

Ashley Richardson

March 17, 2020

No Other Case Like Mine

A profile on Jordan Gallant

The eager 15-year-old boy sat down at the DMV ready to get his permit; the first steps towards finally being able to drive on his own. As he filled out paperwork, the worker stopped him to tell him there was no way he could get his permit, even before taking the test. Completely unaware, at the age of 15, he learned that day that he was classified as an illegal alien in the United States. This is only the beginning of Jordan Gallant's story. A few years prior, 11-year-old Jordan Gallant and his mother packed up their things and moved from Canada to America to be with a man that she met online. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "If you were born outside of the United States, there are two general ways to obtain U.S. citizenship through U.S. citizen parents. You can acquire U.S. citizenship at birth or you can derive citizenship from your parents after your birth but before the age of 18." The issue with Jordan and his mother, is that none of these options were explored upon arrival in America. Many years passed between the two living in Kansas City, Missouri before realizing that his stay was illegal. Contrary to some, gaining the citizenship he needed was not an easy process. Around half of a year after Jordan turned 15, his mother moved away to Arkansas, leaving him in Kansas City. Jordan had to grow up quicker than the average teenager, living on his own for around two years by paying rent using only his child support. Because of his 1 circumstance, there was nothing he could do to help himself. The unfortunate cycle that he was stuck in at this point was the fact he couldn't get a job to make money, he couldn't get a license to drive to a job if he had the chance,

and he couldn't apply for college to move on with his academic career. All of these restrictions were due to the fact that he was not a legal citizen of the United States. Luckily, a very important family entered into his life to quickly save him from this vicious cycle. Immediately upon hearing Gallant's story, the Lawing family was devoted to help in any way possible. Jordan first met Alan Lawing, the son of Kerry and Teri Lawing. Alan generously offered his home to Jordan, as well as friendship. Shortly after being acquainted, and a couple of months after Gallant turned 18, they started acting upon figuring his citizenship issue out: legally. They knew that professional help would be needed, and contacted Gallant's new immigration lawyer, which they didn't know at the time would go the extra mile to protect him. They met for the first time and went over the basic information, primarily sharing his story and determining the game plan. As if there was not enough stress initially, their second meeting heightened the pressure immensely. Gallant's immigration lawyer informed everyone that if action is not immediately taken, he would be deported in 3 months. Shocked, Teri Lawing established then and there that "anything that we can do" will be done. This is when Gallant's immigration lawyer took matters into his own hands. He contacted the state to determine Gallant's situation. After traveling great distances to start a personal court case, the lawyer determined that this issue was one of a kind. Using all of the aspects, the legal court case "Jordan Gallant vs. The State of Missouri" declared Jordan Gallant as an abandoned unaccompanied youth illegal immigrant. "There was no other case like mine," he stated. Because of the rarity of the case and effort from his lawyer, a grandfather law was created for Gallant. He was given a green card that represented five years of permanent residency, allowing him to partake in everything he couldn't before. From this point on was smooth sailing. Gallant finally had the resources to move forward with his life and

that is exactly what he did. Within weeks of the green card, he had his license, applied for jobs, and accepted into college at Missouri State University. The next five years of Gallants life looked identical to any other citizen of the United States, other than being able to vote. His personal drive turned his unfortunate situation into anything but a handicap. He went on to major in business marketing while staying involved by taking on the role of director of marketing for the Inter-Fraternity Council. After graduating, he went straight into work for his family financial advising business. At this time, 2015 rolled around and his five year wait was over. The barrier between Gallant and citizenship was only one simple test. It consisted of effortless questions like “Who is the president of the United States?” And “How many members are in the House of Representatives?”. Directly upon taking the test, he received the news that he had passed. A few weeks later, his citizenship was set in stone through a naturalization ceremony. This was an extremely memorable day for Gallant, as well as 52 other individuals gaining their citizenship. He walked in the building that day as an illegal immigrant, and left as a citizen of the United States. The blend of Gallants luck and strength are what led him to not only a normal lifestyle, but overall success. “The Lawing family are genuine, kindhearted people that will go the extra mile to help anyone they can,” family friend Joy Richardson says. Gallants’ story serves many lessons to learn. No matter where you start, with handwork, anything can be achieved. The love and support from the former strangers, that he now calls family, represents the faith in humanity that is still present.