

Good afternoon. My name is Alphi Black and I'm an Army veteran who used my GI Bill to attend the University of Phoenix. I graduated in 2018, but this did not provide the fulfillment and success the University promised. I wanted to share my story because not enough people are comfortable speaking out.

I am lucky to be self-employed - not because of my Phoenix degree - but *despite* my degree. Not a single employer has valued my University of Phoenix education. I even had an interviewer laugh in my face when I brought up my school. In fact, when I took University of Phoenix off my LinkedIn, I got more interviews and responses.

When I started school, I was working for the Department of Defense while also serving as a reservist. DoD kept telling me I needed a degree to move up. University of Phoenix seemed reputable because they were authorized to recruit at DoD facilities and had recruiters there regularly. They also carried military coins that gave me the impression that they were supported by DoD. I later heard the school got in a lot of trouble for that, but at the time I didn't know this was unauthorized.

I felt pressure to enroll from Phoenix recruiters who told me I needed to enroll quickly or I'd miss out, so I signed up right away. But when I arrived, I found out that new cohorts started every week. They also claimed their alumni went on to be executives and that the school had partnerships with government agencies and companies like Microsoft and AT&T, but I never saw these or any other job placement services.

I went in thinking I would do well and flourish because of what the recruiters said to me. But once they got me in, the school was constantly changing the rules. My tuition wasn't locked in as promised, they kept adjusting my program requirements, and I had to travel to multiple campuses to meet those new requirements.

They also claimed I would finish in two years and that my GI Bill would cover everything, but this was a lie too. Phoenix was constantly canceling required courses which forced me to take involuntary "breaks" when the classes I needed weren't available. During one break, I tried to transfer to another college, but they said they would only accept my credits as electives due to the subpar curriculum at Phoenix. These breaks prolonged the time it took to finish my degree, exhausted my GI Bill, and caused me to incur nearly \$90,000 in debt.

Phoenix doesn't treat its students right. I was aggressively recruited, lied to about the length and cost of my program, and promised career services that were nonexistent. I hope the Department of Education will make sure that schools like Phoenix cannot continue lying to students.

Thank you.