

# dubuque & tri-state

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## University of Dubuque grad: Competing on 'The Traitors' an amazing experience

BY ELIZABETH KELSEY  
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Upon his graduation from the University of Dubuque in 2015, Christian de la Torre never would have imagined that eight years later, he would star in a reality television show.

But the military veteran described his time filming "The Traitors," a new series on streaming service Peacock, as "an amazing experience."

A Madison, Wis., native, de la Torre said he found a home at UD, where he ran track and field and was a Reserve Officer Training Corps member.

"I can't say enough about how community-driven and family-oriented (UD) felt to me," he said.

After graduating with a criminal justice degree, de la Torre spent 4½ years in active duty with the U.S. military before being medically retired in 2019. He worked briefly as a youth corrections officer before, on a whim, he purchased a recreational vehicle and began traveling the country, documenting his adventures online.

At the suggestion of a friend, de la Torre moved to Los Angeles, where friends urged him to seek acting work. On his first job as an extra, he met actor Al Pacino, who took a moment to chat with him.

"That inspired me to keep pursuing this career as an actor," de la Torre said.

He slowly began booking larger jobs, including commercials with brands such as Adidas. Calls for reality TV shows began to come in, until he landed a spot on "The Traitors" and traveled to the Scottish highlands in early 2022 for filming.

The show's contestants are a mixture of ordinary civilians and celebrities, competing for a grand prize of \$250,000. Out of 20 people, three are chosen as "Traitors" and must work together to eliminate "Faithful" contestants, while the "Faithful" work to discover the "Traitors" and vote them off the show.

"It was like Clue, Mafia and 'Knives Out' all put into one in reality TV," de la Torre said. "You're competing, doing challenges and trying to earn money, but you also have to eliminate someone every night who you think is the traitor."

Spoiler alert: At the beginning of the series, de la Torre was chosen as one of the traitors by host Alan Cumming. He said he was excited to play the devious role, and he utilized his knowledge from criminal justice classes at UD, his military experience and his acting skills to carry out his tasks.



University of Dubuque graduate Christian de la Torre (wearing a hat and a plaid shirt with rolled-up sleeves) competes on the Peacock reality television series "The Traitors." *Peacock*



Christian de la Torre can't confirm or deny any future involvement in the series.

"I tried to take all I had learned about body language and what people do when they're nervous or lying, reverse my psychology and thinking and be the exact opposite of what I was

### How to watch

All 10 episodes of "The Traitors" are currently available on Peacock.

taught," he said, later adding, "I looked at the role of the traitor as a mission, so I was pretty cutthroat."

Earlier this month, "The Traitors" was renewed for a second season. De la Torre can't confirm or deny his involvement in the new season but said he would "love to come back," though perhaps not as a traitor — the lying and manipulation were more emotionally draining than the military veteran anticipated.

"We're all about integrity and honesty ... so it was gut-wrenching," he said. "I cried every night, but I knew that when I came out of my room in the castle every morning, it was game on."

## Panel discusses city's need for diverse, accessible art

BY JOSHUA IRVINE  
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A Wednesday night community conversation at Steeple Square drew attention to Dubuque's arts scene and making it more inclusive for artists and audiences.

Representatives from the city, Dubuque Museum of Art, the Grand Opera House, the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra and local artists weighed in as panelists for the latest in a series sponsored by TH Media and the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque.

Some 80 community members joined them, one of the largest audience showings since the first community conversation addressing housing last year.

Panelists and statistical data contend Dubuque's arts scene is vibrant and active, particularly for a Midwestern community of its size. U.S. Census data from 2020 shows overall growth in the number of arts, entertainment and recreation establishments in the city since 1978, though those figures had declined slightly since 2016.

"Cultural vitality is often expressed in whether these organizations prosper, so it's good to see that," said Jason Neises, of the community foundation.

But polling data from the community foundation's 2015 Equity



Gene Tully, of Voices Productions, and other panelists listen to moderators on Wednesday during a community conversation on inclusivity in arts and culture at Steeple Square in Dubuque. *STEPHEN GASSMAN • Telegraph Herald*

Profile also indicated a perceived lack of diversity in Dubuque's art scene and its audiences, with cultural learning opportunities limited to Carnegie-Stout Public Library and the Multicultural Family Center.

Panelists generally agreed with the polling and discussed how their own organizations were seeking to bring change.

William Intriligator, music director and conductor at the Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, said the symphony had adapted a blind audi-

tion process to screen for potential biases and attempted to incorporate a greater diversity of instrumentation and guest artists, such as a trans pianist who performed a concerto with the orchestra.

Gary Stoppelman, executive director of Dubuque Museum of Art, said the museum was moving to include an exhibit showcasing a Black, Indigenous or person of color artist at least once a year, such as the current Black Thread exhibition by Des Moines artist Jill Wells.

Stoppelman also drew atten-

tion to the growing diversity of Dubuque Community Schools, where nearly a quarter of the student body is made up of racial minorities, compared to the city's much-Whiter demographic composition, and emphasized the need for direct outreach to that population.

"The Dubuque Community Schools look like the rest of the country," Stoppelman said. "If we want to be building the community of the future, building the workforce of the future, we need to be building relationships with the people who are here today."

That means exhibits tailored to younger and more diverse audiences as well as making those opportunities more financially accessible when necessary.

Jenni Petersen-Brant, arts and culture affairs coordinator for the City of Dubuque, said the city is offering grant support to both support smaller arts nonprofits as well as to allow a larger audience to view those venues' output.

"If we're providing funding to keep the light on and pay some staff, then they can have a lower ticket price," she said.

*Joshua Irvine is a Report for America corps member and writes about issues related to poverty in the tri-state area for the Telegraph Herald.*

### news in brief

#### Police release name of man found dead in local garage fire

Dubuque police on Thursday released the name of the man found dead in a Dubuque garage that was on fire Wednesday.

Daniel C. Montelius, 46, of Dubuque, was found dead in the garage to the rear of 1428 Iowa St., according to a press release.

Authorities were alerted to the fire at 8:23 a.m. Wednesday. A 911 caller advised that someone was inside the garage, according to a press release.

Police said Montelius was found dead just inside the door of the structure.

Lt. Brendan Welsh said it is unknown if Montelius was living in the garage, and that his cause of death will not be known until the state medical examiner's office comes to a conclusion.

The Dubuque Fire Department is being assisted by the Iowa State Fire Marshal's Office with the investigation into the fire, the release states.

Dubuque Fire Chief Amy Scheller said the fire marshal's office's investigation into the source of the fire had not yet concluded.

"He is leaning toward accidental at this time," she said of the fire's cause. "He still needs to conclude the investigation, but he has not found anything to show that it was intentional."

#### Agency identifies Pearl Harbor remains of Monticello native

MONTICELLO, Iowa — U.S. officials have identified the remains of a sailor killed in the World War II attack on Pearl Harbor as those of an Iowa native.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced this week that Navy Seaman 1st Class Donald A. Stott, 19, of Monticello, was accounted for on March 26, 2021.

A press release states that Stott was aboard the USS Oklahoma when Japanese aircraft attacked the battleship and other ships at the Honolulu base. Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew from December 1941 to June 1944. The remains were interred in the Halawa and Nu'uuanu cemeteries.

In 2015, the agency exhumed the remains of those who were on the USS Oklahoma and began using dental, anthropological and DNA analysis to finally identify the men, including Stott. He will be buried on March 25 in Monticello.



Donald A. Stott

#### Loras student seriously injured by train in Dubuque, police say

Police on Thursday confirmed that a person was injured by a train over the weekend.

Jayden P. Upton, 21, a Loras College student from Rock Island, Ill., was taken by ambulance to UnityPoint Health-Finley Hospital before being airlifted to University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City "for advanced trauma care," according to Dubuque police.

Lt. Brendan Welsh wrote in an email to the Telegraph Herald that police responded at approximately 12:35 a.m. Sunday to the area under the Third Street bridge near U.S. 61/151 for a report of someone yelling for help.

Police found Upton lying along the Canadian National Railway tracks. Welsh wrote that Upton "was conscious and alert but had sustained severe injuries to his left arm and leg due to an apparent train strike."

Canadian National Police Service, a private force linked to the railway company, is investigating this incident.

#### Police: Pedestrian struck by vehicle, possibly injured

Police said a pedestrian suffered possible injuries when he was struck by a vehicle Tuesday in Dubuque.

Jerome W. Loney, 72, of Dubuque, was taken by ambulance to MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center for treatment of possible injuries, according to Dubuque police.

The collision occurred at about 12:15 p.m. Tuesday at the intersection of Main and West Fifth streets. Police said a vehicle driven by Ralph R. Potter, 69, of Dubuque, was stopped on Main at the stop sign at the intersection when Potter's vehicle turned right from the stop sign and struck Loney in the crosswalk.

Potter was cited with failure to yield to a pedestrian within an intersection.