

This is a photo of my first day of boarding academy. Note the flat-top growing out, the stonewashed jeans. The cans of RC Cola on the pencil sharpener. And on the cinderblock walls: a silhouette of the SR-71 spy plane; photos of Michael Jordan; of Spike Lee as Mars Blackmon; of Tony Dorsett and Herschel Walker, the promising but ultimately lackluster running back duo for the Dallas Cowboys. If you look closely, you can see I'm nonplussed about my mother taking this photo. My father, however, appears slightly bemused. Both my parents have always thought it was funny that it was obvious I couldn't wait for them to leave. It was true. It wasn't that I didn't love them. It was that I was embarking on four years that would change my life. I knew this and I wanted, as soon as possible, to get started.

—Matthew Völlmer

