



Bill stared at Matt and felt nothing but the utmost shame in his coworker. Matt Powers, the number one news reporter for Channel 8 and all of Dade County. Matt Powers, the man who would sell his own mother to land a breaking story. He was the man who asked the “tough questions,” which usually meant putting a microphone in the face of a grieving mother whose child had recently been killed, raped, or something just as vile. That’s who Matt Powers had become — a walking, talking contradiction to the journalistic values and ethics set by such renowned newsmen as Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite.

Bill had been Matt’s cameraman and stand-in for over ten years, and his friend for just as long. He remembered a much different Matt Powers: the young ambitious intern who worked hard to get his job. The good friend who once confided in him, spoke lovingly of his wife Karen and son Joey, and above all, shared his ideals. But somewhere along the line,

all that changed. Ratings became paramount and little else mattered, not even his family. He started an affair with the weekend weather girl, then progressed to the sweet college intern with

the big breasts and small IQ. And in what was his ultimate mistake, his wife caught Matt and anchorwoman Tracy Christ in Karen’s bed. Right after that, Karen and Joey moved out.

As distraught as Karen was, Matt showed little, if any, regret. Sure he missed Karen and Joey, but he was too involved in his career to give them much thought.

“Sorry Karen, but I can’t take Joey this

weekend,” Matt often told his wife, “I’m just too busy right now to spend time with him.”

However, in those brief yet powerful moments when regret and sorrow overcame him, he thought of Joey.

Matt was preoccupied with high ratings, the number of bimbos he could bed, and his goal of becoming a network reporter. It was in Matt’s pursuit of the latter that he and Bill had their falling out.

Matt and Bill were reporting on a local shooting: an eight-year-old boy was shot and killed in school by a fellow classmate. This was the sort of story Bill had now found tedious. After twenty-five years of filming numerous atrocities, Bill had become disgusted with his profession. He often dreamed of starting over: maybe filming tear jerker and puff pieces that tug at the heart and give people some hope.

Bill had set up his camera not more than twenty feet from the small black body bag, in which only one size person could fit. It was the type of set-up that Matt loved: the kind that creates the effect of dread and hopelessness and keeps the morbidly fascinated glued to their television sets. Bill pointed the camera at Matt, and watched with disgust as he turned ‘it’ on. ‘It’ referred to how Matt transformed from total callousness to complete sincerity with the flick of a switch. As he laid it on as thick as he could for the camera, Matt noticed a distraught woman wailing by one of the police cars. It was the mother of the deceased little boy. Without hesitation, Matt rushed towards the woman, and Bill had little choice but to follow.

“Ma’am you must be going through a lot of pain right now,” Matt said to the bereaved mother who had fallen to her knees sobbing. “Can you please share with us some of your feelings?”

Matt brought the microphone even closer to the woman’s face, angering several of the officers who quickly pushed Matt out of her way.

“Get the fuck out of here,” yelled an officer, but it was too late.

He had caught the poor woman’s pain and trapped it forever in the permanent prison of videotape.

After arriving at the Channel 8 studio, Matt prepared to edit the video, but Bill refused to hand over the tape.

“What are you, crazy, old man?” Yelled

*Leo Gonzalez is an education major with aspirations of becoming a history teacher via a doctorate in political sciences. Exploitive news media made him angry enough to write this story.*

Matt, "I don't have time for your bullshit."

"I won't let you do this Matt," Bill replied, "I won't let you air this."

"In case you've forgotten, in your senile old age, I'm still your superior and I want that fucking tape or you're fired."

Reluctantly, Bill threw the tape at Matt's feet and then looked directly into his eyes.

"You prick." Bill said, "Don't you even care what that woman has been through, what she's going to go through the rest of her life?"

Matt stared right back into Bill's eyes.

"You don't get it do you? The only thing that matters to me is the fucking story. You remember how I cried when we were interviewing the parents of that retarded kid, the one who was beaten to death by bullies? You were so moved by my sincerity towards them. I'll bet you really thought I felt for them didn't you? But I got to tell you something: I was just faking it, pal."

"It was quite simple really; I just rubbed my eyes when the camera wasn't on and voilà, Niagara Falls. That's just who I am, Bill, and you're going to have to get used to it, or you're going to have to find yourself another job."

Bill did not say a word. He looked away from Matt, his face a mixture of pity and anger. With his head down, Bill slowly made his way out of the room.

The next day proved to be an odd and uncomfortable one for both Matt and Bill. Outside of the usual daily pleasantries, neither of them spoke much. Matt was in the studio listening to the police scanner, when he overheard a crime in progress. It was another child shooting. Right after hearing the news, Bill and Matt were quickly on their way to the scene.

As usual, the Channel 8 van was the first on the scene. The police tape had already been set up, keeping the gathering crowd away from the small body, which lay covered under a large yellow tarp. Bill had set up his camera as close as he possibly could, while Matt finished fixing his hair. As they were ready to begin shooting, one of the officers lifted the tarp exposing the dead boy's face. Bill caught a glimpse of the face through the lens and a deep knot formed in his stomach.

"Matt," said Bill, "You'd better turn around."

"Its not like I haven't seen this kind of shit before," Matt answered.

"Please, Matt," Bill said, "Just look!"

Matt quickly turned, and through a web of police tape, he saw his dead son lying under the yellow tarp. Matt's look of fear was authentic. Suddenly, he ran through the yellow tape, fell to his knees, and embraced his son's lifeless body. Matt held his son, as the tears flowed down his face and the onlookers stared aimlessly. Several officers had to help Matt up, consoling him the best they could. Bill rushed to Matt, still carrying his expensive camera. As the officers helped Matt to an ambulance, Bill rushed to his side and pointed the camera directly at Matt.

"Matt, you must be going through a lot of pain right now. Can you please share with us some of your feelings?"



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