

Mr. Germany and His Life

I chose a very awesome man to interview named Kester Franke. Kester is an exchange student born in Hamburg, Germany. He is as of right now 16 years old. The reason I chose him was that we don't often see a lot of exchange students that come to Lincoln. So, I thought it would be funny to interview him and see what his life was like in Germany and how his life has been ever since he came to the US. This interview was conducted in the Lincoln library. (but since it's Lincoln the audio has some other background noises from other student.

Jordan: *Ok Sir what is your name?*

Kester: My name is Kester Franke

Jordan: *Where are you from?*

Kester: I am a foreign Exchange student from Germany and I grew up in Hamburg and with 2 million people living there. Somewhere around there.

Jordan: *How old are you and how long do you expect to stay here as an Exchange student.*

Kester: I am now 16 years old and I expected to be here 10 months. Then I go back to Germany

Jordan: *Do you have any family or relative or is it just you on your own?*

Kester: Actually it just me I have some classmates who went to America. And now they are all around the country, but no family relative that I know.

Jordan: *So, before, what was your expectation, when you were going to America. Like what was the think you believed about America.*

So far off to a great start, hopefully I don't end up stuttering cause I'm very nervous.

Kester: You know like from stuff like Hollywood and other movies and books we also read in class about America. At some point, you have a certain expectation of how it is here. Like nice and everybody is free and stuff but when preparing for the exchange year. It was getting pretty clear with like some phone calls with information from some people. I read books and articles about how insane it is in America and is more dangerous and all over the place an stuff. So I had like some information about America so I wasn't surprised when I came here. How everything is different and how people imagine it, but now this doesn't speak for everyone. I can also mention that some people were

completely disappointed when they came here, especially from Germany. I couldn't imagine if my sister came here. She would have been out of her mind. She also likes high school musical and stuff.

Jordan: *What were the steps you had to take to get here as an exchange student? Like you aren't able to just come here and boom an exchange student.*

Kester: No you are not able to just come to America just like that, the first thing you must have is ok grades to be able to just come out of school for a year to become an exchange student because American school years don't count as a Germany school years. Then you would have to find an organization, with that you would have to find pretty early because there is very limited amount of people that can come here (America). And when I did it, it was already too late, so I had to pay like \$10,000 more to even come here.

Jordan: \$10,000 Jesus

I thought about how it like bribing them with more money so he can come here.

Kester: That is a crazy amount of money, so we had to pay \$10,000 more than usually. It just the craziest thing. I had to have a good education/grades here to skip a grade, then we had to pay a lot of money. Then I had to go to Berlin to get my Visa. I had to deal with flights and stuff and write 4 different application for different organization to the school. Organization from here(America) and organization in Germany. So it was like pretty hard but it wasn't as bad for a year here

Jordan: *When you said you had to pay \$10,000 to go since you were late, was it like a bribe to get you on the list to go here or what?*

Kester: No it actually like 2 programs, one is the classic program and the other is the program where you can pick. The classic program is what we wanted to do, where we pay and the organization would look in America for school and I don't even know where I'm going. And for \$10,000 more you are able to pick where you want to go. There was some spots for me, and I picked to go to Tacoma.

Jordan: *What were the other option you could have chosen to go to? Like other states?*

Kester: I could have, it not the same price then depending on where you go. \$10,000 more and I could have went to California.

Jordan: *So was Tacoma like the cheaper option?*

Kester: I wanted to stay near a city

Jordan: No rural areas

Kester: Yeah no rural areas, I wanted more urban or just be able to go to big city in an hour or so which is possible here in Tacoma. I could have went to Oakland in San Francisco, but I think that a pretty bad part/place(I think that what he meant). I could have went to Hawaii. I could go to New York but it was all pretty expensive.

Jordan: *So Tacoma was basically one of the cheaper options?*

Kester: No it wasn't the cheapest one. It was the cheapest one near a city.

Jordan: Near a city

Kester: The cheaper one would be some small village in Idaho with the population with only like 500 and the school with only like 20 people. I didn't want to go there

Jordan: *How are you adjusting to life in the US? As stated before like transportation is much easier in Germany while here it harder with buses and less source of transportation.*

Kester: Yeah like you said, my house mother is like 70 years old, she doesn't want to drive more than half an hour. And every time I ask her she likes "I can't drive you everywhere." So when I came here, the first thing I looked for was bus schedules and routes. I'm able to go to most places I want to go with the bus. The problem is it takes a lot of time though

Jordan : Yeah I understand they take forever and are a pain in the booty (pg. 13 Mrs. Anders gosh)

Kester: First thing I looked for is how to go to Seattle, School with the bus and returning home from school because I get driven to school. How to go to like clothing shop or the Tacoma mall. Which is pretty is now since we have technology but the hardest part was getting used to the school life here. It so different.

Jordan: *Adding on to that how was the German education system different from the American education system? For example like hours classes, Like you stated before there is like 12 classes. How is each class laid out .*

Kester: Completely different, so what you guys have here is like 6 different classes every day for the entire year. In Germany we have blocks of classes, with only 3 different kinds of classes a day but each class is around 1 and a half hours to 2 hours each. For example 2 hours of German, 2 hours of Math, and 2 hours of English in a day. And Between them we have breaks. School starts later in the day and stop earlier but we have less breaks (im assuming like day breaks or breaks between classes not sure). We are working constantly and working pretty hard. So when I came here, I was pretty surprised how classes are. 15 minutes of attendance, 10 minute of the do now, and 30 minute of the actual lesson. In my opinion I don't think it enough to learn anything because the next day you will just forget about it. It a big different cause I originally had 12 classes and the shift of 12 to 6 is a big difference.

Jordan: Yeah I agree like majority of the class spent isn't really toward the big lesson it more of the attendance and somewhat review with the do now. We don't have enough time to practice with the new materials and stuff.

Jordan: *How are your teachers like in Germany, are they any different from the ones here?*

Kester: In Germany, the teachers were way more strict, which is understandable since we have to get stuff through class faster. In Germany there is 3 different types of school system. These part are after Elementary school, one for the student who did bad in elementary. Which I believe is weird because society expect them to do better afterschool. Then they would get into a school with easier task, engraving thoughts of you need to get good grades or you will basically be screwed in life. The second one is easier task but lets you finish school and lets you go to a university if you do good. And gymnasium which I am on, which is the hardest part. Stricter teacher where they won't repeat stuff, and move on if you didn't listen or if you missed some stuff. It then your responsibility to learn what you missed at home or own your own. We learn way more due to this with all the strict teachers and stuff and it all being stuff into one class. So basically if you don't listen to the teacher, you will basically get pooped on (pg.13 Mr. Anderson). Teachers aren't allowed to beat student but I believe that some of the teachers wanted to beat me/students.

Jordan: Here in America some schools would allow beating students with like a paddle. Doesn't required like parent permission or anything, they would just use a pickle ball ish paddle and whoop the kids butt (pg.13 Mr. Woody-San). Majority of school ban it and say it illegal but it still a possibility in some school.

Kester: In German school you aren't allowed to do that but for example, some teachers here, no offense but my Spanish teacher, if she was the same teacher in Germany, she wouldn't be a teacher or would only be able to teach in an elementary level because she isn't on the same level as a German teacher. She would probably be thrown out. Since I hear students saying we don't learn anything from her

Damn that is tuff, sucks to learn in Germany if our teachers aren't even on the same level as them you will get thrown out or demoted.

Jordan: *How are the grades divided? For examples ours is preschool to 5th, middle school 6th to 8th, and high school 9th to 12th.*

Kester: We have in elementary 1st to 4th grade and then after directly go to what you guys call high school. So it would go from 5th to 13th grade. And after that you would do university and stuff. But like I said earlier it divided into like 3 different parts. It would go from people who are 9 in 5th grade being with students in 13th grade being 18 and they would all go to the same type of school. Kinda funny

There a 13th grade?

Jordan: *How did you feel from the transfer from being in a school with students around your ages to a school with students becoming soon to be adults already?*

Kester: Sure it kind of scary, but they are more friendly. They aren't as scary as the people here being 18 years old. But I got to say like it isn't harder for the 5th graders, it just like middle school from them. I didn't have a problem with it.

Jordan: *Ok Mr. Kester Man, how do you feel about the law in America and our gun laws?*

Kester: I feel like the laws are kind of weird, like for those that don't know I don't know all the laws since im from Germany. I feel like your gun laws are pretty weird. I see a lot of people who are open carry with guns in their bags or pants. It kind of weird because people right next to you can have a gun without you knowing or you know it there. You guys also got like weird health laws and insurance where it way more expensive here and has different laws to it. But I don't really know much about it since I'm not into politics.

Jordan: Are your guns laws in Germany any different from the one here?

I already knew the response was going to be yes since America is very obsessed with guns and has more guns than people.

Kester: Yes very different, I was very surprised well (*as Kester rethought what he was about to say*), I'm not surprised, I know basically any one can own or buy a gun here, but it very different in Germany because no one is physically able to own a gun. The only way to obtain a firearm is to have legal document that says you need that firearms for survival or for a job. So basically, only police officer or security guard are the only one with access to firearms. Plus, we don't have lots of guns shops. I know one but it only for hunters or used for hunting. There also isn't open carry, so no carrying guns out in public. So wherever you walk you will most likely never see a gun on someone unless they are a police officer or something like that.

It funny that sentence that you need legal document since basically we see everyone here with guns and it just looks like the government and people are just giving it out to whoever they want to.

Jordan: *How is your healthcare system, because for us, it very expensive?*

Kester: I don't really know much about it because my parent manage it all, but I know everything get paid through our insurance like dental, health and etc. But I know everyone has Health insurance. It not like people don't have health insurance.

Wow, everyone has health insurance, wish that was here. I see people doing crime to go to jails just for health insurance because they are unable to pay for it.

Jordan: *Let go back to the other question since this interview was in 3 different parts. How are your teachers here in America compared to Germany?*

Kester: They are way more nicer, more likeable, they treat you more like an actual person than just some other person in their life that they are forced to be with. Like if you don't do well in school you are really just (Mr. Franke Kester man trying to think of an English word to describe this)

Jordan: As like a Background character or student, like you just there and no one notices you or something

Kester: Yeah like in the background, like the teachers don't really care they will just do their normal teaching and task. They do their teaching really fast and I have some friend with mental health problems and the teachers don't seem to care or want to help them. They would just say like go get yourself a doctor.

Basically telling students it not their problem, go handle it another time or just completely telling students they don't care and it not their problem at all.

Jordan: *What did you wish the Germany education system has that in America.*

Kester: Both has their pros and cons. I think the German system is more efficient, though we are under a lot of pressure. While here it more relaxed, dumb down to chill while learning. If we applied some of the system here in America to the German system, I feel like it would affect the status of the education more in a negative way than positive.

Jordan: Yeah cause let me be honest here, sometime it the teacher's fault but I would blame the students also for not showing up. Some students would just skip every day and wonder why they are doing so bad or they would just show up once in a while and wonder why they are so behind or lost. Sometime it the teacher's fault, for making lessons very boring and are unable to motivate students because of that. While in Germany, like you stated, if you fail a class in Germany. You are basically screwed over for the rest of your life, while here in America you can just take an Equivalency class and get back that credit with no drawback or anything.

Kester: Yeah for grades we have a system 1 through 6. If 6 is the worst and 1 is the best, if you get a 6 on your transcript, I have to repeat the class or change school. And what I stated before we have 3 levels, I'm currently on the highest level (best), if I were to get a 6, I would completely drop out and go to a different school

THAT INSANE, I have never failed a class but having to transfer to a different school just because you didn't pass 1 class is nuts.

Jordan: Ok that is time for the interview, it was very nice interviewing you Mr. Kester

Kester: Thank you for interviewing me.

After this interview with my boy Kester, I feel like I got to understand the life of a student from another country. How lucky am I to be raised in a place where I'm treated like a person can actually person in skill while Kester from Germany get mistreated as a person because the amount of pressure the school puts on him to succeed in life. Plus I always wanted to interview someone from outside the country because I wanted their stance on how they view the US and if they had certain expectations about it and us. Also, I'm not surprised by some of the things he said, how it's safer in Germany because of their laws, while here, basically everyone has a gun and can kill you at any time. I built a better relationship with my friend.