

Mackenzie Brodkowicz

Sitze

English

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Picking Up Purpose

My sophomore year in high school was a year I will never forget. The world was in a pandemic, the United States was in a political war, and I was just a kid having to live through it all. Everything was changing this year. All these new experiences thrown at me at once. I didn't know how to react. I didn't know who I was or who I wanted to be.

All of this happening at once was pretty hard on me. I'd lost all motivation to do anything. I didn't want to try at school. I sat around on my phone a lot. I went to school but I never wanted to. I was convinced I was going to be stuck in the small town of Oregon for the rest of my life.

The 2020 election was a big part of my sophomore year. All elections are a big deal but this year everyone made it a bigger deal. On social media it was the only topic people could talk about. A Lot of people were really serious about if you voted for one party they wouldn't even talk to you. I had been alive during other elections but I wasn't old enough to know anything about what was going on.

After the election it had seemed as if the world was calming down a little bit. People weren't talking about it as much on social media. It seemed as if the world had accepted Biden won. As the weeks flew by though, that began to change. On social media, people began posting about January 6th. "Wait until January 6th, these liberals will pay" is an example of what some Trump supporters said. We all thought they were joking until January 6th came. I watched them

raid the capitol building. Pictures were posted on social media of people carrying Trump 2020 and confederate flags through the capitol building. A video of two men reenacting George Floyd's death at the capitol went around too. I was shaky as I watched the news and saw the new social media posts. Why would these people do this? Is everyone alright? These thoughts took over my brain.

The next day at school we were having a weird day. In most classes we avoided the subject, until English came. I slumped down in class expecting a regular english class. Until my teacher brought up the raid at the capitol. We started a discussion. Ideas were flying around the room like little flies. And every time my teacher exclaimed something new, It was like he was dropping food and hundreds of flies swarmed the room.

"We've been through BLM and Trump tried to fight back with police so maybe he thought he shouldn't fight back and that's why he didn't send any army or troops to the capitol" A student justified. At first this seemed ridiculous to me.

Trump had no problem sending the military on peaceful protesters, I thought.

Although Trump has made bad decisions in the past, he could just be trying a new approach, another voice in my head reasoned.

Trump just didn't want to hurt his supporters. He obviously cares more about being in power than this country.

But no violence is a better solution than killing a bunch of people at the Capitol.

But these people knew what they were doing. They killed a cop. Something should have been done

But the country is already in huge fear with Covid and all these protests, the armed forces fighting these rioters could have caused even more fear.

They would have caused more fear, but then the people would learn they can't just storm the capitol.

True.

_____ *Change is scary. In order to change the country, fear is going to happen.*

And then my teacher added “When your great grand kids are in school, this will be in their textbooks”.

His words slapped me across the face. I suddenly had a million flies around my head. These people who raided the capitol, had done something that would impact generations to come. They had done something big for what they believed in. They were doing something with their lives. I just had been opened to a new world. This made me realize that I had to do something with my life. I wasn't going to be some name on a headstone somewhere. I wanted people to know who I am. Not that I was going to raid the capitol building, but something. I wasn't going to just work at an office job for the rest of my life. Not only did I want to do something meaningful with my life, I wanted to be more outgoing. I was done cocooning. I started to talk to more people, and share my ideas.

As the discussion continued I was excited. I could have ran 100 miles and not been tired. I headed home that day and told anyone that would listen and I was going to be known. I fell asleep and dreamt of all I could do. I'm still ready to have my voice heard.

This discussion in class was just a discussion to everyone else. But to me, this would be something I would never forget. I learned purpose, confidence and self worth. This raid taught me if I wanted something to get up and get it. I could have the world if I fought hard enough. Now I'm not saying I'm going to go raid the capitol building. I believe there is a right way and wrong way to make change. Raiding a capital building because an election did not go your way

is wrong. The moment was more about these people doing something that wouldn't be forgotten. If Trump supporters could go down in history books for something stupid like this raid, I could do something better with my life and be known. I've always heard you should learn from your mistakes, but I never knew you could learn from other people's mistakes.