCU All-Star, going to an HBCU has to be one of the best decisions I ever made!

### **3. What is the story of your "experience" at Your HBCU given its heralded status as a stellar and prestigious institution?\***

When I came in, I knew I wanted to climb the social ladder. Not to get popular, become Greek or get at girls. I wanted to be known on my campus for being "the boy that writes books" and my overall brand. I tried my best to be consistent in my hustle and school pride the past four years to brand myself as a hard-worker and a notable personality at FVSU. I've had many setbacks. Life has hit me hard in my years at FVSU. However, I've learned so much about life being a Wildcat. I don't know where I would be without FVSU.

### **4. "First time" experiences at your HBCU?\***

My first times are different than others! My first time stepping out of my ego and realizing that I didn't have everything figured out like I thought I did was my Sophomore year. My first time flying on a plane and visiting the White House was my Junior year. My first time self-publishing a book (after being signed to independent publisher DC Bookdiva Publications) was this year. These first

experiences have shaped me and will continue to shape me as I move forward in my life.

**5. Who are the professors that have impacted your life in and out of the classroom? How did they do that?\***

I have to say Mrs. Alderman as the first person. I came into FVSU as a math support student. I've never been good in Math. My first day in Mrs. Alderman's class, she told the class about my book. At the time, I didn't know who she was. I came to find out that she used to work with my Aunt at Southwest High School in Macon in the mid 2000's and worked with her at Miller-Motte Technical College a few years ago. Plus, she knew my parents, my brother and had knowledge of everything that I was doing outside of school. Immediately I took to her. I could tell her things about my life that she would understand because she knew me and lived in the same community I did. I was able to go to her when I was hurt or frustrated and she'd listen to me. Plus, she'd always find a way to make me laugh and laugh at the things I say. Other professors that have impacted me are Mrs. Juone Brown, Ms. Karlisha Booze and Dr. Meigan Fields! They're professors straight out of "A Different World" and "Drumline"!



Randall has interviewed many celebrities & dignitaries in his time at FVSU from Fonsworth Bentley to Stacey Abrams and Tracee Ellis Ross. However, his favorite interview was with Michael Baisden!

**6. What is your major? and Why did you choose it?**

My major is Media Studies because I have a passion for storytelling. I've always had a passion for storytelling. I used to watch TV when I was younger and create a new episode based off what I saw. I used to write and try to sell my own comic books when I was in elementary school. In middle school I filled up several notebooks with different stories. I knew that I wanted to be in a profession where I had the opportunity to tell stories, especially positive stories about our people.

**7. How are you positively active on campus? (e.g. clubs, SGA, etc.)**

I've been super involved over my nearly four years here at FVSU! My freshman year I worked with Retention Services (now University College) as a Reading & English tutor. I tutored 50 students my freshman year and even helped senior and graduate level students with their work. I joined SGA my sophomore year under the Lawrence Malloy Administration and served as the Director of Alumni Affairs. I then was promoted to co-Director of Marketing & Communications with Mia Pitts, one half of the popular YouTube pair ThePittsTwins. I served as Director of External Affairs my junior year under the Niae Tibbs administration and served as a 2017-2018 White House HBCU All-Star Ambassador for the White House Initiative on HBCU's. I also started doing sports coverage with FVSU Athletics my junior year, commentating the Football, Basketball and Volleyball games.

**8. What was your proudest moment in your life to date?**

Once again, this might be a different answer from everyone else! My proudest moment came

January 2018 when I realized that I wanted to chase entrepreneurship and I decided to step away from my position in SGA and my position with the campus radio station PowerJamz. Both of these organizations are the reason why I'm where I am today. However, it was time for me to take ownership of my life and embark on a journey to be self-made. It was hard to make the decision to leave those organizations because they meant, and still mean, so much to me. But, I had to leap. My mental health wasn't where it needed to be. I didn't feel fulfilled anymore. I found myself down and even got to a point where I had a breakdown on the phone with my mother as I tried to understand why I felt as if I was going in the wrong direction in my life. I was so worried about other people and their issues that I didn't focus on myself. Once I withdrew from those organizations, I worked on my mental well-being. Shortly after, I found out that I'd be doing a Summer Internship at ASPIRE TV. I then started production on my first documentary "Election Season". I also started working on my book "A Queen's Pain", channeling everything that I've felt the past three years into that story. Without that moment of realization about my life's journey I wouldn't even be doing this interview right now.

**9. What is your process when you are going through a hardship that you have never faced before?**

I have to communicate. If I don't communicate, I'm going to hold my frustration or sadness in and make myself feel worse than I already do. I'm still a student, both at my institution and in life. I'm working more on my attitude and disposition. You have to have a level of self-control. That also means understanding how to process and control your emotions. No matter what occurs in life, we have to keep fighting. We can only continue the fight if we lift ourselves up.

**10. What life-changing books would you recommend to others to read?**

Well, I definitely say my book "A Queen's Pain"! lol But, in all seriousness, the Bible is definitely the first book you need to delve into. Other books that have improved my life are "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" by Alex Haley, "The 48 Laws of Power" and "The Laws of Human Nature" by Robert Green. Also, books that are relative to your experience. I love books by Kimberla Lawson Roby, Omar Tyree, Michael Baisden, Carl Weber and other authors that authentically represent black life.

**11. When and how did you discover your passion in life?**

When I was younger! I knew that I loved writing and telling stories. Also, I knew that I wanted to be an influence on people and my generation when I got to high school. I wanted to be the counter-narrative. I wanted to be the black man that people viewed when they thought of black men in my generation. I wanted to counteract the negative stereotypes that are thrust upon us. I also wanted to do everything I can to empower Black Women to realize how beautiful, intelligent and full of drive they are. That's why I'm here now.

**12. What's your take on life (in the philosophical sense)?**

You have to own your life. Point blank, period! You can't allow other people to dictate where

you're going in your life's journey. Eventually you have to rationalize and think about what you want. What do you desire? What makes you happy/sad? Where will I be in 5-10 years or even after I graduate college. We lose sight of this in the turn-up, heavy workload and family atmosphere at HBCU's. If you don't step back and think about this, you'll get lost in the sauce. Also, you have to be about action and not talk. I don't like hearing "When I graduate I'm gonna....". Nah, I'm doing this right now! We have to be self-starters if we truly want to succeed in this world that thrives on competition.

### **13. Entrepreneur? Tell us about your business.**

Well, I run my own Media Company HBCU Pulse in conjunction with Urban Intellectuals. I'm publishing my first book through Pulse called "A Queen's Pain"! In the book, which is the first documented Mass-Market fictional portrayal of Royal Courts at HBCU's, we chronicle the journey of junior Raynetta Durham. She desires to be Miss Laketon State University and a woman of the Rho Eta sorority on campus. However, she deals with issues concerning her mental health and campus politics that threatens to derail her campaign and her process to become a Rho Eta. In the story we also talk about bullying, the real HBCU experience, value and a whole lot more! It's coming out on Black Friday! You can pre-order the Kindle version of the book on Amazon!