

OPPOSING VIEWS

Guess Who Paid For This Student's Fancy Vacation

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A college student sparked outrage after he allegedly used his financial aid money to pay for a fancy vacation with his girlfriend.

In a video documenting his trip, Brandon Lerry explained that he received \$2,500 in financial aid and decided to use it for something unorthodox.

"Hi, my name's Brandon and my school just gave me \$2,500 in financial aid to spend on books and supplies," he says at the beginning of the clip. "I decided to do something a little different with my financial aid."

The clip, which was posted on Lerry's YouTube page OurVisualEscape on April 6, then shows Lerry presenting his girlfriend with an itinerary for a trip to Thailand. The young woman expresses her disbelief and excitement, and the video then cuts to an aerial shot of the picturesque country. The remainder of the video consists of clips of the pair's romantic getaway.

Some YouTube viewers applauded his decision to take his girlfriend on a trip, and many were impressed by the beauty of the country.

"Sooooooooo beautiful what you did! Love tranquility Beauty peace," one viewer commented, according to the Independent Journal.

Others weren't so nice — instead pointing out that the way he used his funds was illegal.

"You're a f***," one viewer wrote. "I work my ass off at school, spending 60+ hours a week on my schoolwork. I have been denied financial aid even for just my tuition so many times and here you are spending \$2500 on absolute f***ing bullsh**."

"You used your financial aid for BOOKS for tickets to another country and I can't even get approved for financial aid because my dad makes too much money!" another commented. "He's not paying for my college! I am! People like this make me upset! People actually want and need that money for an education and your blowing it on something it wasn't meant for!"

Another viewer made the point that tuition and financial aid is paid for, in part, by the taxpayer.

"Almost 60 percent of undergraduates receive some form of financial aid to help them pay for college," a 2003 report from the College Board reads, according to the Cato Institute. "While a significant amount of this aid is in the form of loans, frequently subsidized by the federal government, over \$40 billion of grant aid was distributed to college students by federal and state governments and by colleges and universities."

Forty-four percent of the \$302 billion public colleges make in revenue comes from taxpayers, the Independent Journal reports.