

Robbery victim finds interest in criminal justice

After being asked to describe the face of a robber to a sketch artist, student discovers a way to use her drawing abilities

Karen Hill
FEATURE EDITOR

"Open the register," said the man. A gun barrel stared coldly at Sacha Snyder as she opened the register containing the day's money two years ago at Gary's Tuxedo Shop in Clackamas. Of all the people who came and went from the shop that day, his would be the face Snyder would remember.

At the time, she was busy working full-time at Gary's and taking several art classes at Mt. Hood Community College with plans to major in fine arts. Snyder had little interest in criminal justice.

After the incident at Gary's, Snyder was asked to describe the robber so a Clackamas County forensic artist could create a sketch. During the session, an interest in this area of art arose in Snyder. The forensic artist suggested Snyder take courses from Stuart Parks to become a certified forensic artist.

A year later, Snyder was given

her certification, which involved taking courses in Colorado and Idaho.

Currently Snyder, 23, is working on earning an AAOT in criminal justice at CCC to supplement her forensic artist certificate.

"Because of the saturation of forensic artists in the Portland area, it's kind of hard to get my foot in the door without getting another degree," said Snyder.

An incident involving an intruder at CCC, last March, presented the opportunity for Snyder to pro-

duce a sketch of a woman as described by cadet Adam Pedersen. Snyder, as she was once asked to do herself, requested that Adam look through the pages of a book displaying hundreds of pages of noses, eyes, mouths, chins and other facial features and choose those that most closely resembled that of the intruder.

"I asked him to describe the overall feeling and the most prominent thing he remembered about her," said Snyder. Although the face of the person may seem vague, the

features are usually recognizable.

"It's a lot easier for people to recognize something than it is for them to recall it," said Snyder. "The pictures, when you're doing it, they just kind of jump out at you. All you have to do is look at a sheet of noses and you'll see this one nose and you'll just know that that's the one. With a traumatic incident like that, the image is burned into your brain; you'll never forget."

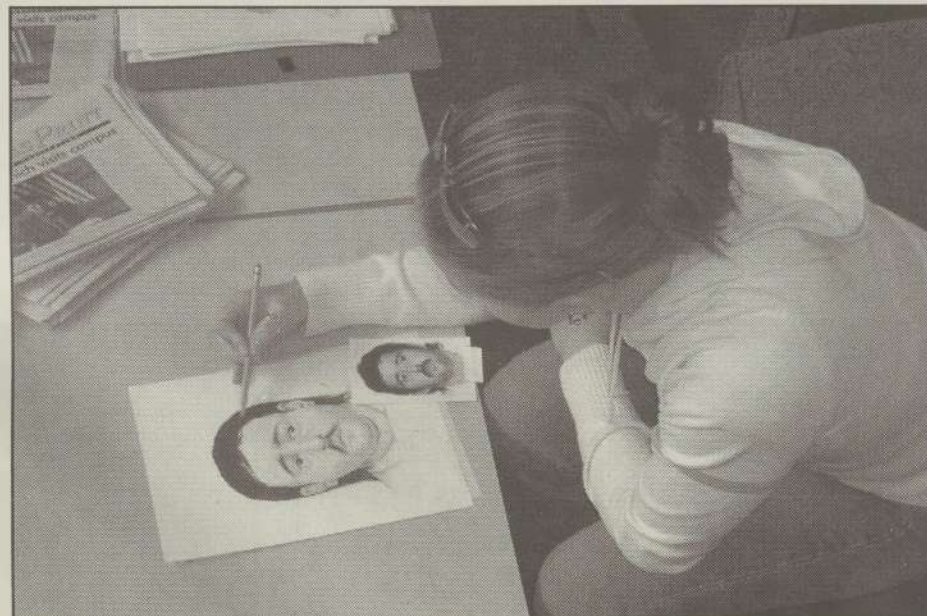
Snyder is currently unsure which area of criminal justice to pursue, but is hoping sketching can be a

part. She is grateful for the criminal justice program at Clackamas.

"I think [the program] is great," said Snyder. "It's taught by people who have actual experience in the field. It's better than going to school where people just teach you having been taught. [The instructor] knows what it's really like out there."

Snyder remembers the incident with a shudder, but is still amazed at the way it has shaped her plans.

"It's weird how something like that can completely change your life," said Snyder. "The way I can either look at the incident as a horrible thing that causes fear, or I can take something good out of it and turn it into something positive; that's what I've chosen."



NIC DELZELL CLACKAMAS PRINT

Criminal justice student Sacha Snyder was given the opportunity to draw a sketch of an intruder on campus last March, as described to her by CCC cadet Adam Pedersen. The sketch was used by campus safety to search for the intruder.



SNYDER

Clackamas student relates a tale of two cities

Obiero is on a quest to help hometown of Nairobi, Kenya

Bethany Monroe
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

After working with World Concern to bring food and medical supplies to needy people throughout Africa, student MyQue Obiero is furthering his education in hopes of finding cures for the devastating diseases that he witnessed.

Obiero, 23, is a native of Nairobi, Kenya. He was invited to live with friends in Oregon so he could attend Clackamas Community College, where he is working on a transfer degree in microbiology.

"[I've seen] diseases wiping out a whole population and doctors don't even know what to do," said Obiero. "That's why I'm going [to college]—to research some of those diseases—see if I can find cures."

Although Americans often associate Africa with jungles and small villages, Nairobi is actually a large city.

"It's bigger than Portland ... but the infrastructure is much worse," he said. "The roads have

potholes ... we have street kids all over the city and rubbish heaps. It's basically a third-world country.

"We have 42 different languages in our country and they are all very, very different," said Obiero, who currently speaks seven: Swahili, English, French, Tswana and a few other African languages. He is also attempting to add Spanish and Japanese to his list.

"Japanese sounds so much like my mother's [tribal] language ... so I find it easy to pick up," said Obiero. He also said he prefers to learn languages by listening to native speakers rather than studying in a classroom setting.

Obiero admits that the intensity of schoolwork at Clackamas is not quite comparable to his high school years in Kenya.

"We used to go to school from seven to seven," he said. "On Saturday, you go to school from eight to five, Sunday from eight to one. So, basically every day you go to school."

The senior year is especially intense, when students prepare for a month of exams that they must pass in order to graduate from high school.

"They can give us questions from our freshman year," said Obiero, explaining that he had to

study stacks of notes from all four years of high school. "There's no multiple choices—no A, B, C, D."

Nairobi, which is Kenya's capital city, is home to a diverse mixture of people, but many attempt to hold on to the customs of their tribes.

At the age of 14, Obiero underwent a tribal rite of passage into adulthood requiring him to spear a lion. He and 19 other boys were taken to the jungle early one morning and left with spears as their only weapon.

"[The lion] roared so loud—

that's what he uses to paralyze his prey," said Obiero. "So when the thing started roaring after my friend threw the first spear ... it almost drove us nuts. I was screaming my head off; it was so painful."

After an intense chase, Obiero said, he and the others were successful in slaying their lion.

Although the cultural differences between Kenya and the United States are vast, Obiero has plenty in common with his American classmates.

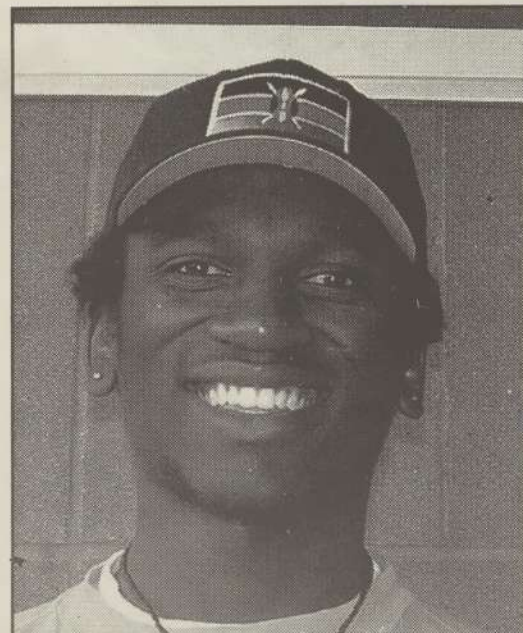
A Blazer fan since age 10, Obiero is a sports enthusiast and particularly

enjoys rugby, soccer and basketball. He loves fast food, especially Wendy's. He also loves to travel.

"I've been to South America, North America, Europe, Africa, I'm from Africa ... so I need to go to Australia and maybe Antarctica just so I can say I've gone to all continents," he said.

For now, Obiero is enjoying his time in the United States.

"A couple of times I've dreamt in English and I've said, 'Man! I'm so Americanized!' It freaks me out!" he said.



MICHAEL COOPER CLACKAMAS PRINT

Student MyQue Obiero speaks seven languages including Swahili, English, French, Tswana, and several other African languages. "We have 42 different languages in our country, and they are all very, very different," said Obiero. Obiero has travelled to North and South America, Europe, and Asia.



FIVE REASONS TO CHOOSE WSU VANCOUVER

- 1 The power and prestige of a Washington State University diploma ... close to home.
- 2 Fifteen undergraduate and eight graduate degree programs.
- 3 Small classes and fully engaged learning with world class faculty.
- 4 In-state tuition opportunities for Oregonians ... call to see if you qualify.
- 5 John Robert Brown Scholarship ... recipients receive full tuition for two years. To learn how you can apply, visit: <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/ss/schollist.htm#john>

CALL TODAY FOR ADMISSIONS INFORMATION.

14204 NE Salmon Creek Avenue
www.vancouver.wsu.edu
(360) 546-9779

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
VANCOUVER
World Class. Face to Face.