

CRIME

Joseph Van Hakren

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**Story Sources**

**[EXCELLENT SOURCE LIST. YOU TALKED TO A LOT OF PEOPLE. TO SAVE SPACE, JUST INCLUDE THE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER]**

**Name:** Jose Rivera

**Age:** late 40s

**Occupation:** webmaster

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Daniel Brathwaite

**Age:** late 32

**Occupation:** technical support specialist

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Tony Aguirre

**Age:** 40s

**Occupation:** Police officer, CPU

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Sal Alvarado

**Age:** 30s

**Occupation:** Community Affairs Officer,  
23<sup>rd</sup> Precinct

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Walter Torres

**Age:** late 42

**Occupation:** Super

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Mohamed Younes

**Age:** 60s

**Occupation:** Public Relations

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Altariq Abdul Shaid Muhammad

**Age:** 36

**Occupation:** Maintenance Supervisor

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Fr. John Jauci

**Age:** 60s

**Occupation:** Priest

**Phone:** St. Cecelia's rectory

**Name:** Loretta Bruton  
**Age:** 38

**Occupation:** Secretary  
**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Yvet Rodriguez  
**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** unemployed  
**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Name:** Tony  
**Age:** 30s

**Occupation:** Deli worker  
**Phone:** corner of 102 and 2<sup>nd</sup>

Joseph,

You did some excellent reporting here. You talked to a lot of people and you got them to open up. Keep bringing that energy and enthusiasm to your reporting and you'll do very well.

Where the story could be improved is in the focus. It seems like you had a focused question, asking about crime. But the quotes you include in the piece seem to veer off the topic from time to time. It may be that the question wasn't quite personal enough. If you ask someone if they plan to move out of New York that requires action or inaction on their part. But if you ask people about crime, it is a more esoteric concept for them unless they have been crime victims.

In writing the story, you needed a more focused lede that went directly into your question. Then throughout the piece you needed more transitions and paraphrasing to avoid having one quote follow another.

The main point of this assignment was to get out and do some reporting. And you accomplished that very well. Keep thinking about focus, focus, focus.

Carla

Humans are pack animals. [THIS IS THROAT CLEARING. YOUR LEDE SHOULD TAKE THE READER RIGHT INTO THE STORY.]

The ///old adage,/// [“OLD ADAGE” IS REDUNDANT. HOW MANY “NEW ADAGES” HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF?] “safety in numbers” is common to our communal psyche, especially since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. [AP STYLE: READ THE ENTRY ON DATES] As people came together to mourn, crime statistics nation wide dropped. Even traditionally labeled rough areas of New York City

felt a renewed sense of solidarity. [THIS PARAGRAPH IS MORE THROAT CLEARING. YOU CAN CUT IT OUT OF THE STORY.]

Across the country, crime dropped after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, and East Harlem was no exception.

In East Harlem, which is a low to middle income community, In East Harlem “Crime dropped significantly for a couple months after 9/11,” said the community affairs officer for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Precinct, ~~Community Affairs Officer~~ Sal Alvarado. “And it’s still down to an extent. There are more shootings now than~~then~~ back then, but the funny thing is the murder rate has stayed down.”

But in interviews with 11 residents of the low- to middle-income neighborhood, it was clear that do not feel safer.

“People are bad shots, that’s all,” said Jose Rivera, a man in his 40s who has lived in East Harlem for most of his life. “Gangbangers hold guns in fancy ways now.”

~~Jose Rivera said winking. Rivera, in his 40s, has lived in East Harlem most of his life.~~ He has a wife and three children and is the webmaster for [www.east-harlem.com](http://www.east-harlem.com). “Seriously though, 9/11 hasn’t impacted us to much, we don’t think the terrorist will come up here.”

“That day was a tragedy, one of my best friends, Edna, died down there,” said Julio Nieves, 55, who grew up on 118<sup>th</sup> ~~St.~~ Street [AP STYLE: READ THE ENTRY ON ADDRESSES] and works as ~~an apartment building a~~ doorman on the Upper East Side. “But every day is a tragedy here. It hasn’t been much different; we’re still ducking bullets.”

Loretta Bruton, 38, a secretary for the New York City Housing Authority, said she had not noticed a decrease in crime. “I don’t feel nothing different,” ~~she said.~~ ~~Loretta Bruton, 38, a New York City Housing Authority secretary who has worked in East Harlem for the past three years.~~ “I didn’t even know that crime dropped.”

~~“[The drop in crime] was a good fad,”~~ Walter Torres, a 42-year-old apartment building superintendent and local drug rehabilitation volunteer, said the drop in crime “was a good fad.”

~~noted.~~ “But it’s over now,” Torres said. “The judgment of God rained down on us that day because we believed in idols made of iron, marble and glass. He checked our sense of pride. Don’t know if it worked though, I remember that during the first week after September 11<sup>th</sup> three storefronts owned by Arabs were vandalized.”

Tony, a deli worker of who is of Middle -Eastern descent who declined to give his last name, ~~said and works at a local delicatessen commented,~~ “The real reason why crime went down is because there were no cops around to catch anyone.”

“There wasn’t much violence that specifically targeted Muslims,” said Altariq Abdul Shaid Muhammad, an African-~~American~~ man who has a ~~W~~white, Jewish father. “For a while after 9/11, police protected the masques mosques [WATCH THE SPELLING ON MOSQUE, IT’S AN “O” NOT AN “A”] specifically, they were parked outside 24/7.” Shaid is a 36-year-old maintenance supervisor who learned about Islam while “doing some time.” He said, “Everybody is anti U.S. to an extent. The government that is. You know, we all have to look out for each other.”

~~“The precinct is very active in the community,”~~ said Mohamed Younes, who works in the public relations department for the Islamic Cultural Center, which includes a masque mosque located on the corner of 96<sup>th</sup> Street St. and Second Avenue, said the drop

~~is crime was not related to Sept. 11. “The trend [of crime dropping] doesn’t really have to do with the events of September. It has been happening for many years now,” he said.~~

~~“There is a higher awareness in the community. People are helping each other.”~~

Nieves agreed. “It’s like one big family up here,” Nieves said. “Everyone looks out for each other because in this neighborhood it’s always a struggle to survive.”

“People came together for a minute and then went their separate ways,” Shaid said. “But I do still think that things that used to aggravate us are now overlooked, we realize that life is too short, there’s no time for arguing.”

~~///“I saw it in people’s faces, they were nicer, more compassionate.”///~~  
[FLOATING QUOTE. THIS NEEDS ATTRIBUTION. DID SHAIID SAY IT? OR DID RODRIGUEZ SAY IT?] Noted Yvet Rodriguez, 35, who has two sons and is looking for employment in the food industry. She grew up in East Harlem and comes back often to visit family and friends. “For me that feeling has stuck. It’s good for the children to realize it’s better to be nice to one another. We didn’t have such a big reminder. Now the kids know that’s it’s important to have a more peaceful life, to be more compassionate to one another, not to lose their heads too quickly.”

~~In the tight knit neighborhoods of New York City people have different backgrounds, experiences, and process information in various ways; it all depends on their perspectives from within the pack. September 11<sup>th</sup> had a great impact on many American communities and, at the other end of Manhattan, in East Harlem, the effects still linger along side the reality of everyday living. [RESIST THE URGE TO SUM UP AT THE END OF A STORY. YOU HAVE A GOOD KICKER WITH THE RODRIGUEZ QUOTE, SO KEEP THAT. BUT IF THE READER HAS READ YOUR STORY THIS FAR, THERE IS NO NEED TO SUMMARIZE. THE READER WILL ALREADY GET IT.]~~

What is for sure, Rodriguez says, “A peace of mind is the best thing you can have.”

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### Story Ideas:

**NURSING HOME:** While interviewing Julio Nieves, he noted that the nursing home his mother went to has a history of not taking care of patients so they stay in there for a specific period of time. After that time, the home gains control of the patient’s Social Security check. I would like to see if this is a common occurrence, speak to some other patients and to the people at the nursing home. I think it could be a good, longer investigative piece.

**ARTIST:** I would like to profile a local artist named De La Vega. He writes profound statements on sidewalks and creates art on buildings. His work was a motivating factor for me applying to Columbia as his most used phrase “Become Your Dream,” caught my eye. Recently he’s been the center of controversy.

**INTERNET:** Meeting with the webmaster for [www.east-harlem.com](http://www.east-harlem.com) he noted that most of the visitors to the site were from people who didn’t live in the area. But he noted that most people in the area do have email. I would like to do a story that looks at internet

penetration in East-Harlem, what it means to the community, how and if they use their own sites.