

## Interview Questions: Tattoo Receiver

- How many tattoos do you have and why did you decide on those specific designs?
- What made you get your first tattoo and tell me a little about that process? What do you remember about it?
- When you are looking to get a tattoo, what do you look for?
- What category of tattoos are your favorite? Do you ever look at other categories or do you mainly stick to one?
- How do you look for tattoo designs and tattoo artists?
- What is the most painful part of the tattoo process (outside of getting the actual tattoo?)
- How do you ever regretted a tattoo? If so why?
- How do you normally pay for a tattoo? Do you think you have a pretty good knowledge of price points with tattoos? Have you ever negotiated on price?
- How do you go about scheduling for a tattoo?

## Interview Questions: Tattoo Artist

- How did you get into tattooing?
- How long have you been tattooing and how did you get into the business?
- When your clients are getting a tattoo, what do you think they are looking for?
- What category of tattoos are your favorite to do? Do you ever look at other categories or do you mainly stick to one?
- How do you look for inspiration with your tattoo designs and do you look at other tattoo artists for inspiration/advice?
- What is the most painful part of the tattoo process?
- How do you ever regretted giving a tattoo? If so why?
- How do you normally get paid for a tattoo? Do you think you have a pretty good knowledge of price points with tattoos? Have you ever negotiated on price?
- How do you go about scheduling for a tattoo?

**Name: Travis**

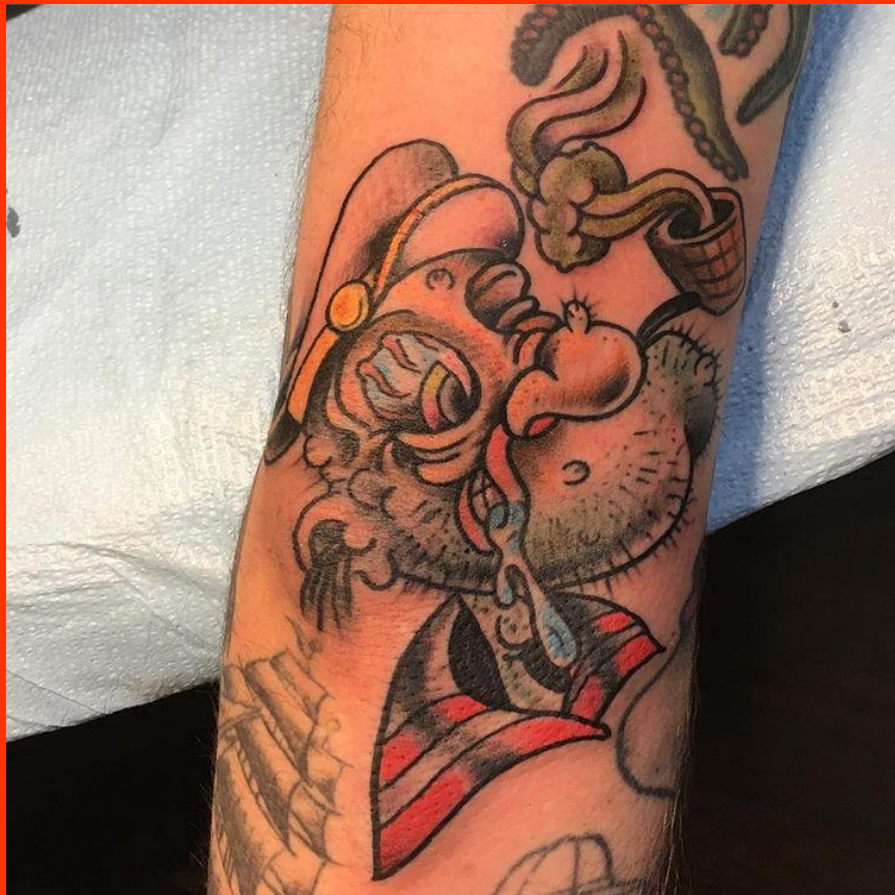
**Age: 28**

**Occupation: Insurance Software Salesman**

**Location: Chicago**

**Relationship Status: Single**





“Most of my tattoos are just shit I like.”

**How many tattoos do you have and why did you decide on those specific designs?**

I just counted today, it's 23 after a careful recount. A couple have meaning, but most are just shit I like.

**What made you get your first tattoo and tell me a little about that process? What do you remember about it?**

I was always into tattooing, the first one was a drunken idea, that I don't really remember. I always liked tattoos, even in 6th grade I remember drawing blink 182's tattoos on myself. I was very excited and nervous to get my second tattoo, I was only 17 and went and immediately got my forearm tattooed. It was 2 sessions and an hour into the first one, I was like this sucks.

**So do you regret anything about that first “real” one.**

I wish would have gotten his trace on my arm first, because it wasn't sized to my arm properly. I also filled up my arms and legs first, but as I've aged I realized I'm happy to have my back and chest still available because now I know what sizes look best, like a full big chest and back piece. So I'm saving the best for last.



“I’m a fly by the seat of my pants type of tattoo guy.”

**When you are looking to get a tattoo, what do you look for?**

As far as design goes or as artists go? I look for bold lines and hard color, but I also like back and grey. I mostly like traditional stuff. I’m a fly by the seat of my pants type of tattoo guy, so I don’t think about that stuff too far in advance. I also know a lot of tattoo artists so I get tattooed by them but when I was looking around for an artist I would look for someone who was great at traditional and has a good reputation within the tattoo community. Reputation is huge to me, now that I know a bit more about the tattoo community. Since I’ve gotten so many tattoos, looking for something super specific is less and less important. I normally just try and have fun and get something I like.

**What category of tattoos are your favorite? Do you ever look at other categories or do you mainly stick to one?**

[answered in above question]

**How do you look for tattoo designs and tattoo artists?**

As of recently, I just want to find an artist I can work with; and find out if they want to try and do something new that they get hyped on that way they give a better tattoo and I can be part of that experience.



“Don’t get your tattoos lasered off, it loses the rawness.”

**What is the most painful part of the tattoo process (outside of getting the actual tattoo?)**

My most pain in the ass tattoo was from this guy Ronnie. He shows up at my mom’s house to tattoo me and doesn't have gloves, towels, or the skin gel, so I have to buy the gear, although he does deduct it from the overall price. I eventually get the tattoo after Ronnie resizes the thing like a bunch and even then I had to convince him to stay awake and do it. It was a pain in the ass but that’s what makes getting tattoos fun. Also, this was his first tattoo after getting his vision back in one of his eyes.

**How you ever regretted a tattoo? If so why?**

No, not really but I’m a fly by the seat of the pants kinda guy, so I don’t put much thought upfront about it and I know what I’m getting into. I don’t really respect people who remove their tattoos out of regret, since it used to be forever and traditionally there was no do-overs. The tattoo loses it rawness.



It would be nice if I could go straight to the artist's post of this image, not tattoodo's.

**How do you normally pay for a tattoo? Do you think you have a pretty good knowledge of price points with tattoos? Have you ever negotiated on price?**

I've gotten good deals because I've gotten to know people and I hang out in tattoo shops. I've just gotten these deals by becoming friends and been willing to work with the artists. It all depends on how much time you put into getting the tattoo and your relationship with the artists. Prices always vary, but you can keep them on the low end.

**How do you go about scheduling for a tattoo?**

Once again, I'm a fly by the seat of my pants type of guy, but also I book a time casually with artists when we're face to face. Sometimes I'll use the phone to call them if I am taking a trip somewhere and know the artist.

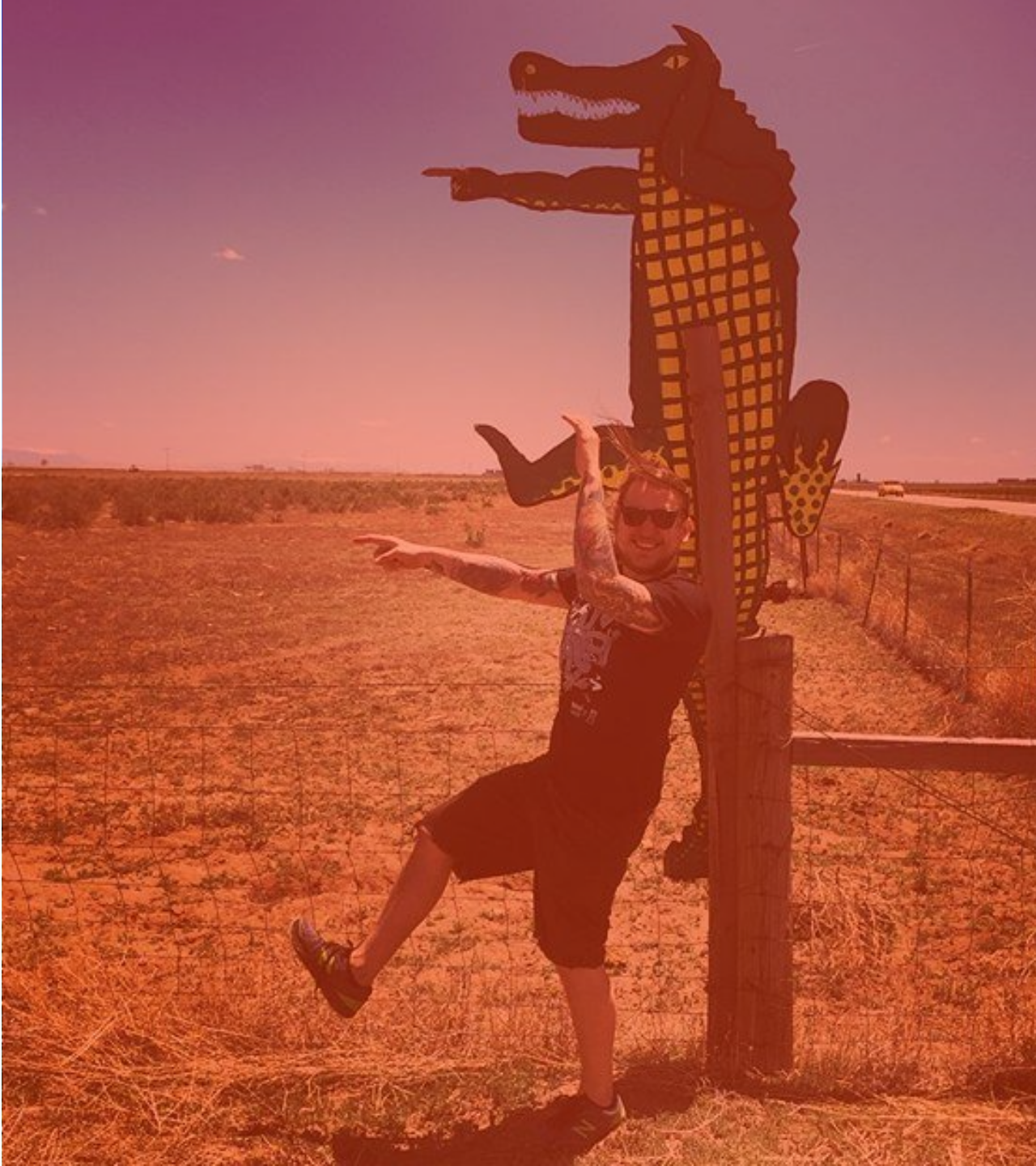
**Name: Rob**

**Age: 30**

**Occupation: Tattoo Artist**

**Location: Denver**

**Relationship Status: Engaged**





“Taking an idea and turning it into a design, it blew my mind.”

### **How did you get into tattooing?**

I started getting into tattooing after getting a tattoo in a shop in Denver. It was the first time someone tattooed me in a studio setting. It seemed like magic, because he took an idea and turned it into a design, it blew my mind. I also love going to new shops, each shop is like a community, and I like that feeling of being part of something. That’s why I got into it.

### **How long have you been tattooing and how did you get into the business?**

2.5 years I’ve been tattooing, and I was doing a year of counter work at the shop before that. A lot of that work was learning to manage the shop, be in charge of inventory, and mopping; things of that nature. I still had to prove myself to them, so I could get an apprenticeship, they told me right off the bat that it wasn’t a guarantee. That counter work sucked though, because you feel used in that position, and you’re not making any money. But I had to learn how to deal with customers, also working in the bar industry helped me with dealing with people. The professions have quite a few similarities.





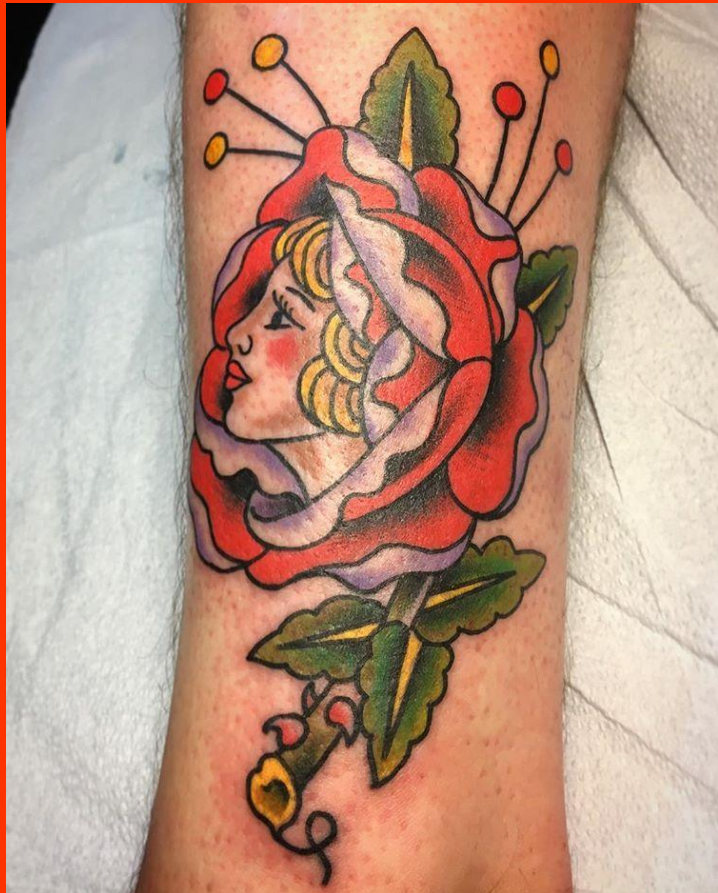
“I have to convince the customer what is best for them.”

**When your clients are getting a tattoo, what do you think they are looking for?**

I think that people who come to me aren't expecting a big back tattoo and they just want an apprentice tattoo, something small and clever. At times I have to explain that their image doesn't necessarily translate to the skin, and you have to think about line weight and other variables to make a good tattoo, so I make sure my clients understand that right away. Honestly, I have to convince the customer what is best for them. Like for instance, instead of getting a bible verse on your ribs, why don't you turn that into an image for me to translate onto your skin.

**What category of tattoos are your favorite to do? Do you ever look at other categories or do you mainly stick to one?**

My favorite are old American traditional. I love those old American eagles, roses and skulls. I like patterns too and just getting what I know will look good over time. I like simplicity, I'm a simple guy that likes simple things.



“Getting someone to stop moving sucks.”

**How do you look for inspiration with your tattoo designs and do you look at other tattoo artists for inspiration/advice?**

Lately, I've been getting inspiration from the people who tattoo me. I love checking out other shops and seeing what other artists are up to as well. I get a lot of inspiration from Instagram too, it puts into perspective all of the work I have to do to excel at this craft. I get inspired by the older generation of tattoo artists too. Those early pioneers were amazing.

**What is the most painful part of the tattoo process (outside of getting the actual tattoo?)**

Consultation for sure. Consultation is the time to sell them your idea, and to get the “fish on the hook.” There is normally a lot of back and forth with the customer. Then you have to give them a good drawing and sell them on it, which can also be painful because they might want a revision. Then the revision process sucks too, the drawing part is hard and time-consuming. Also, if they can't sit well while getting tattooed and/or the tracing process on skin, that can be painful. Getting someone to stop moving sucks too.



"I regret plenty of tattoos."

**How you ever regretted giving a tattoo? If so why?**

I regret plenty of tattoos, sometimes I give one to just get them out of there. You give them a warning normally, like to stop moving or something. But if they don't listen, you just want them to finish and get out. You're always going to try and put out your best work but it doesn't always work out that way. It takes 2 people to get a tattoo, you know.

**How do you normally get paid for a tattoo? Do you think you have a pretty good knowledge of price points with tattoos? Have you ever negotiated on price?**

I charge \$100 an hour and I don't charge for consultation, or drawing time, but a lot of other people do. I charge them per minute while they're in the chair, that includes whenever they want a cigarette break or whatever. I do negotiate, all the time really. I sell myself short a lot because if it is something I want to do on someone who doesn't have much money, I will cut them a break so I can put that piece in my portfolio.



“I usually try to schedule an hour more than expected.”

### **How do you go about scheduling for a tattoo?**

I have an open schedule, but I will normally get people via Instagram, phone, or word of mouth. I always make sure to do a consultation and a deposit. No questions asked if someone bails and that way I still make some money. I want to start doing PayPal payments if someone comes in from out of town. I usually try to schedule an hour more than expected because I don't know how much time I will actually need to do the tattoo. And I don't like people waiting around and biting on their nails.

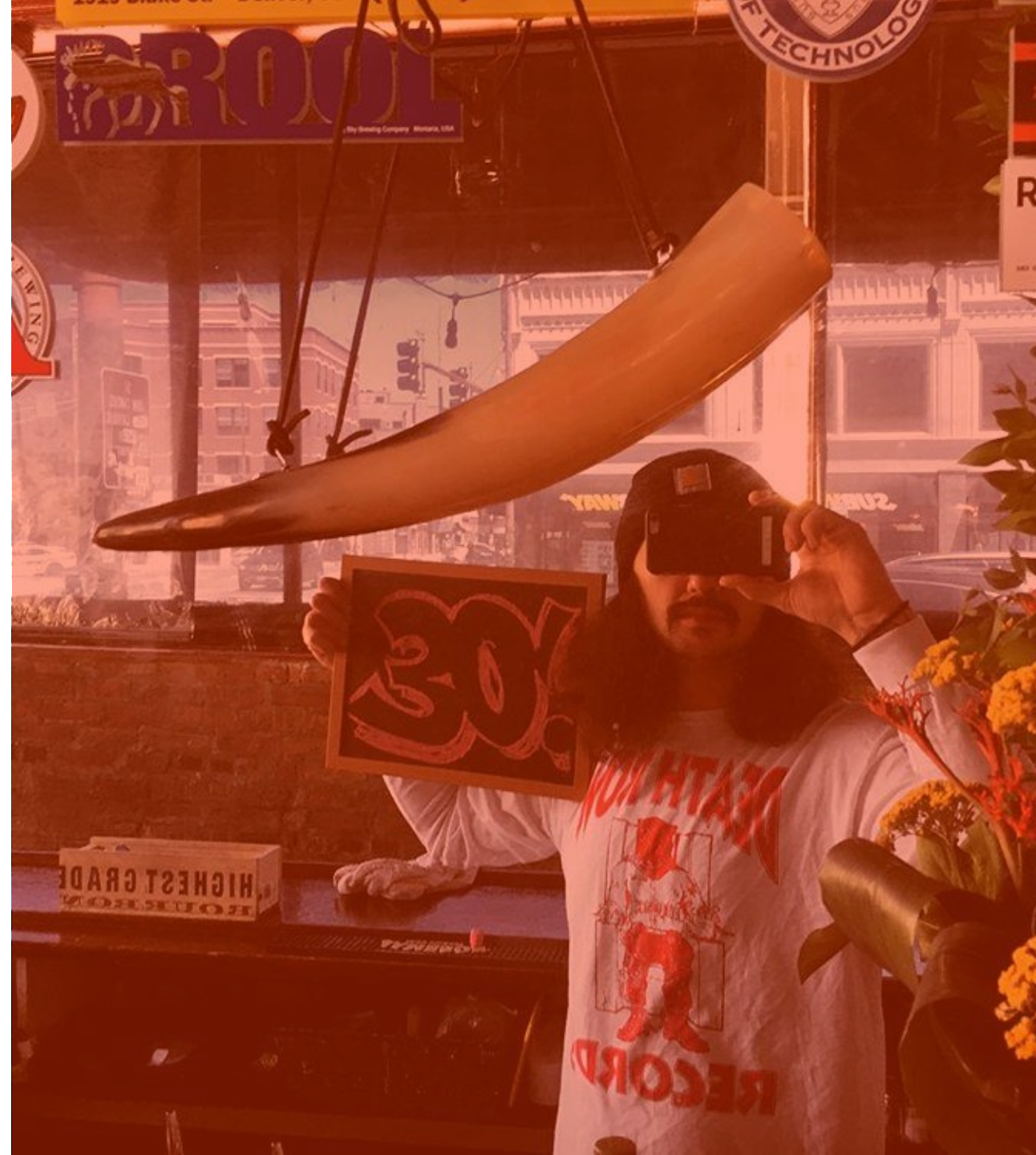
**Name: Trino**

**Age: 30**

**Occupation: Bartender**

**Location: Chicago**

**Relationship Status: Single**





“It’s really about how I feel when I get that design.”

**How many tattoos do you have and why did you decide on those specific designs?**

Not sure, I couldn’t tell you how many I have, somewhere between 15 and 20. Every design is different depending on the artist. I let the artist decide on the design normally. It’s not about how many tattoos I have, it’s really about how I feel when I get that design. That’s what makes them special.

**What made you get your first tattoo and tell me a little about that process? What do you remember about it?**

The first one was a “warriors” tattoo and was part of getting into that crew when I was young. I remember it hurt, but they all started hurting less in my 20s and then now they hurt more in my 30s, funny how that works out. It’s similar to getting a hangover. I was super nervous when I got that first one. I’ll never go over it though, because it was significant at the time and it’s a chapter of my life. That first tattoo was also my only “house tattoo.”



“Tattooing on your body what scares you is a way to embrace it.”

**When you are looking to get a tattoo, what do you look for?**

At this point I'm looking for what exactly an artist has to offer. it's like I'm starting an art collection but it's on my body opposed to my walls. It's funny because people recognize certain tattoos that I have by certain artists.

**What category of tattoos are your favorite? Do you ever look at other categories or do you mainly stick to one?**

I appreciate any good artist but I love demonic rock-n-roll tattoos. That's my favorite style. Tattooing on your body what scares you is a way to embrace it, I still need to get that spider tattoo.

**How to you look for tattoo designs and tattoo artists?**

To be honest I find them on Instagram or word of mouth from other tattoo artists. I think Instagram is the best thing to happen to the tattoo community in the last 5 years. I do tattoo travel tourism frequently, so finding people around the country is really just a win-win.



“It’s awesome when the artist can create something for me that I can’t even picture.”

**What is the most painful part of the tattoo process (outside of getting the actual tattoo?)**

Nothing is too hard about the process, one thing I realized is proper communication of what you want is crucial. Never beat around the bush about it, because you won't get the product you really want. Its awesome when the artist can create something for me that I can't even picture.

**How you ever regretted a tattoo? If so why?**

I have regretted them, but at the same time, it marks a certain place in my life. I remember what it took for me to get that tattoo in that part of my life, and why I don't really regret them. They all tell a story.





“Never undervalue your tattooer.”

**How do you normally pay for a tattoo? Do you think you have a pretty good knowledge of price points with tattoos? Have you ever negotiated on price?**

I've been tattooed by a lot of respected artists and I abide by the normal \$150 an hour rate. But some artists are fast and still maintain that quality, so I'll pay for like a \$350 tattoo, if it only takes an hour, if it's worth it. It's normally based on that artist's reputation.

**How do you go about scheduling for a tattoo?**

If they're in town, I'll go face to face and talk to them via a consultation. If someone is guest spotting, I'll talk to them via the gram or via phone and schedule something.

One last thing, never undervalue your tattooer, because you are buying a piece of artwork. Don't compare prices, go to the person you really want it from and respect that price.

# Summary

## Interview Assessment

The interviews went extremely well. I learned a lot of things about the tattoo process, including pain points from both the client and the tattoo artist's perspective. I feel like I received a lot of good information about what makes a tattoo special to each individual.

I believe that interviewing the tattooees helped me realize that the tattoo is about the work of art; as well as, the experience of receiving it. Interviewing the tattoo artist made me realize that there are a lot of factors in giving someone a tattoo. The process starts as soon as there is contact with the client and can end after the tattoo or continue on as a relationship.

## What I've Learned

1. There is a need for an app that alleviates some pain points for the tattoo artist.
2. Not every tattoo means something to someone. It can be more about collecting an experience or a piece of art from someone.
3. There are 4 main points in the tattoo process: Consultation, Drawing, Revision, and Actual Appointment.

## Overall Summary

There needs to be a slight change in the scope of this app. There needs to be an app for the tattoo process; that streamlines the process, stage by stage for the tattoo artist. One that alleviates the painful back and forth of the consultation and revision stages. This app needs to be focused on early adoption from tattoo artists and the tattoo clients will follow.

The app needs to feed off of Instagram and help give tattoo artists a space where they can negotiate; list their prices for revisions, consultation, and hourly. It should help unite the tattoo community through a clear open-dialog.