

SHATTERING STEREOTYPES

College student defies expectations set for her within her career and personal life

by Alexis Kramer

A piercing silence cut through the room as **Sophie Winnick**, 20, locked eyes with her professor. She listened to his offhanded advice regarding her career choice; she would never make it as a woman within the sports industry.

Winnick headed into the University of South Carolina upon becoming a sports agent. Throughout her freshman year, she encountered unrestricted criticism and doubt pertaining to her choice. Much of the skepticism linked itself to Winnick's gender and the lack of women within athletic administration.

"In Sports Management, you have to take a briefing class. We had to go around the room and say what you want to be. It's probably eighty-twenty guys to girls in Sports Management. I said 'I want to be a sports agent.' The professor stopped the whole

class and said 'Just so you know, everyone wants to be a sports agent. None of you are probably going to be a sports agent; it's a very oversaturated field. It's a big old boys club that's very hard to break into.'" Winnick said.

Undeterred by her professor's disparagement, Winnick stuck to her initial choice. She chose to both double major and double minor to ensure a multitude of employment possibilities.

"The reason that I wanted to get the business aspect in the double major of Sports Agent and Marketing is because Sports is a business, and law just happens to be an aspect of sports business. I also double minor in criminology and history because that helps you get into law school and with the LSAT [Law School Admission Test]. You never know where one lead might take you. You might go into one thing, and it might take you in an entirely different direction. That's why I want to have more than one background," Winnick said.

Choosing this path, however, meant Winnick often found her accomplishments diminished by the fact that she was a female.

"[Here's] one example of how men feel about women in business. I have a very

firm handshake; it's something my dad taught me at a young age. Ninety-nine percent of the time that I shake a guy's hand, they go 'wow, that's a strong grip for a girl.' I also get 'wow you know a lot about sports' from a girl. It's just frustrating because I want to take the 'for a girl' out of the equation. 'Wow you know a lot about sports' by itself is a great compliment," Winnick said.

Despite these interactions, Winnick didn't factor gender into this equation of accomplishment. She valued competence and capability over pre-disposed prejudices of superiority.

"Susan O'Malley was the first female president of an NBA franchise. I introduced myself to her because she's a professor here at USC. She's everything every woman in every

industry should strive to be. She doesn't care about what she's a woman or how she "Wow, you're the first woman to be a NBA president. She said 'Yeah, but that doesn't matter, because I did my job.' It should be the right person for the job, not the right man or the job," Winnick said.

Winnick saw parallels between self-assurance and success. She realized that a sturdy sense in personality and demeanor inspired admiration in others.

"If you want to go into something where you lead people, you can't stand aside and watch a man take a job you want because you're worried about what other people might think of you. You have to be assertive. You have to take all aspects of your personality and throw them in people's faces, because otherwise, you'll get left in the dust," Winnick said.

Winnick stressed the importance of disregarding hostility and voicing opinion within society.

"Don't stand in the background. Don't be quiet. Be outspoken in every opportunity you

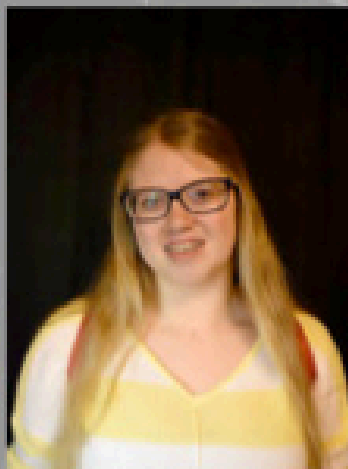
have," Winnick said. "My advice to anyone trying not to fall into the lingering expectations of women from the twentieth and nineteenth centuries is that you can't be afraid of what people are going to say at all you."

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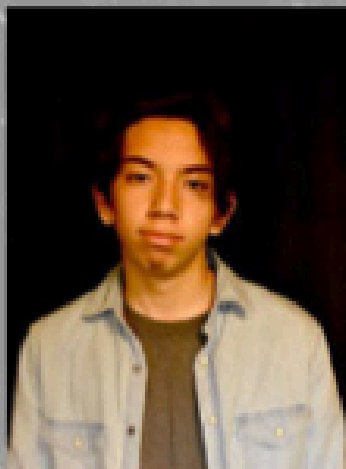
STUDENTS BREAKING BARRIERS



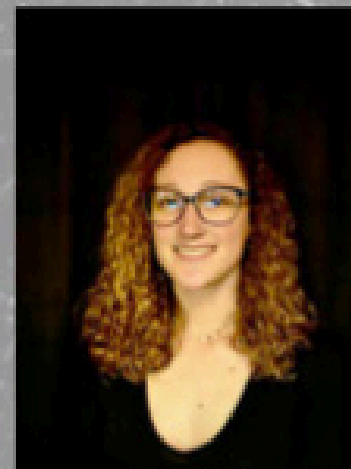
"I plan on being an athletic trainer. When I was growing up I wanted to be in a job where I could help people but still be involved in sports. The amount of women in the athletic training field is very low, but recently it's been getting better and better. Last year was one of the first years a woman was the athletic trainer for a Major League Baseball team. My coach could help girls see that athletic training isn't just a field for men and anyone can do it," **Caylene Shave**, 17, said.



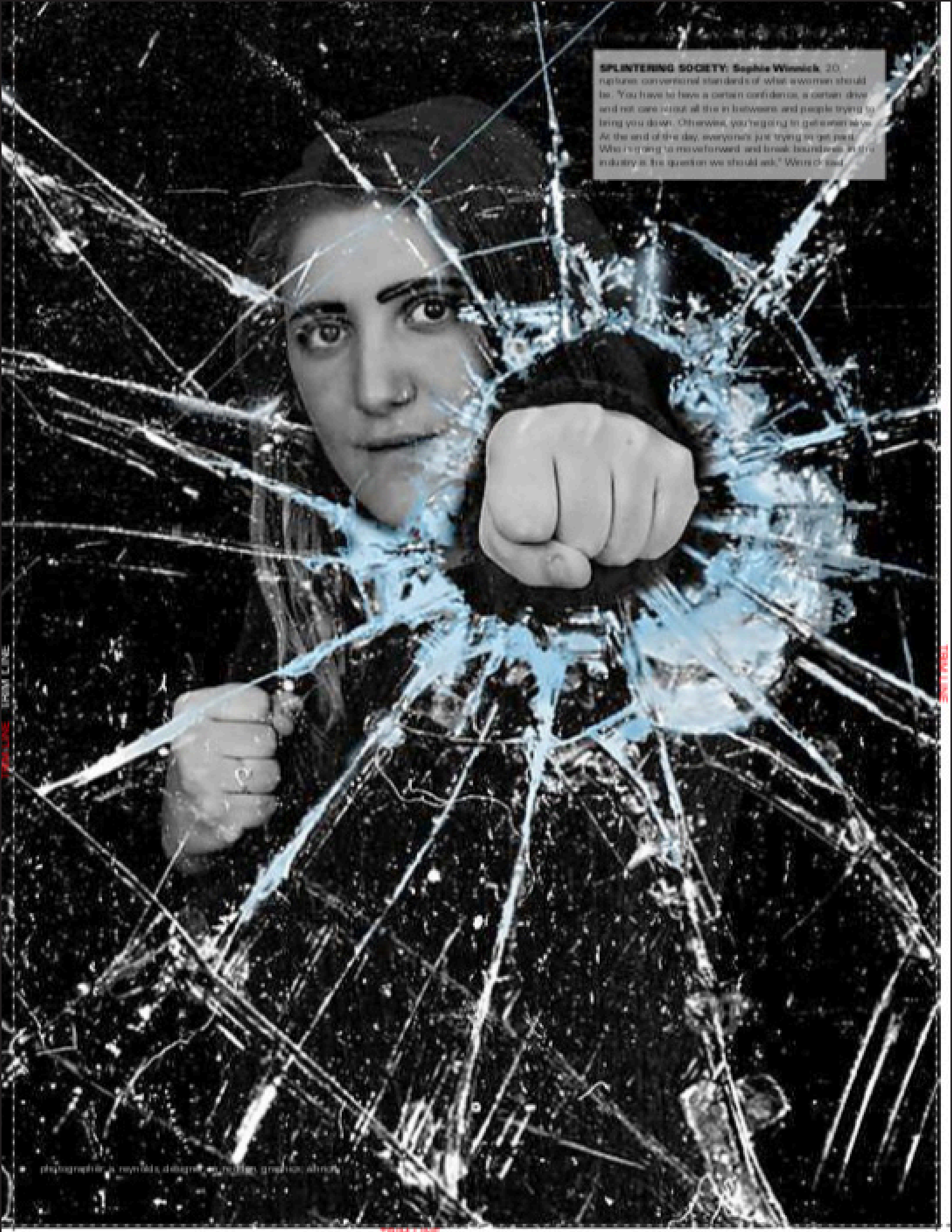
"I want to go into journalism. It's a stereotype that most journalists don't tell the truth, and that they'll just want to be scandalous. I want to tell people's stories correctly and truthfully. It's my dream to be an editor someday so hopefully me being a female would not infringe on my ability to be higher up in the field," **Jordan Galitsky**, 15, said.



"I want to modernize marketing in how it's done and who can be involved with it. I think doing more marketing through social media and making it a more inclusive field in general would help a lot. There's a big stereotype of someone going door to door to sell things in marketing, but that's just not the best way to do it. I'm also Latino, and people always assume that I'm going to be loud and obnoxious, so I just have to ignore them," **Victor Cajuna**, 15, said.



"I want to go into the business side of journalism. I've been spoiled in my journalism program because I'm one of the head editors, and they all respect me. I feel like in a lot of programs it's not like that though. I would hope I would be respected in the professional world. I work at a book store, and they told me I could only be a cashier because I'm a female. I think that's stupid because we can all do anything we want," **Emma Dowling**, 16, said.



SPLINTERING SOCIETY: Sophie Winnick, 20, upbraids conventional standards of what a woman should be. 'You have to have a certain confidence, a certain drive and not care what all the n-baggers and people trying to bring you down. Otherwise, you're going to get eaten alive. At the end of the day, everyone's just trying to get paid. Who's going to move forward and break boundaries in the industry is the question we should ask,' Winnick said.