L'Damian Washington has dealt with loss before. He knows as much as anyone that life goes on.

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'A THOUSAND REASONS TO SMILE'

Things you didn’t know

Copeland’s Cranium

Shane Ray
Dreams of TV
## INSIDE

### A SUPERHERO’S TRANSFORMATION
Max Copeland talks about how Halloween made him who he is today and what you should not pass out to trick-or-treaters.

### WASHINGTON SENDS A MESSAGE
After scoring a momentous 96-yard touchdown last Saturday, L’Damian Washington knelt down and sent thanks to his mother.

### BURSTING ONTO THE SCENE
Sophomore defensive end Shane Ray is shining even with Michael Sam and Kony Ealy doing big things. Ray has big plans of his own.

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Copeland’s Cranium

Missouri Tigers offensive lineman Max Copeland is finally free from his two-week media suspension, and just in time for Halloween. This week, he discusses scarring trick-or-treat memories, his favorite horror movie and some nostalgic ‘90s rock.

As told to Alexander Smith

Here is one of the reasons why I turned out screwed up: I was 3 or 4 years old. I think I was dressed up as Buzz Lightyear. I was probably a nice kid then. I was probably not weird yet.

When we were trick-or-treating, it was just me and my parents. I walked up to a house and this 7 1/2-foot tall gorilla jumps out and screams at me. Like a roar. It was traumatizing. It was some dad. He ended up pulling off his mask.

Why would you just jump out and yell at a kid like, “Arrrrghhhhh?” Boom. I just turned into a crazy person from there. In retrospect, I thank that man. If he hadn’t scared me, I’d be wearing some sort of collared shirt with sleeves on it at a job and wearing deodorant.

It was kind of like the opening scene from a superhero movie where something dramatic happens and a superhero is born from the experience. That was my experience.

I don’t like gory movies because it’s cheap shock value. I’d rather go for weird and creepy. I feel like that takes real directive talent to be able to scare someone without simply killing someone. If it’s something really weird that disturbs you, that’s cool.

One of my favorite movies of all-time was “The Devil’s Rejects.” I don’t know if I should talk about that movie because it’s a really disturbing movie, but it’s awesome. It has this serial-killer family that’s just going through killing people. Here’s the cool thing: As disturbing as all the craziness was, there’s this one super tough sheriff with these awesome sideburns that’s like, “No, I’m putting a stop to this.”

He goes through and takes each family member one by one and says, “Nah, this isn’t going down in my town.” The last scene of the movie is the family driving a convertible into this police blockade. The solo from “Free Bird” is playing, and they’re riding into this blockade and they just mow ‘em all down. They all die, but it was cool.

Yeah. That was awesome.

I’m not a big fan of the dental accessories (when trick-or-treating). I don’t care if your dad’s a dentist. You buy some at least fun-sized Snicker’s, or else your house is getting egged. That’s just what’s going to happen. I’ve gotten dental floss. I’ve gotten mini toothbrushes with the dried toothpaste on them. So you don’t even get your freedom of choice in toothpaste, which is just … yechhh.

Halloween is an excuse for fat kids — i.e. linemen — to eat candy, but we’d probably eat candy anyway. So this is just a little more guilt-free. I was wondering what would happen if the offensive line went trick-or-treating. That would be really funny if that could be like a YouTube video.

Pregame Playlist

“ZERO”
THE SMASHING PUMPKINS

I don’t like carving pumpkins. I like smashing pumpkins.

When I was little, I had a cousin who lived with me. She grew up in the golden age of grunge. I was probably 3 or 4, but she was a teenager, like 16 or 17 in the early ‘90s, so this was grunge’s heyday. I have a distinct memory of Smashing Pumpkins songs coming from her room.

When I was 16, I got “Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness.” It was a weird album, but it was really good. It awakened forgotten memories for me, like, “Oh my gosh, I remember sitting in my ‘Space Jam’ pajamas eating toothpaste (when I was a kid, I’d eat toothpaste by the bottle) and hearing this.”

There’s one song I still listen to all the time from that album: “Zero.” It’s an awesome representative of what grunge-metal was. It’s low-down. It’s dirty. It’s a little apathetic.

“Zero” accomplished that anti-movement mentality, and it’s really dirty, dude. I consider that a very heavy song. (Singing) “Wanna go for a ride?”

He’s kinda like, “I don’t care about anything.”

You can’t listen to the song without bobbing your head, and it also brings back childhood memories. It could’ve been influential in my taste in music today.
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**SENDING A MESSAGE SKYWARD**

**STORY BY ALEXANDER SMITH**

**When Missouri receiver L’Damian Washington scored a 96-yard touchdown against South Carolina, he got down on one knee and thanked his guardian angel.**

Missouri fans will remember last Saturday’s overtime loss to South Carolina for the heartbreak. For fourth-and-goal from the 15-yard-line. For a game-tying 23-yard field goal that bounced off the left upright. L’Damian Washington will remember it for his mother, Sonya.

Last Wednesday was her birthday, but for the seventh time, Washington could not celebrate with her. She passed away at the age of 38 after falling ill at her son’s basketball game in December 2006.

So on Saturday, when Washington caught a second-quarter pass from Missouri quarterback Maty Mauk, split two defenders and sprinted 96 yards for a touchdown, he drowned out the crowd noise and got down on a knee in the end zone.

He thought about the woman he calls his guardian angel.

“The touchdown was my message to her,” Washington said. “I just want to thank God for giving me the ability to be here and represent something so powerful, which is her.”

Washington’s father was shot to death a decade before Sonya died. The single mother left four boys behind. L’Damian, the third son, was 15 years old at the time. LaCourtney, the oldest, was 19. Tobias was 17. And little Tomarious was just 9 years old.

The brothers had some community support but mostly had to fend for themselves. Sometimes, they failed to pay the electric bill on time. Money for the rent was a tougher prospect.

But so far, they’ve made it. Washington and his two older brothers are proud high school graduates, and Tomarious will graduate from Green Oaks High in Shreveport, La., in the spring.

“It’s just important that people know I was raised the right way,” Washington said. “For me to make it here, my mother never left my side. What she taught me was still instilled in me. It carried a long way.”

Offensive coordinator Josh Henson remembers a string bean walking into the cafeteria at the Mizzou Athletics Training Complex.

“He was just real thin,” Henson said. “Real skinny.”

Washington stood 6 feet 4 inches tall, but he only weighed 150 pounds as a high school senior. Henson was the offensive line coach at the time. He showed Washington around the facilities, and when it was time to eat, he led Washington to the all-you-can-eat style lunchroom.

“Go eat,” Henson said.

The young athlete was shocked.

“Anything I want?” Washington asked.

Henson nodded. Five years later, the moment is still lodged in his memory.

“That struck me,” Henson said. “Just the blessings that we have. Most of us in this country take for granted the blessings we have and the things we grow up with. It kept things in perspective about what’s important in life.”

As a redshirt, Washington struggled on the practice field during his first season. He didn’t seem to fit into then-offensive coordinator David Yost’s scheme.

He thought about leaving the program.

“I wasn’t sure if I fit Mizzou’s system,” Washington said. “We didn’t stretch the field much.”

But he stuck with it, learned the playbook and hit the weight room. As a redshirt sophomore, he caught 20 passes for 364 yards and three touchdowns in 2011. Last year, he bumped up his receptions (25) and yards (443) to go along with two scores.

Now, the former string bean is up to 205 pounds and leads the team with 635 yards and eight touchdowns in eight games. He produced the season’s signature play — a reception touchdown on a trick play toss from fellow wideout Bud Sasser to beat Georgia in Athens — and his 96-yard scamper against South Carolina would’ve been one for the ages if Missouri had been able to pull off the win.

Basically, he’s one of the best players in the SEC — if not the entire nation — and is a safe bet to make the highlight reel every week.

“It’s a beautiful thing,” defensive end Shane Ray said. “L’Damian has been through a whole lot in his life. For him to be able to do what he’s doing now, I feel like he’s putting his family on his back and doing everything possible. You see something like that and you can’t help but show your support for what he’s doing.”

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**
Missouri wide receiver L'Damian Washington, right, runs past South Carolina's Jimmy Legree, top left, and Brison Williams, as he scores on a 96-yard touchdown reception during the second quarter Oct. 26.
Washington’s teammates paid him the ultimate compliment in August when they named him one of the team’s four senior captains, and he has yet to fail them.

“We’re all behind him 100 percent,” Ray said. “Whatever he decides to do or say, we’re down for him.”

Before overtime began on Saturday night, Washington circled the Tigers up and let loose with an emotional outburst caught on ESPN cameras.

“If you want to be great, this is the time,” Washington yelled. “You came to Mizzou for great games like this.”

The eventual loss came in heartbreaking fashion. Kicker Andrew Baggett knocked his game-tying 23-yard field goal off the left post in double overtime, and Missouri’s perfect season was no more.

But Washington couldn’t let his teammates lose sight of the ultimate goal: finishing the year ranked No. 1 in the country.

“The outcome isn’t always in your favor, but I think that this group will learn from it,” Washington said. “And I’m sure it’s going to help us down the road.

“You learn from wins, but you have to learn from losses a little bit more. All of our goals are still reachable. The last two years that Alabama won the national championship, they lost a regular season game.”

Less than 12 hours after the loss, he let the world know via his #HappySunday tweet that he was over the loss and ready to move on.

“I understand we’re football players,” Washington said on Monday afternoon. “But at the end of the day, we’ve all got a life outside of football. Just because you have a bad Saturday or things don’t go your way doesn’t mean you don’t have a thousand other reasons to smile.”

“I’d be lying if I said it didn’t hurt. It stung a little bit,” he said. “But I had to come in here with a positive attitude and a smile on my face just to let my teammates know that life goes on.”

Like so many other young athletes from at-risk situations, Washington sees football as a fixer.

He’s on the radar of several NFL Draft analysts and knows that playing on Sunday next year means earning a big paycheck. But he will also leave Missouri with a degree in psychology after years of standout academic work in high school and college.

“I remember the first conversation I had with him when he got here was about going to school and graduating,” Henson said. “How important that was to his future, and to help the next generation of Washingtons live a better life than he had. He’s put himself in a position to do that.”
@TIGER TWEETS

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE PLAYERS’ MOST HUMOROUS, THOUGHTFUL AND INTERESTING TWEETS

@THATGIBSONKID
JOHN GIBSON III
This was the worse homecoming ever on and off the field
Oct. 27

@E_WATERS81
ERIC WATERS
Mauktober is time to rock out with your Mauk out!!! @MIZ_MAUK7_ZOU good game today playa
Oct. 27

@EalyKony
KONY MONTOY EALY
There is no blame unless it’s a team blame it should have never came to a kick or overtime we are better then that gotta do it all the time
Oct. 27

@ELTORROOCHO
DONOVAN BONNER
Preciate all the tweets, I’m fine, Gotta Derrick Rose the knee up so I can be at my best Saturday
Oct. 28

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10 THINGS YOU DIDN’T KNOW ABOUT TENNESSEE

Missouri is still in first place of the Southeastern Conference East Division, but the margin of error got a lot slimmer after last week’s home loss to South Carolina in double overtime. The Tigers don’t get a breather, either. Tennessee comes to town off a bad loss to Alabama. The Volunteers have already upset South Carolina this season, so Missouri will be on alert.

Here are 10 things you didn’t know about the Tennessee Volunteers, who hail from Knoxville, Tenn.

BY MATTHEW FAIRBURN

Kenny Chesney was born in Knoxville, Tenn. Nashville may be known as the birthplace of country music, but one of the genre’s modern stars was born a few hours east. Chesney has sold more than 30 million albums in his career.

Tennessee is full of action and adventure. Quentin Tarantino, director of films including “Pulp Fiction,” “Inglourious Basterds” and “Reservoir Dogs,” was born in Knoxville. Meanwhile, famous stuntman Johnny Knoxville, best known for his work on the television series “Jackass,” also calls the town home.

Speaking of great voices, Mary Costa, the voice of Princess Aurora in the film adaptation of “Sleeping Beauty,” also is from Knoxville. Tennessee’s football team tends to think of itself as a sleeping beauty this season after pulling off an upset of South Carolina two weeks ago.

The University of Tennessee is home to the only museum dedicated entirely to women’s basketball. The Volunteers have one of the top women’s basketball programs in the country. Pat Summitt led the program to eight NCAA Championships and 16 Southeastern Conference titles.

Tennessee’s official school nickname is the Volunteers. The nickname is derived from the fact that a large number of Tennesseans volunteered in the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War and the Civil War. The name Volunteers was first used for athletics by media organizations, beginning in 1902.

10

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The Rock is a mainstay on Tennessee’s campus. The giant slab of rock was uncovered in the 1960s and became a place where students painted messages. The university used to sandblast the messages away but has come to accept the tradition of coloring the rock. Tennessee was hard at work whitewashing the Rock before last week’s game against Alabama, though, when a Crimson Tide fan painted the rock red with the message, “Roll Tide Roll.”

The Volunteers won’t be overwhelmed by the crowd at Memorial Stadium. Tennessee’s football stadium, Neyland Stadium, has the fifth-largest capacity in all of college football. The stadium, which recently underwent more than $100 million worth of renovations, holds more than 102,000 people on game day. When it first opened in 1921, Neyland Stadium held slightly more than 3,000 people.

While most schools practice tailgating, few practice “Sailgating,” like the fans at Tennessee do. Outside of Neyland Stadium before every home football game, more than 200 boats set up shop on the Tennessee River and enjoy a tailgating atmosphere.

Smokey is the official mascot of the University of Tennessee. In 1953, Tennessee’s pep club organized a contest for a live mascot. The story goes that a bluetick hound responded to the large crowd at the event with a howl. The rest is history. The dog now leads the team onto the field for each home game. Last year when Tennessee played against Kentucky, Smokey ran after the Wildcats’ kicker, so Tigers’ kicker Andrew Baggett might want to be on the lookout for that Saturday.

Tennessee claims six national championships in football and has sent dozens of players to the NFL, but none are more decorated than current Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning. After playing four seasons at Tennessee, Manning was the No. 1 overall pick in the 1998 NFL Draft. He’s gone on to throw from more than 60,000 yards in his NFL career, good for No. 2 on the all-time list behind Brett Favre.
Sophomore defensive end Shane Ray has burst onto the scene in his second season for Missouri. As part of a defensive end rotation that includes more experienced players, Michael Sam and Kony Ealy, Ray has earned playing time and totaled six tackles for loss to go with three sacks this season. This week, we asked Ray five random questions.

**What's your favorite movie?**

My favorite movie is probably “Friday.” It’s an old movie with Ice Cube. It’s a movie I grew up watching a lot that gave me a lot of laughs with my family.

**What is your favorite place to eat in Columbia?**

I have to think about that. I eat at a lot of dining halls. At least once a week, I like to go out to George’s restaurant.

**What is the one thing you have to listen to before the game?**

I actually like to listen to Mike Tyson, his speech when he’s talking about how he’s the greatest ever. You know what I’m saying? I like hearing that. Especially with me, playing football. When I get on the field, I have to become a different person. My mind has to be aggressive. Listening to that and getting that idea in my head that I can’t be stopped, it’s typically how I like to feel.

**What is your favorite class?**

My favorite class right now is my law class. It’s my hardest class for sure, but I’m learning a lot of new things. Of course, anybody likes to learn new things, and law is more of what I’m interested in.

**Once your football career is over, what is your ideal career?**

I see Shane Ray possibly being somewhere on your TV doing something. I can’t put my finger on what it is yet. But that’s my idea. I definitely want to become an entrepreneur, open up my own business. My dream is if I’m able to possibly go to the NFL, I want to be able to give back to my community. Maybe start some youth organizations where kids from Kansas City and the inner city can go play football. I really just have a lot of ideas going on. I don’t know exactly what I want to do.
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