

**A NEW LIFE**

Knox (outside her boyfriend's Seattle apartment Dec. 4) "is grappling with the big questions: Who am I? What am I going to do next?" says family friend Tom Wright.

# Amanda Knox Starting Over

THREE MONTHS AFTER BEING SET FREE, SHE HAS A NEW APARTMENT, A NEW BOYFRIEND AND NEW HOPE. BUT WHAT SHE WANTS MOST OF ALL—TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE—MAY NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE



Italian police rush Knox out of court after her conviction was overturned on Oct. 3 (above). At left, Knox and her mother, Edda, arrive at the Seattle-Tacoma airport Oct. 4. "She's incredibly relieved to be home," says a friend.



On a fine November day Amanda Knox did something she could only dream of doing for four long years: She went for a leisurely walk. Knox and her close friend Andrew Seliber took his rescue dog Bogart out to a Seattle park and did some catching up. "She is just so happy to be home and to have her life back in her own hands," says Seliber, 25, who met Knox at the University of Washington six years ago. "She cherishes the little things: the going out for coffee, the breath of fresh air." But as they took their stroll—never stopping too long, lest Knox be recognized—Seliber noticed something different about his friend. "She said one of the hardest things for her is having all this freedom and yet having to be so guarded," he says. "There were times I had the impression she was recoiling into her own thoughts. She isn't as smiley and bubbly as she was before."

It was just over three months ago that an Italian appeals court overturned Knox's conviction in the 2007 murder of her roommate Meredith Kercher and set her free after four

**“ SHE JUST NEEDS SPACE NOW. SHE'S FOCUSED ON GETTING HER FEET ON THE GROUND” —FAMILY FRIEND TOM WRIGHT**

years in prison. Since then, Knox, 24, has been quietly trying to resume her life and reconnect with friends, while coping with occasional death threats, her family's crushing debt from legal fees and her own strange notoriety. As interviews with several people close to Knox show, the transition back to some kind of normalcy has, so far, been tricky. "Returning has been a bit weird for Amanda," says one family friend. "She still has some of that free-spirit, hippie aura about her, but she's

more realistic now. I think she's still trying to figure out how she can put everything she's been through to some good use."

Knox was just 20 and a University of Washington junior studying abroad in Perugia, Italy, when she and her then boyfriend, Italian student Raffaele Sollecito, were charged with Kercher's murder. The Italian tabs depicted Knox as a sex-crazed monster, and in 2009 she was found guilty and sentenced to 26 years behind

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: INF. NEWS PICTURES/WENN; AXELLE/BAUER-GRIFFIN



**FAMILY SUPPORT**  
Knox and her sister Deanna went shopping together on Oct. 16. “Her sisters and her mother are her best friends,” says someone close to her.

**GETTING BACK TO NORMAL**  
Knox and her closest friend Madison Paxton took a road trip to see the band Mumford & Sons in Portland on Dec. 6. “She’s really a hippie, just doing her thing,” says a family friend.



bars. Knox endured a series of grueling, emotional court proceedings and, she has claimed, sexual harassment by an Italian prison official before she was freed on Oct. 3. The first sign of how completely her life had changed after her release came when she got off the British Airways jet that brought her back to Seattle. “She was surprised by the huge press turnout at the airport,” says Michael Heavey, a Seattle judge whose daughter went to school with Knox. “When she was in Italy, she had no concept of how big her case had gotten. She was blown away.”

Knox spent her first days of freedom with relatives on nearby Vashon Island; one of the very first things she did was order Chinese takeout. From early on, she tried to steer her family’s attention away from herself. “She just really wants to know how everyone else is, especially her two younger sisters [teenagers Ashley and Delaney],” says family friend Anne Bremner. “She makes a real effort to give them the attention they often weren’t getting

**“THE KNOXES HAVE BEEN TERRIFIED FOR SO LONG, AND FINALLY THEY CAN BREATHE AGAIN”**

—A KNOX FAMILY FRIEND

because of what she went through.” Her parents, Curt Knox and Edda Mellas, divorced when Knox was a child and have their own separate families now. But their daughter’s imprisonment brought them closer together than they had been in years. “Amanda has come back to a blended family,” says a friend, “and that has been a great silver lining for her.” Knox spent the holidays in West Seattle hopping from one relative’s home to another and basking in their joy at having her back. “The whole idea had been to get her home for Christmas, and now she’s home,” says a source close to the family. “It was a very casual holiday with

lots of smiles and togetherness.”

Yet Knox’s ordeal has also damaged her family in ways not easily fixed. “Everybody is injured and wounded, and Amanda is in the middle of it all being pulled in different directions,” says Paul Ciolino, a private investigator hired by the family to examine the case. “She has got to be feeling pressure.” For one thing, hiring the lawyers who freed her has plunged her family into debt; friends say they owe upward of \$1 million. Proceeds from a planned book will help; Knox, who filled several journals in prison and has been writing about her experience, has signed with top literary agent Robert Barnett and is due to meet with publishers in New York City in January. (Sources say director Ron Howard also wrote her a letter expressing interest in her story.) Still, Knox’s relatives are being careful not to rush her into any deal just for the money. “The reality is they have staggering bills,” says Bremner. “But they don’t want Amanda to feel like she owes them anything.”

**Who’s WHO**



**MEREDITH KERCHER**  
After Knox’s release, the victim’s brother Lyle told reporters, “We are back at square one.”



**RAFFAELE SOLLECITO**  
Now living with his family in southern Italy, Knox’s ex is planning a future visit to Seattle.



**RUDY GUEDE**  
Convicted of Kercher’s murder and sexual assault in ’08, he’s serving 16 years in jail.



**CLAUDIO PRATILLO HELLMANN**  
The judge slammed prosecutors for their treatment of Knox.



**MADISON PAXTON**  
Knox’s best friend moved to Perugia during the case; they became roommates in Seattle.

In fact, her parents are giving Knox all the room she needs to find her own way. In late October, she moved into an apartment with her best friend Madison Paxton and other pals in the city’s grungy Chinatown district. “It’s not a safe neighborhood, but she doesn’t seem to care about that,” says an acquaintance. “I don’t know many girls who would go down there, let alone live there, but it’s a pretty smart place to hide. No one there cares about Amanda Knox.” Having their daugh-

ter leave them so soon after they got her back was bittersweet for Knox’s parents, says Tom Wright, cofounder of the group Friends of Amanda Knox, “but they know that giving her her wings is part of the healing process.” Knox also sometimes stays at the Seattle apartment of her new boyfriend James Terrano, 24, a musician and longtime friend who stayed in touch with her during her time in prison (she still speaks via Skype with Sollecito, who was also released on

Oct. 3 and lives in Italy). Knox, who has no car, gets around mostly by bus or on foot; after years of confinement, says Seliber, “she just walks and walks and walks.” Another observer says, “I once saw Amanda walking down the street in the rain. She was skipping and talking on her cell phone, laughing and looking happy as hell.” Knox has been spotted shopping at an Asian market and buying a Halloween costume at Target, where she was recognized by customers.



**NEW BEAU**  
James Terrano (hanging out with Knox in Seattle, top and below) stayed in contact with her while she was in prison. “He has always been there for her,” says a friend.



Amanda posed for photos during an outing with friends last month.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: INFO2; MEDIA PUNCH/FACE TO FACE; MIRRORPIX/FLASH NEWS; ITALIAN POLICE/EPA; PIERO ORCCHIONI/ALANDOV; SPLASH NEWS; MCGHEE/NET; INF; MCGHEE/NET



**“IT’S AMAZING HOW NORMAL SHE SEEMS, AT LEAST ON THE SURFACE. WHO KNOWS WHAT TRAUMA SHE WENT THROUGH?”**

**—MICHAEL HEAVEY, A FAMILY FRIEND**

**OUT AND ABOUT**  
Knox shopping (top), snacking with friends (left) and on a ferry. Says Tom Wright: “She isn’t going to let what happened to her diminish her life.”



“She waved to them,” says the acquaintance, “but most of the time no one seems to recognize her.”

There are still days, however, when Knox sleeps in and doesn’t go out until late, if at all; her friends say she’s had trouble devising a set routine after having every hour so rigidly scheduled for four years. But slowly she is finding a rhythm that suits her. She spends lots of time with her sister Deanna, 22, who takes her for spins in her old red Corolla (with a “Free Amanda Knox” sticker still on it). She and Madison take a once-a-week Krav Maga self-defense class, and she has also met with University of Washington professors to discuss possibly resuming her studies in the spring. “She is still working out what she wants to do with her life,” says the family friend. “But right now she’s

just trying to live her daily life and be a normal young woman again.”

It helps that she doesn’t have to worry too much about being retried for Kercher’s murder. Legal experts say it’s unlikely Italian courts will reopen the case, and an attorney who counseled the family feels confident U.S. courts wouldn’t extradite her. Knox has had to cope with death threats since returning home, and her family has taken steps to protect her. “Her safety issues are being handled,” says Steve Moore, a retired FBI agent who volunteered as Knox’s bodyguard for 10 days in October. “I don’t think she lives in fear.” The biggest nuisance in her life might be the many photographers who follow her around. “Her life nowadays is very much about cohabitating with the paparazzi,”

says Seliber. “She is adamant she doesn’t want to be famous for those horrible four years. But no matter how hard she tries, Amanda is never going to fade into the background.”

That is not to say that she can’t try. One recent afternoon, after lunching on Vietnamese noodles with her stepfather, Chris Mellas, Knox and some friends went downtown to take in an Occupy Seattle protest. “There were people walking around with signs and making speeches, and many of her friends were in the crowd,” says a bystander. “When she got there, she had this excited look on her face, like ‘Let’s see what’s going on.’” Then Amanda Knox waded into the sea of young people, and disappeared.

**Johnny Dodd and Alex Tresniowski. Praxilla Trabattoni in Perugia**