

The Capital Times

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editor's comments

As a high school senior, I once found myself consumed with the excitement and rush of a developing story. Human skeletal remains were found deep in the wooded area of my high school campus. Afterschool, I knocked out interview after interview, confirming facts reported by local media and bringing myself up to speed on what was happening. The last interview I needed was with a lieutenant from the investigating police department. He was out of his office and so I waited anxiously for his call. The wait was simultaneously boring and suspenseful. Then he called. The lieutenant informed me he had just returned from the autopsy. I would be, he said, the first person from any media to receive the details. That's when the adrenaline kicked in. Carefully, he dictated his notes and hanging on his every word, I feverishly scribbled them in my reporter's notebook.

It was an amazing feeling to get the details of a developing story first. I competed with local media for the details and won. I wanted to run with it. I felt I could conquer the world. Though it was not a major story for the local media, it was for the high school campus. Besides, being first was affirmation I did something right. Since then, I've chased the high of good, hard-hitting news reporting. But journalism, as an editor told me, is not all glamorous, and I'm fine with that.

* * *

Upon returning from spring break, I read in the daily activity report provided by Penn State Harrisburg Police Services that two students on the spring break trip to Spain were involved in a fight with police. Later, The Capital Times received a tip from a non-Penn State student who was spending spring break with Penn State students in Spain. The police report and tip alone had The Capital Times investigating the trip to Spain. It doesn't take much to put the two together and realize there was something suspicious and newsworthy going on.

Throughout the investigation, more tips came in and the story took a turn where none of the editors ever imagined it would. The complexity of the story, events, details and characters were mind-blowing. We all felt the rush, which was greater than the one I experience covering a dead body on my high school campus. This involved an investigation on the newspaper's part – contacting multiple sources, confirming details, disproving details, reviewing budgets – the whole nine yards.

It was exciting to relive the rush of journalism. It was even greater, as Editor in Chief, to be able to share it with members of my newspaper staff. I felt that as a team, we could accomplish anything. The investigation was also a valuable learning experience no journalist could ever gain in the classroom. I did not take part in much of the actual research, but I offered guidance, ideas and reassurance. I made sure they dotted their I's and crossed their T's. I watched them anxiously await phone calls like I once did and I shared the excitement with each new break in the story. I can't quite express in brief how proud I am of the staff I lead.

Investigating and reporting is the duty of a journalist, but we all would be lying if we said there was no personal satisfaction in it. In the words of Jason Leopold, who wrote about how he broke the story on the energy crisis in California in one of my favorite journalism books, "News Junkie": "I hesitate to admit it, but I get pleasure out of striking a match, starting a blaze, and watching it burn. My story was going to be a fucking inferno."

Honestly, one of the reasons why I chose to be political science major was that I secretly wanted to be one of those journalists who kicked some corrupt politician out of office, but I truly think this will do.

-- Diana

“And also never forget:
 The press is the enemy.
 The press is the enemy.
 The press is the enemy.”

-- President Richard M. Nixon.

Corrections and Comments

The Capital Times seeks to provide complete, correct and fair reporting. Any necessary corrections or comments are welcome and appreciated.

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