
A Message to a Terrorist: College Admission Essay Sample

Confusion and panic were clearly visible. People were running around frantically, shouting and screaming. Everyone was in a hurry. Nobody knew what was going to happen. We were all scared. Fall Fiesta was almost upon us.

The thirty or so students that were at school on that Saturday afternoon were responsible for the organization of Fall Fiesta, an annual event held to benefit our community and attended by people of all ages. At about 5:20 pm, just as the last of the preparations were completed, we all gathered around the stage. Mr. Caemmerer, the Student Council advisor, congratulated us on our hard work. "The most important thing today," he said, "is to make sure that nobody leaves feeling disappointed. Do whatever you can to make sure that people have a great time."

My first assignment at Fall Fiesta was to run an activity called the "Velcro Wall." My job was to dress participants up in a Velcro suit that would enable them to stick to a soft wall. Although business was slow at first, the activity quickly became popular among the smaller children. Parents clapped and cheered enthusiastically as they watched their offspring hanging upside down, screaming and giggling with excitement.

Just before my shift was over, a young girl (probably not more than six years old), ran over to the Velcro Wall and proudly handed me a "Play" coupon. "It's my turn now," she exclaimed, a huge grin lighting up her face. "I want to go upside down." My friend and I chuckled as we watched her shout with delight at the prospect of being suspended upside down in midair. The Velcro on the suits was a bit coarse, and an hour of lifting up little children had made our knuckles red and sore. We laughed with the little girl as we gave her a "Prize" coupon. As we traded places with two more volunteers, we decided to find some water. "These kids are definitely enjoying themselves, buddy," my friend said to me.

As I walked around exploring the other activities that had been set up by my peers, I couldn't help but feel a little proud. Our fear, it seemed, had been unnecessary. Everything was working out just fine. I watched children walking with their parents and heard the music of the school's jazz band. The scent of cotton candy hung in the warm air. Everyone was having a fantastic night.

As I approached the "Cookie Decorating" booth, Mrs. Fischer, our high school guidance counselor and the advisor for the Senior Class Government, came toward me with a strange look on her face. "Vetan, start cleaning up and go find Mr. Caemmerer," she said. Without another word she walked off, leaving me in a state of confusion. I stopped someone near me

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and asked, "What's going on?" The boy, someone whom I had seen playing soccer on the field earlier that day, replied, "Some places in Delhi just got blown up. They think the school might be next. Everyone is leaving."

The next forty-five minutes or so were surreal. It felt as though I had entered a dream world from which there was no waking up. Everyone was in a hurry. My thoughts turned to my 13-year-old sister, Mahika. I looked around, hoping to catch a glimpse of her or her friends. I had left my mobile phone at home. I borrowed somebody's phone and called my father. One ring. Two rings. Three rings. Nobody was picking up. I called my mother. One ring. Two rings. Three rings. Still nothing. Trepidation built up inside of me as I circled the area once, twice, three times. As I quickly navigated the crowd, I bumped into a small child. "Where do I go to get my prize?" he asked. Believing that nothing should tarnish a child's innocence, I determined to forget about my apprehension and led the child to the prize booth, where there was a line of kids waiting to collect their rewards. I gave him his toy, and he ran off.

As I headed towards the gates of our school, a parent approached me and asked me where the microphone was. "I need to find my daughter," she said. I directed her toward the microphone, and told other people to start making their way towards the exit. I borrowed another phone and called my mother. One ring. Two rings. "Hello?"

"Mama? It's me, Vetan. I can't find Mahika. Do you know where she is?"

"She went with her friend's parents. She is safe. Dad is at the Diwali party at the office, he will come to pick you up."

"Mama, the school is not safe. I'm going over to Gaurav's house. Tell Dad to pick me up there." With that, I hung up the phone and ran towards the exit, where I saw confused, scared people trying to reclaim their money.

As soon as I got out of the school, I ran to my friend's house. Panting, I arrived to find him watching the news. There had been several explosions in various markets. Sarojini, where my sister and I often shop for clothes. Govindpuri, the market behind my grandmother's house. Fire, terror, fear, chaos, anger, tears. A reporter, standing bravely in front of a camera, exposing the tragedy to the world.

My Dad returned from his party ten minutes later, and we left to pick up my sister from her friend's house. The ride home was uneasy, the silence punctuated only by the sound of my sister crying. I looked over at my father. Through his hardened exterior, I could see a side of him that he usually kept hidden. He was scared. How to console him? How to console my crying sister?

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When I got home that night, I ran up the stairs and fell into my mother's arms, crying like I used to when I was a little boy. We stood in the kitchen for over twenty minutes. We didn't need words. I felt safe and relieved. For the first time in my life, I prayed to God. I asked Him to forgive me for not believing. I told him that I was forever grateful to Him for keeping my family safe.

I want to thank you, the terrorist who brought such destruction to my city. I want to thank you for reminding me about the importance of family. I want to thank you for teaching me about the importance of faith. I want to thank you for showing me just how strong humans can be. I want to thank you for showing me that the world is bigger than any one individual. Today, you have won, for today, my family, my city, and my people are frightened. But your victory will only make us stronger. Our community is resilient, and our resolve has never been stronger. Our student council will organize more Fall Fiestas in the years to come. Every death that you have caused will be avenged through acts of kindness and consideration. Unlike you, we are not alone in our struggle: all of humankind stands with us. May God be with you.

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