

# The Capital Times

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## editor's comments

This past summer, I nearly lost it. The passion for journalism and the aspiration to be one of the best quickly, though temporarily, dissolved in a muddle of confusion, frustration, loneliness, anger and sadness.

A kid on my block was hit by a car.

I watched as human curiosity overtook the people gathering at the intersection. I watched as nearly a dozen police officers arrived at the scene, and EMTs carried the boy's body away in an ambulance. Sirens blared and lights flashed. People came, gossiped and left.

I knew one of the officers who remained and processed the scene. He was aware I was interested in police and military reporting and so I thought, as long he knew me, it would be OK if I stayed and watched them work. He didn't wave, smile or acknowledge I was there. He gave one look my way and turned to a fellow officer. But I know he knew I was there because I was still in my work shirt: a bright yellow polo that read OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER across the back.

I saw a woman cry with her face in her hands. Across the street, an angry and embarrassed man in a white shirt and jean shorts crossed his arms. Police took him away and set up yellow do-not-cross lines. I saw the kid's black Heelys and the silver and red BMX bike in front of the car. I saw where he hit the windshield. A web of cracks spiraled from a sort of dent in the glass. Sticking out of the dent completely horizontally was a large, pointed piece of glass. The blood around its edges glistened in the streetlights. That was the glass that cut the kid's throat and would later take his life.

I watched flies collect on the blood-soaked clothes at the center of the intersection. The police continued to measure every inch of the scene and mapped it out carefully on paper. Then the fire department came. I watched a fireman hose down the area, washing the blood away, while the officers chatted. Everyone else was gone by then. The neighbors and the passersby who saw the blood would think it was only in the intersection. But I watched it run downhill all over my street. As it washed toward the corner I stood at, I could smell the kid's blood and wondered if it would rise up over the curb. It didn't. It just washed past me and down the street toward my brand new car.

The days following the accident, I couldn't stop imagining the scene. When I'd cross the street to my car, I kept thinking that I was stepping in the kid's blood. When I'd pass the intersection, I still saw the car, the bike and the kid's shoes. I didn't know how I should feel after that. When I found out the day following the accident – not through a newspaper, the local evening news or even a friend, but at the sight of a memorial on my block – that the kid did not make it, I was saddened. It was horrible news that literally hit too close to home.

Then the media came.

Of course they came. It was an ideal tragic story: A young boy racing home on his bike to get help and stop a fight in a local park was hit by a car and lost his life. He died trying to do a good thing, said friends and neighbors.

Journalists can be competitive. It's part of their nature. I get territorial when I see a reporter at my high school or the local police station. When they came to my block, I was angry. Not because I wanted the story, but because I was there and they were not. All they came for was the tragic story and the sort of heroism in a kid that makes you all warm and fuzzy inside.

Parked in front of my house was a FOX43 van. After the live coverage, I watched a young woman, in high heels, a knee length skirt, a feminine blouse covered with a cropped sweater and enough jewelry that you'd think she was going to a cocktail party, climb into the van. I hated her for how she could just arrive, do the story, pack up and leave. I couldn't do that. I couldn't pretend it was just another story because I was there. I couldn't pack up and go home at the end of the day because it happened outside my home. I had to deal with it.

While the police measured the scene, I felt stupid for still being there, but I would have felt more stupid leaving after staying so long. I stayed partly because I wanted to see what police do and partly to support them. I also stayed because I wanted to set myself apart from other journalists. But that time, I went a little too far. That sort of scene is tough to take in and I didn't have to, but I did. There are growing pains every journalist has to go through at some point. The death of a kid on my block was one of them. But it's OK because I'm still writing.

-Diana

## Corrections and Comments

Correction: Professor Jason Jones's photo in Issue No. 3's Prof Spot should be credited to the School of Humanities, not Rabyia Ahmed of The Capital Times.

Correction: Pat Worthington plays varsity men's baseball, not varsity men's soccer as described in the Student Athlete of the Week photo caption in Issue No. 3.

The Capital Times seeks to provide complete, correct and fair reporting. Any necessary corrections or comments are welcome and appreciated. Please call 717-948-6440 or e-mail [captimes@psu.edu](mailto:captimes@psu.edu).