

RASTA
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Word count: 692

Story Sources

Name: Max Gachette
Age: 32
Occupation: store clerk
Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: Cox
Age: 38
Occupation: store owner
Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: Detective Edwards
Age: 30s
Occupation: Police officer
Phone: [REDACTED]

Joseph,

You had quite an experience when the police raided that shop. And even though it was so disconcerting, you still managed to put your notes together and write a story.

It's hard to start out working on one story and have it turn into another story altogether. In this case you ended up with more of a hybrid story – half crime story, half business story.

I would recommend that you embrace the crime story more and use much more description of what you actually saw with your own eyes. And while you should mention the Columbia journalism student in the lede, you need to be a bit more judicious about it.

Here is an example of what you might have done with the lede:

After staking out a Rastafarian store for two hours, undercover detectives raided the store while a Columbia University journalism student who had been interviewing the clerk looked on.

With guns drawn, five detectives entered the store, told the student to put his hands in the hair and slammed the clerk's head down on the counter.

The detectives arrested the clerk, Max Gachette, and said he would be charged with selling marijuana.

"This store sells weed, we have proof of that either by seeing transactions or by that man selling to undercovers," the police said. "We obtained a warrant and have searched the place. We have recovered some quantities right now."

Then you use the information from Gachette just to describe who he is in terms of being an arrested person.

It all comes down to focus. So once the story becomes a crime story keep the focus on the crime.

This focus thing will come after a while. Just keep working on it.

Carla

A Columbia University student of journalism student found out that sometimes a business has many ways to make money. He was covering a story about a local business on Friday, Friday August 16, [AP STYLE: READ THE ENTRY ON DATES] when police raided a Rastafarian Health Food store located at 350 116th St. The raid was in response to an anonymous phone call complaining about marijuana distribution, the police said.

As a two-hour interview with the store clerk, Max Gachette, wrapped up, the student turned to leave and five plain-clothes detectives burst through the door. They screamed for everyone to put their hands up. They immediately cuffed Gachette and frisked the student.

“This store sells weed, we have proof of that either by seeing transactions or by [the counter clerk] [DO NOT INTRUDE ON QUOTES WITH BRACKETED INFORMATION. EITHER USE WHAT HE SAID, OR PARAPHRASE] selling to undercovers,” police said. “We obtained a warrant and have searched the place. We have recovered some quantities right now.”

Charges will be made against the store clerk, Max Gachette, [YOU’VE ALREADY IDENTIFIED HIM. IN SECOND REFERENCE EITHER USE HIS LAST NAME OR CALL HIM THE CLERK] for possession and distribution of marijuana, police said. They said they will most likely not charge the store or the store owner unless evidence shows that the owner is involved.

The store, My Cup Runneth Over, has been open at the location for two years. It specializes in Rastafarian paraphernalia, incense, vegetarian health foods and it makes fruit smoothies and shakes. Gachette said he had has-worked at the store for three weeks.

Before the raid, the student interviewed both Gachette and the owner of the store.

The owner, a man who would identify himself only as only goes by Cox, said in a telephone interview before the raid that he is from Trinidad. He migrated to the U.S. United States [AP STYLE] in 1991.

“I used to have another store on the wWest sSide, 118th and Eighth Avenue,” Cox said, “but I had problems with the landlords so I moved. I picked here because most people in the area don’t know much about health. I want to teach people to live with love and kindness, get the youths this message.”

The recent recession has been affecting sales, Cox said, and he’s he has [AVOID CONTRACTIONS] not too keen with the American business culture.

“American different,” Cox said comparing the U.S. with Trinidad. “It has no love. You have to work too hard to make money here.”

Homeless since 1999, Gachette ~~currently resides~~ lives at the Charles H. Gay shelter for men on Wards Island. To deal with the hardships and ~~temptations~~ [WHAT ARE THE TEMPTATIONS? YOU NEED TO BE SPECIFIC] of being homeless, he turned to Rastafarianism.

“First I read the Bible,” Gachette said. “Whole thing from cover to cover and back again. I rewrote it, out by hand. I know the Bible. I know what it teaches and it helps keep me on the straight path so I can survive in the shelters.

~~“You can’t have sex with another man, in the shelter that’s everywhere, that’s why they call it Gay shelter,”~~ he said laughing. “You can’t smoke or sell the cocaine.”

Gachette ~~notes that~~ [IF YOU SAY “NOTES” YOU ARE VOUCHING FOR WHAT HE SAID. YOU’RE TELLING THE READER THAT WHAT HE SAID IS TRUE. AND CERTAINLY YOU DON’T HAVE ANY WAY OF KNOWING THAT.] ~~said that~~ he ~~has had~~ a strong work ethic and that since he began working at the store three weeks ago, sales have increased.

“I don’t let them do that, see,” Gachette said referring to customers who were used to haggling prices with other employees. “Those were the other guys, I told you. I must profit enough in order to live within the demands of the neighborhood, for if I do not profit, I cannot live.”

After stopping by the store for more than a year, observing, buying vegetarian food to cook outside, Gachette said, he started working with Cox by helping to move heavy furniture.

“I helped fix up the place,” he said. “I moved tons of trash from the back. I work for free here you know. Just want to be partners in a good business.”

Gachette and Cox are interested in expanding the shop into a restaurant. They said ~~that’s that is~~ when the real money would start coming in, but there was a lot that had to be done with the place.

“Right now we just do juices,” Gachette said, “good juices that are good for you. You can pick some fruits from the fridge, or you can bring in your own. But, as soon as the landlord stops messing with us and gets this place up to code, we want to get into some good food, too, food that’s good for you.”

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Story Ideas:

~~///RASTA2: I would like to go back to the Rasta shop and get an interview with Cox or with Max if he is out to find out their side of the story./// [THIS DESCRIBES SOME REPORTING YOU’D LIKE TO DO, BUT IT’S NOT REALLY A STORY IDEA. WHAT WOULD THE STORY BE ABOUT?]~~

MALL: In researching the business story I found out that someone is planning to build a mall at 125th Street near the Triborough bridge, but many people in the community are against it. I would like to find out the details of the controversy.

RAOS: In the Italian section of Spanish Harlem there is a restaurant that has been told to me to be the best and most exclusive restaurant in Manhattan. I walked by the place and it doesn't look any different than any other sidewalk pasta joint. I would like to interview the owner and some exclusive customers to find out what makes this place such a legend. [IF, IN FACT, THE RESTAURANT IS A LEGEND.] |