

What We Can't See

By: Reese, Evelyn, Jack, and Jacob

The Source

By Jack

The office was dark and quiet. It was only ever like this after everyone leaves and I am stuck doing overtime. Squinting as I wrote line after line, clicking and clacking away on my keyboard. The screen seemed brighter in the dark, however, I had one final thing to finish before leaving for the day. Only two years ago I had started working on political campaigns. I was new so I didn't know the ins and outs of politics. All I knew was that I had been watching the news since I was twelve, and I wanted to work in politics. From the outside, it looks glamorous. After working in politics for a time, I learned the truth. It is all a show for the public, most politicians don't lie to get votes. Others lie to cover up crimes. The one I work for is no different, I would know. He employs me to do his dirty work. I was hired at the beginning of the campaign and promptly assigned to do PR work for my boss. My most recent assignment was covering up evidence of the candidate taking money from a super pac. The candidate had lied about it publicly and now the evidence needed to be disposed of, and I was now looking at the files on my computer. My cursor hovering over the delete button, I thought back to when I first entered politics.

"Good morning sir," I said, waving to my new boss. He waved back, returning the greeting and showing me to my cubicle. "Your first assignment will be to acquaint yourself with our advertisement campaign, and dispose of some things for me." The candidate then strutted into his office, the walk showed his confidence in himself. I had romanticized politics to myself, and it was my first day on the job. I had thought that it would be full of honest people working towards changing the world, but now I was facing the truth. Files opened across my screen showing evidence of an array of crimes from tampering with witnesses to embezzling money. "This can't be a normal occurrence around here." I thought to myself, deleting them. I didn't want to think about it but every once in a while I would have to cover something else up and it was getting harder and harder to ignore.

Snapping out of my daydream, I look back at the computer screen. Thoughts swirled around in my mind, I was powerless to stop the corruption within politics but the actuality of it made me angry. In a momentary act of defiance, I decided not to delete the files, instead, I downloaded them. Sending them to my phone before contacting a journalist, and sending the evidence to the press. I could lose my job for this sure, but I finally took a stand. A momentary feeling of pride washed over me as I left the office for the night. History is filled with people who took risks to make a stand. I can risk my job to make an improvement, even a small one. Maybe this won't do anything to stop political corruption or even this one candidate, but I had to do something.

The next day I come into work and it is business as normal. The story must not have worked yet. The pride had not completely worn off yet but much of it had been replaced with a feeling of dread. Knowing that at any moment my coworkers could find out that I leaked the files. I had never liked disappointing or angering people, even if they were participating in the corruption. Sitting down at my desk I realize that I never deleted the original files. With the boss leaving his office, I

rush to remedy this. Suspiciously running over to my computer, booting it up and purging the files before doing the same to the files on my phone. "Is something wrong?" He asks, looking over the wall of my cubicle. He seemed concerned and not suspicious, however I am struggling to come up with a lie. "I am alright, I just felt the impulsive need to sit down before nine as to not be late." I explained, barely coming up with it. "You are already in the office so you wouldn't be marked as late." My boss replies. "It is just my OCD I guess." I don't have OCD but it convinced my boss that nothing was wrong. "Hey boss you will want to see this!" One of my coworkers yelled from the other end of the room, turning on a tv. As the news program plays, people crowd around. I don't join them, already knowing what is on it. The boss storms back over. "Did you send them those documents? They said it was an anonymous source so it seems like you would do it, and cover your tracks." The boss wasn't quite yelling, but he was more than angry. His face had scrunched up showing years of wear. "No, it wasn't me. It must have been someone else who had access to the photos." I reply, as calmly as I can. "There will be an investigation. If I find out you did this, then I swear to god I will..." Some of the other staff pulled him away from me to calm him down. There is no way they can trace this back to me... right? I won't even be at any risk of being found out if charges are brought against him before the boss has a chance to investigate me.

Soon enough I am home. The work day was tense as the IT guy spent hours poking around my computer. They weren't able to confiscate my phone and go through it because unlike my computer, my phone is my property. They need a warrant to do that. The IT worker didn't find anything, however I am sure there is some way to track the files, knowing modern technology. I sigh to myself, sinking into my couch and turning the tv on. The news drones on about possible prosecutions of the candidate. Even if that happens, I could still lose my job or get sued. I just hope that it ends up being worth it, depending on what the punishment is. Not to say that I am not proud of myself for standing up for what I believe is right. I began to do a deep dive on the files, looking at news sites which were analyzing the files. When I first saw them I didn't know what I was looking at. Now I could see how apprehensive the crimes were. There was evidence of embezzlement and laundering money from a company to covertly fund the campaign without the public gaining knowledge of the nefarious activities. Thinking back on the possible consequences, I can't stay in politics after this. Maybe working in the media is an option, exposing corruption and fighting it rather than participating in it. Then I have an idea, a way to avoid said possible consequences. I pass out after making a couple calls, looking for opened positions in media companies from my bed. The dark room only lit by my phone, filled with the pings of notifications.

"I quit." I walk into my boss's office. "Mind telling me why?" He asks, his demeanor confused and mad. "Because you treated me with so much suspicion when I was loyal until now, I believe that I am owed a bit of trust. However, I refuse to do your dirty work anymore." Leaving the room, I put my belongings into a box and lug them out of the office. Putting them in my car I drive to my new job as a writer in a newsroom. It would be a new start, in a job that I can truly be proud of. Maybe someday I can even be an anchor or find other positions that interest me.

Entering the set, the show is already in full swing. Today's topic is still the leaked files. "This evidence seems pretty damning, I believe it could lead to a prosecution." One anchor says,

prompting the guest to respond. "It would make sense. As a legal scholar I see a couple angles that they could prosecute this from, either misconduct, or embezzlement." The show continues, the noise fading into the background as my thoughts block it out. Even in a corruption ridden society, people can fight back. Not only can people fight back, they will fight back. I am now at the heart of that fight, whereas a day ago I was on the other side of this fight. Throughout my life there was one idea that was at the center of my philosophy. Freedom of speech, an idea that allows corruption to be exposed and fought. Now rather than working against that idea, it was the main tool at my disposal.

Annotation #1 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

I used first person point of view to show the thoughts of the main character. This allowed the reader to see the character's point of view through the eyes and interpretations of the main character. This also showed the way that the character perceives the actions of others, rather than how others see their own actions. The ability to see the perception of an action rather than the intent of an action will make the response of the main character more understandable.

Annotation #2 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

In Amaryllis the author wrote in such a way that the main character explains terms and things that were unique to the text when they are introduced, or when the author feels like explaining them rather than laying it all out at the beginning. This appears when the main character introduces the theme of corruption but doesn't mention the character's interactions with corruption until the flashback which further explains the personal connection.

Annotation #3 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

I used my section to lead into the next section where the point of view changes as there is a new character so it is their first person perspective. The story goes from the beginning action, the comino that sets all of the others off, through multiple other points of view until it reaches the end of the story. This allows the story to flow easily, building up to the conflict and resolution while providing all needed information.

What Was Unknown

By Evelyn

As I'm outside of the building, I start thinking to myself

Can I actually do this?

Am I the right fit for this job?

No,, I have to think highly of myself. You can do this Monica!

Now, I'm walking up the stairs, and my feet feel heavy as I try to lift them up the steps. At the door I feel a strange energy. Or maybe I'm just nervous. As I turn the knob of the door open, I see a big buff man sitting. I put a smile on my face to hide the feeling I have inside.

"Hello" I said, feeling like I have to throw up.

"Hello ma'am, please have a seat, Would you like to be the new secretary?"

"Yes, It would be my honor."

"Great, you can come in tomorrow."

"Yes, of course."

As I was walking to my car, I couldn't stop thinking about what I was getting myself into. I saw two men arguing as I was walking to the room to get interviewed. It looked serious. It made me question myself.

What could they be talking about?

I shouldn't worry. But still....

Nah it's probably nothing.

I was on my way to my new job, and I felt some kind of pressure on me. As I was sitting down at my new desk, I started thinking,

Why did the old secretary leave so soon? What aren't they telling me?

I had a busy work day. As I looked for parking, I got out of my car and started walking to the front of my house. I jiggle the keys so I can get inside. I drop everything and go straight to my kitchen. I grab my bottle of wine, I walk to my living room and put my feet up on the table. I turned on the TV then I remembered.

Oh crap, I totally forgot about the campaign. Let's see the new people running .

I looked at the tv and the person who is running one of them is Mr.Corbett. He seemed so confident in this debate. He looks like he could be a great politician. Also he had some cool ideas he was talking about, like keeping our environment as safe as possible, and women having the ability to have a abortion.

Then I turned off the tv and dragged my feet upstairs and got in bed for the night.

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It was my 2nd month working at the new building, and people seem to trust me. But except for this one person he always keeps to himself, his name is Daniel. What I find weird about him is that I always see him looking at me across my desk. I always catch him in the corner of my eye. One time I tried talking to him, but no matter what he always gives me his back, and each time I tried to have a conversation he gives such an attitude. I don't know what I could have done to make him hate me.

There's one week until people get to vote and I'm still voting for Corbett. I want to vote for him because he wants to try and make our economy better, and get away from plastic to save our coral reef, and also give women rights for their bodies. The next day I realized that my alarm didn't ring and I looked at the time it was 10 am.

Oh no... no...no... this can't be.

I jump out of my bed and rush out the house. I clock in then I see Daniel, I see him coming out the way out where my desk is. He walked right past me, as I was going to sit down.

I take a look at my desktop and I see that an important paper was on the floor but the air conditioner had been broken for months. My guess is Daniel went through my things.

What was he looking for?

I'm so tired of him, I will talk to him when I'm on my lunch break.

"Daniel!" I said.

"What do you want?" Daniel replied while walking the opposite way from where I was walking.

"What were you doing looking through my stuff?"

"Uh No I wasn't."

"Are you serious right now? You make no sense. I can't believe you're lying to me," I stormed out of his office.

Daniel acts weird, I don't know if that's his personality. What could he possibly be looking for? I have nothing to hide. I'm going to find out.

It was 12 at night and every one was off, but I was finishing paperwork. As I was gathering my personal belongings I saw Daniels desk.

I wonder what HE is hiding.

As I drop my things I go over to his computer, I tried to look for the passcode and I found it under his keyboard

Wow, couldn't he find a better hiding spot?

As I go to he's search history I see some disturbingthings, but aside from that I see a weird text message saying,

"Is everything done?" from Corbett.

"Yes, sir."

"I want everything done by next month."

"Okay, sir."

What is going on? Why does Daniel have Mr.Corbett's number? What is Corbett doing at this company? What is really going on in this building?

I had so many questions wrapping around my head. I headed home trying to process what I just saw with my own eyes. I sat down and opened my own computer and I started to research the company. I go to my search bar and type "company of saving people. The company name was "saving people" it was about giving food to people who need it, but what if it's all a cover up?

As I researched I found shouting news. I was supporting someone taking money and doing investment and taking money when he shouldn't

I was left with my mouth open.

I felt chills down my spine and a cold sweat.

How could I support this kind of company? I am so stupid I should have seen more into it. Should I still keep working there? Of course not. But it's the only job I have. How could I support Mr. Corbett I thought he was a great guy? Someone had to do something about this

When I got home it was already 10pm and I couldn't sleep. Then it became 11 to 12 until 3 am. I had to get up for work.

I only had 3 hours of sleep. I walk up the building

I felt like everything was silent and all I could hear was my heart pounding.

I sit at my desk and I see daniel and I can't look at him the same

Was he helping a horrible man? Did he do it willingly?

I stop myself from getting into my head. I finished work and I ran into Daniel, I couldn't even look him in the eye. So I said sorry and walked away. As I was walking away I could still see Daniel's eyes looking at me. I was sitting in my car and burst out crying because I couldn't tell anyone what I found out. And someone knocks on my window and I see Daniel I opened the door for him and he looks at me and said

"you found the conversation didn't you"

"Umm, yes I did"

"You can't tell anyone what you saw"

"Ok"

He got out of the car and I drove off.

It's been 3 days since I found out and I'm still the same. I still can't sleep, eat, or function right. It was around 3pm in the afternoon and I was on my lunch break. I walked up to the main center of the building and I saw on the news that there was a scandal in the city and telling Corbett to get out of the campaign. It was wild, and is getting out of control. People found out about taking money. I see Daniel biting his teeth and shaking his head. Then I see the rest worried and shaking their heads. Daniel looks at me. I just took a sip of my coffee and told the owner that I quit.

Annotation #1 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

1st person

The reason I picked being first person is that I wanted to make my character 1st point of view so we can get all the ideas and what she thinks in the story. The impact the story has of this technique was knowing what she finds out about the plot of my story. One example of my technique is page 1

"Can I actually do this?"

Am I the right fit for this job?"

No,,, I have to think highly of myself. You can do this Monica!" This was Monica, she was talking to herself.

Annotation #2 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

Typical sentence length,

As we see in my story I find that my sentences are short, but there is a reason for that, is when time passes by. Also, when I go to the next sentence is when Monica takes a pause and thinks in her mind. A example is

"I was left with my mouth open.

I felt like chills down my spine and sweating cold.

How could I support this kind of company?" Monica was surprised that she was supporting a horrible company and she was having pauses and continuing to talk about how she feels.

Annotation #3 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

The final technique I like to show you is a different font. As we see there's three different fonts, the first one is Monica talking, the 2nd font is when Monica is talking inside her head, the last one is when she finds messages from Daniel's computer. I can give give examples for each one

"Now, I'm waking up the stairs, as I pick up my foot to go up the stairs I feel my feet are heavy. At the door I feel a strange energy" this was her telling what was happening in her surroundings. The 2nd example is "I felt like chills down my spine and sweating cold.

How could I support this kind of company?" The final is the example I like to explain is

" Is everything done" from Corbett

" yes sir"

" I want everything done by next month."

"Okay sir"

This was when Monica found out that Daniel was helping out Mr.Corbett.

What Some Can See

By Jacob

The election is just a few weeks away and my father, Dennis Corbett has been acting strange recently. His numbers in the polls are much higher than the other candidates. I don't know much about what he does exactly but he always is taking important calls and working longer hours than he says he will.

What does he do when he disappears for hours and I don't see him on the news?

This question repeats in my head, as it feels like everyday he comes home later than he did the last night.

Maybe I'm thinking about it too much. Dad is always talking about how he wants change and to help the economy or something.

I don't know much about politics or much of what my father says he is working towards but he often talks about money and something about a bunch of big companies. I feel deep down that something is off about what my fathers true motives are but I also don't think my Dad would lie about the things he says on tv.

I definitely am thinking too much. It's getting late so I should really go to sleep...

The Truth

By Reese

“Lela,” Marilyn said, tapping on the door frame, “Director wants to see you.”

I shooed away a makeup brush aimed at my eye so I could turn to look at her. “Right now? Aren’t we on in,” I swiveled, looking for a clock, “forty minutes?”

Marilyn sighed.

“Yeah. He didn’t say why, he just asked for you.”

I looked at Marilyn with sympathy. We have been working together for six years, since I was just an intern. Now, of course, I’m an anchor, but Marilyn is still working as the Director’s assistant. She is *always* busy, running all over the building for him. Honestly, he cherishes her a lot, but that doesn’t stop him from working her to the bone. I don’t know how she’s kept up all these years.

“Okay,” I said with a sigh of my own. I turn to look at the two people who were just applying layers of skin-toned goop to my face, “Are we done here?”

“No, not at all,” they said after staring at me for a second too long.

I wanted to roll my eyes. “Okay, let me rephrase: Can we be done here?”

The two looked at each other with uncertainty, then turned toward me and nodded in resignation, “Sure, you can go.”

“Perfect,” I said with a tight smile as I grab my blazer, shrug it over my shoulders, and walk out of the boxed room in step with Marilyn. We walked briskly to the elevators, chased by the sound of our two-inch heels hitting the tiled floor.

As I walked by a never-ending line of tall oak doors, I considered why the Director would call me. I didn’t do anything wrong as far as I can remember. I’ve just been doing my job, not collecting the news, not writing the news, but reporting the news. I couldn’t possibly imagine what he wanted from me. Lost in thought, I almost passed the Director’s office. I paused before knocking and looked down. I straightened my skirt, let out a breath, and knocked on the door in a quick *rat-ta-tat*.

“Come in,” his voice called, muffled by the heavy door. I pushed open the door and stiffly walked inside. The room itself is intimidating, with floor to ceiling windows and only a few dim lights. Not to mention, the walk to the desk takes a few minutes, just enough time to make anyone a stuttering mess in front of the Director. I had to tell myself to calm down, I had talked to the Director tons of times, this was nothing new. I was filled with anticipation, my hands were shaking slightly, and I had to focus on not stumbling and embarrassing myself.

“Miss Layla,” he said, peering over his silver glasses and dropping the newspaper he was reading with a *thump*, “How are you holding up? Good, I hope.”

“Yes sir,” I replied, looking him in the eye to convince him—who am I kidding—to convince myself of my confidence. “I was getting ready for the nightly report, is there something I can help you with?”

He swiveled his chair to face me and sat up, propping his elbows on his desk and his chin on his hands.

“Yes, I believe so.”

He paused.

“Tell me,” he said, “how do you feel about covering a scandal on one of our country’s favorite politician’s?”

I stared at him. What? What did he mean? There was a scandal about a politician? And he was asking if I wanted to cover it? Was he really giving me a choice? And why on earth would he ask me?

"If you are worried about how it might present your name, you don't have to do it," he said through his hands. His eyebrows were furrowed and it felt like he was staring into my soul.

"Sir, if I may, why ask me?" I said, hoping for a reasonable response.

"You're reliable, you're good at your job, you've been here long enough that I can ask this of you, and most importantly," he said looking me dead in the eye, "I think you would be the most willing to present this out of our anchors."

I nodded.

"Thank you, sir. Is there any way I can know what the scandal is before I decide to cover it?" I said. I wasn't optimistic he would say yes, usually you are just told what to say, and unless it's a big deal, you don't really know what you are covering until you look at the script.

"That can be arranged," he said, finally leaning back in his chair.

"Thank you, sir. If that's all, I'll take my leave," I said. After he nodded, I tilted my head down and turned on my heel and hustled out of his office.

"Miss Lela," the Director called after me, "It'll be on your desk tomorrow morning. I'll expect to hear from you by noon."

"Yes, sir," I said, and continued out of his office. As I closed his door behind me with a *thud*, I fell back against the door and shook out a breath. My mind was racing—almost as fast as my hands were shaking. This had never happened to me before, I had never been specifically asked to cover something, but then again, we haven't covered something this big in a long time. I tilted my head to the side, his reasoning made sense.

"Oh well," I muttered with a sigh, "That's a decision for tomorrow." I pushed off of the door and started making my way down stairs, I still had to do tonight's report.

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As much as I tried to take my mind off of my conversation with the Director, I was thinking about it the entire "5:00 News Report," and the entire subway ride home. Even now, my mind was struggling to formulate all of my thoughts and questions. What was the scandal? What "favorite" politician was involved? Were we sure it was a reputable source? No, I'm sure the Director would do his research, he wouldn't ask me to cover something he wasn't sure of. Right? I mean... he did give me something similar to a warning, "If you are worried about how it might present your name, you don't have to do it." I definitely needed to think this through more. Alright, I thought, after I read my report on it tomorrow, I'll make my decision.

...

The next morning, as I walked from the parking lot to the office, I reminded myself of the decision to come. After sleeping on it, I was still very on the fence, whether to cover the scandal story or not. On one hand, it would bring more attention to me as an anchor, and on the other—if it

turned out to not be completely true—it would bring my name down, and if I didn’t get fired, I’d still be crushed by the hierarchy.

The elevator doors slid open with a *ding*, and I started my way to my office.

“You’re here early, Lela,” Marilyn called to me.

“Yeah,” I replied with a wobbly smile and a small shrug, “Director’s orders.”

“I see,” Marilyn replied with a raised eyebrow, “We should get lunch later.”

“Sounds good, I’ll text you.”

“Okay, see you later!”

“See you later!”

I walked the rest of the way to my office, and closed the door behind me. I dropped my blazer on the chair in front of me and looked around the room. The sunlight from a singular window shined on my desk, illuminating the dust and my absence.

Also illuminated by the sun, was a small packet of copy paper, held together in the top left corner by one red paperclip. I walked over to my desk, and picked it up. I took the paper clip off and flipped off the first blank paper. Underneath, was more than I could ever imagine.

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I set down the paper and breathed out in shock. Then I spent the next five minutes writing an email to the Director with only one thing in my mind. *I’ll take it. I’ll cover it.*

...

The next three days were a blur. After finding out the politician, Cordett, was embezzling money, I decided to take the case. The people in the country deserved to know how much of a liar Cordett was, and I was going to tell them. My stomach was constantly filled with nerves, and I couldn’t eat much more than coffee. I was still so shocked from everything that had happened and everything I had found out, I doubted I would be able to calm down and relax until I finished covering the story.

...

“Lela! Great job, social media is blowing up, your name is going to be huge!”

“Thanks, Jamie. But, we all worked hard for this,” I replied with a tired smile. He patted me on the back with a smile and walked past me. I got many more pats, hand shakes, smiles, and congratulations as I walked back to my office. I couldn’t wait to close the door behind me and sink into my chair. This was the most I had been in the office in over a year and the most involved in a story I have ever been. I was exhausted, but it was good to know that the people of our nation now had the power and the information to choose a better candidate.

Annotation #1 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that

choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

One technique I chose to use was commas for my sentence structure. This can mostly be seen in the dialogue or when my character, Lela, is thinking through something. I did this because I think that someone who worked at a news group would be someone who thinks through things a lot. This made me think the sentences would be longer and have more commas to show each thought tied together. An example of this is, "This had never happened to me before, I had never been specifically asked to cover something, but then again, we haven't covered something this big in a long time." This sentence uses three commas to separate but lead the character's thought process along.

Annotation #2 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

A second technique I chose to use was point of view. I wrote this piece in first person because I wanted the reader to understand the events happening through my character's lens. My character speaks very formally and does not always express their thoughts or feelings openly, especially in a work setting. Because of this, if the reader were not able to see the thoughts of my character, I think it would feel very incomplete and uninteresting to read. A quote from the part I wrote that clearly shows the point of view is, "As I closed his door behind me with a thud, I fell back against the door and shook out a breath. My mind was racing—almost as fast as my hands were shaking."

Annotation #3 - In 50-100 words, describe a technique you use in this piece. Why did you make that choice, and what impact does it have on the reader's understanding of the story? Make sure to quote a phrase or sentence from your writing. Bonus points for explaining how another author influenced your choice!

The last technique I used was almost like mini-chapters. I used three dots to separate spans of time and ideas. I made this choice because I wanted the reader to be able to clearly notice spans of time that had passed and be able to clearly distinguish the different ideas I am presenting in the story. I had picked this up from my book club book, "The Inheritance Games", by Jennifer Lynn Barnes. Barnes used the chapters or little symbols to separate ideas and clues, as well as spans of time. An example of when I used this technique in the story is:

I was still so shocked from everything that had happened and everything I had found out, I doubted I would be able to calm down and relax until I finished covering the story.

...

"Lela! Great job, social media is blowing up, your name is going to be huge!"

