

Jerry Zhao — Statement, Photojournalist of the Year Portfolio

I contributed to the *Focus* magazine's various types of coverage throughout the year from the Black Lives Matter movement, influential to the greater Dallas area, to smaller stories within the school (debates within politics, new teachers, etc.).

No matter what I did for each of the photos, I learned that the subject for the photos must help provide context to the story whether subtly or loudly through their emotions or actions. For example, a majority of my photography during the Black Lives Matter movement relied on emotions of the protestors and my own ingenuity in the field. Photos of protestors walking with their posters in defiance were certainly interesting subject matter; however, further context could and should be provided for the story to have a greater impact. Small things like the juxtaposition of the different ages marching in solidarity in different photos or using a blurred “defund the police” sign behind a police chief answering the protestors’ questions were all thought up on the spot, small changes which created more context and thus proper coverage.

Each of these situations where I was in the middle of the action required an active thought process, and these experiences taught me how to properly think on my feet. These lessons to actively think also applied to the scheduled photos I created. Whether it was finding an effective mix of Rembrandt and backlighting in an environment I had no control over for the photo of the new water polo coach or building the mask for a photo of the cover for our final *Focus Magazine*—to a certain extent—everything required a bit of improvisation. Although it may seem like a given that actively thinking on one’s feet is required for proper, effective photojournalism, this is a skill developed through experience and one of my most important lessons I learned during my time working with the magazine.

Jerry Zhao — Elaboration on entries

April magazine cover — This photo mainly focused on conveying the idea of “preserving american democracy” within our school. The custom built mask required planning, and I had to mess around with the colors of the roses in order to fit the spot colors on the magazine.

“Trenton Calder” spread — I wanted to subtly demonstrate the prestige and might of the new water polo coach in this photo. I shot from a lower angle and used more dramatic backlighting to achieve this effect while maintaining the subject’s face through the mix of Rembrandt and side light from the pool windows.

“At the Top” page — I juxtaposed the “DEFUND THE POLICE” sign with the police chief’s stressed face in this photo to display the overwhelming pressure the general populace of Dallas was placing on her, creating essentially “the crowd’s stubborn and unrelenting answer” to every one of her statements as well as the media’s questions: defund the police.

“Looking for National Change” spread — I wanted to show the solidarity of the protestors as they marched together in the blistering Texas heat. I used the shock value of the sign to demonstrate to the readers the passion of the protestors.

“Where it Happens” spread — This photo was taken to juxtapose the fourth photo, displaying how children are forced to mature much faster than they should in the world today. Her carrying the sign also shows that this issue affects people of all ages and that the issue has been swept under the rug for too long.

April 16, 2021 • A ReMarker publication

FOCUS



PRESERVING
AMERICAN
DEMOCRACY

Trenton Calder

After trying out a new sport as a freshman in high school, head coach Trenton Calder found himself playing a lead role on a championship collegiate team just six years later.

It's finally here, Trenton Calder looked confidently into each of his teammate's eyes. He knew right from the start this day was going to be special.

Everything Calder had put himself through up to this point was about to pay off. All the swimming, miserable workouts and missed parties earned him an opportunity to compete in the biggest game of his life: the 2007 NCAA Men's Water Polo Championship.

Fans slowly gathered at the Avery Aquatic Center at Stanford University for a highly anticipated matchup between the nation's top two water polo programs: the University of California Berkeley and the University of Southern California. For Calder and the Cal team, the sound of the pool splashing back and forth combined with the clapping and hollering of thousands of energetic spectators made for the perfect environment.

Finally, as the team gathered in silence for prayer, the game was ready to begin.

Soccer, baseball and hockey were Calder's favorite sports until he got into high school. As a freshman living in Chino Hills, CA, Calder found another passion when his sister, a swimmer, got him into the pool to try out this new sport.

Calder's strengths matched perfectly with the necessary skills for water polo. His talent as a swimmer combined with a strong arm from baseball gave Calder an advantage over his peers. He was "a duck to water."

But he wasn't planning on sticking to the sport for very long. For Calder, water polo was simply an escape from high school PE, giving him a way to avoid this requirement for the two years he needed. It all changed when Calder tried out for the national team the summer after his freshman year.

"Congratulations, you've made this team, and you've basically punched your ticket into college," a coach said.

That's when Calder realized water polo had the potential to take him places he had never imagined.

For the next four years, Calder played water polo for both school and his club team. Having an immediate impact as a freshman on the varsity team, Calder's first season

was a success, earning him the status of the team's Most Improved Player.

From there, the accolades poured in while he played center. MVP, scoring leader, First Team All-League All-American, and a league championship to top it off.

On the club scene, college recruitment became a new focus in Calder's athletic career as he played in bigger tournaments. At the time, Calder's sister was swimming at the University of California, Berkeley, and she alerted the head coach of her brother's status.

Calder thrived under the pressure, winning the championship in a newly-created event and being voted MVP. He attracted the attention of a variety of schools, but Cal, Pepperdine and UCLA stood out.

"The coaching staff and the players as well as the education is what made Cal win for me," Calder said. "It was the best decision I've ever made. Everything about it was the best."

Calder had even more success at the collegiate level. During a transitional period in the gain and loss of players on the team, winning a championship wouldn't come easy.

"Coming to Cal, the expectation was, 'We're going to get a national championship in our four years here,'" Calder said. "So that thought of 'Can we beat any team?' was already in our heads. We already knew 'we're gonna beat everybody, now we just have to go out and do it.'"

At one point, Calder had to have hip surgery, forcing him to change positions from center to defender. This didn't stop him. Calder enjoyed his new position and had great success with it as well.

Two days before the game of Calder's life, the team left for Stanford. It was good for him to see the other teams, judge the competition and anticipate the next day's results. Back at the hotel later that night, the team went over their game plans. The atmosphere was tense. Everyone was excited the wait was over. Everything they had put themselves through, everything they hated to do, would finally pay off.

Game day was no different. The morning started off with a workout routine, and

everything was running smoothly. Everyone was smiling and nodding, thinking, "We're gonna kick some ass today." It didn't matter what went wrong because the team would make up for it; they would compensate. Taking in the arena, the empty stands and the quiet ambience, Calder knew the atmosphere would be completely different just a few short hours later.

And just like that, he was there, waiting anxiously for the game to start. The stands started to fill up. The music was blaring. The team was getting hyped up. As the crowd quieted down, the players waited steadily.

Then the ball dropped. The team made plenty of mistakes, some missed shots here, poor defense there. But the team didn't fall apart; someone would always be there, ready to compensate for a mistake made. Then came the end of the game. Cal was up by two, and during a crucial timeout, the team planned their next play for Calder.

They called it "Banana." Standard rotation, but using a pick in a 6-on-5 advantage situation, Calder's team added their unique twist. The play worked perfectly every time the team had run it during the regular season, and they were sure it would work out this time.

The same play ended up winning them the game. With only seconds left on the clock, the crowd went berserk, full of band members, parents and alumni who came to watch the final game.

"The atmosphere was super hostile, and everybody was yelling," Calder said. "It was awesome."

Calder spent the rest of the day with the team, reveling in their exceptional performance at the highest level. For him, the national championship was the end goal. All of his sacrifice, nearly eight years of practice and grind, finally made sense.

"Win or lose," Calder said, "I would do it all again, just to have this opportunity right now. It's all worth it, just to be here, let alone win."

All that time, all that energy sacrificed – all of that makes sense when you finally get to the pinnacle.



After coaching at both Brown University and the University of California, Berkeley, Calder prepares to use his personal experiences with the sport to coach the varsity water polo team.



As a captain and one of the top players on the Cal team, Calder was a main contributor in the team's success because of his large wingspan and his natural ability to move through the water.

Story Luke Nayfa, Will Pechersky, Nikhil Dattatreya
Photos Jerry Zhao, Courtesy Trenton Calder

AT THE TOP

Dallas Chief of Police Renée Hall spoke to protestors and reporters outside City Hall about the Dallas Police Department, defunding the police and working with protestors.

Renée Hall:

We understand that law enforcement plays a major role, not just in the death of George Floyd, which was absolutely tragic, but in multiple deaths across this country and some even in this city.

We know that in law enforcement, it is not enough for us to stand here and say that it doesn't represent all of us, and it doesn't. I will say that over and over and over again because what we have to remember is that 27% of the Dallas Police

Department, I'm not sure what numbers in other agencies, are black and wear blue, and so these things come very close and dear to our hearts.

We know we have lots of work to do. We can't continue to fight because fighting doesn't get anything done. We are willing, in the Dallas Police Department, and have been since 2017 to get multiple things done. There are more body-worn cameras in this police department because of the administration that you see right now. We're here to work. The Dallas Police Department is doing the work.

We're working with multiple agencies. We've made changes in our organization, and we will continue to make those changes. It is difficult to heal those things that are broken, but we have to work together.

We are putting together all footage, all information relative to the protest, and we will reveal that to you very, very shortly. Everything that we've done, if it's right, we're gonna own, if it's wrong, we're gonna own it.

I do want us to be very clear that the Dallas Police Department has not today and in the past come out against our peaceful protestors. My message to you is that we're here to work.



RENÉE HALL
Dallas Chief of Police

'I don't agree with defunding the police department. The city needs the police. Are there things that need to be done? Yes. There are, but defunding the police is not the answer.'

— Renée Hall



A mass of signs Renée Hall was met with mixed reactions by protestors, with some even booing her throughout and after her speech in front of City Hall.



Proposing an answer Dallas Chief of Police Department Renée Hall speaks with reporters and cameras in support of her police department.

INTERVIEWS Jack Davis, Will Pechersky
PHOTOS Jerry Zhao

LOOKING FOR NATIONAL CHANGE

STORY Cooper Ribman,
Jack Davis
PHOTOS Jerry Zhao

Protests broke out all across the country, from downtown Dallas to New York City, but cities like Minneapolis, Minnesota and Seattle, Washington also saw violence between police and protestors with the use of tear gas and rubber bullets.



Across Dallas Two protestors take part in the marches in downtown Dallas, one holding a sign with a quote from George Floyd's daughter, the other wearing a mask with "I can't breathe" written on it.

SEATTLE

Following the death of George Floyd in late May, protests and riots began in every state in the country.

Some areas felt the effects more than others, with major cities being most impacted by the demonstrations.

Dylan Clark '14 has lived in Seattle for two years, and has experienced the atmosphere around these protests and riots.

"The first Saturday after that killing there was a huge protest downtown that turned pretty violent," Clark said. "There were cop cars being torched, police using tear gas and rubber bullets, so there was a lot of chaos that first weekend."

As the weekend progressed, the chaos continued.

"The Sunday after that, there was another protest downtown," Clark said. "I actually went to that one, and luckily, that one did not turn violent. I wasn't really in the crowd because of coronavirus so I was staying back with a mask but I was proud to be able to walk with everybody. For the most part at the start, police were escorting people, but then unfortunately at some point they decided they'd had enough. Two blocks ahead of where I was they started tear gas and rubber bullets and everything."

Following the violence towards protestors, the demonstrations grew even larger, eventually centering on a police precinct.

"I think the protestors were really upset at the way the police were escalating to tear gas and rubber bullets and violent arrests," Clark said, "When I was there, at least on Sunday, I didn't see anyone doing anything that required, in my opinion, that type of action. For 10 days after that, every single night at the Seattle east precinct there were massive protests."

Clark lives only eight blocks from the targeted precinct and experienced the surrounding chaos daily.

"Just because of concerns about the pandemic going on and also concerns about not wanting to be tear-gassed, I didn't go to any of those protests," Clark said.

The precautions taken against COVID-19 at the protest were varied, as social distancing in such a crowded environment was difficult.

"Almost everyone was wearing a mask," Clark said, "but during the protest itself, there was a large cluster of people just like we've

seen across the country. I think a lot of people have decided they're willing to wear a mask and take the risk of being close to someone in order to express their right to protest."

Having experienced the situation first hand, Clark has witnessed the differences between the events occurring in Seattle and the media coverage.

"Everyone in the media and in the world and on social media views what's going on through sort of a biased lens," Clark said. "They come into it with preconceived notions of what's right and what's wrong, and then they look for things to confirm those opinions. I think I saw a lot of people on either side looking at that first day's protests and digging in deeper to what they thought already."

Early in June, protesters created the Capitol Hill Organized Protest, an occupied protest and autonomous zone in the Capitol Hill area.

"The autonomous zone is up the hill about eight blocks from me," Clark said. "At first, it was interesting because portions of the media were saying, 'these people want to secede from the US and make a lawless zone and they're crazy' and, at least at first, that was a misinterpretation of what was going on."

Clark says what started as a good idea slowly evolved into a disaster, taken advantage by ill-meaning individuals.

"At first, it was street art everywhere," Clark said. "Murals and graffiti like 'Black Lives Matter' beautifully painted in the middle of the street and people in the park enjoying themselves. There were therapists there talking to people who had been traumatized. Unfortunately there'd be more and more reports of small bad things happening. People posing as security guards holding guns and telling people whether or not they can go there. I think some people took it as an advantage to exercise power."

The autonomous zone continued to devolve, until it was cleared by Seattle authority on June 8.

"What's unfortunate in my opinion," Clark said, "is that the people who originally organized the protests like the Black Lives Matter organization in Seattle, and other organizations who are leading the protests, after a while pulled out because they realized the protest was losing its meaning and the

force that motivated these protests lost its focus and it more became a bunch of people just hanging out. In the last week of it, there was a string of shootings that happened there, so it became a place that people wanted to avoid."

MINNEAPOLIS

Gary Lundgren, associate director of the National Scholastic Press Association, has lived in Minneapolis for 20 years, and has experienced the growing tension between the Minneapolis Police Department and the community for years.

"Black Lives Matter has been protesting in Minneapolis for quite some time," Lundgren said. "A couple years ago they would protest and shut down the freeway. While the riots were very troubling, facing the issue itself was not surprising to people in Minneapolis."

Lundgren believes the amount of time with these issues in the spotlight will bring about change.

"I think there's going to be changes made because there's certainly the perception that the Minneapolis Police Department has a lot of work to be done in a lot of areas, especially dealing with the African-American community," Lundgren said.

Unlike many cities across the country, Lundgren says the protests in his area have remained mostly non-violent.

"Even during the time the riots were happening in the national news, there were some pretty large protests happening in downtown Minneapolis that were peaceful and made the news," Lundgren said. "While the protests have calmed down some, the whole community realizes that big changes have to be made, and they just can't ignore this, or it's just going to keep happening. No one wants there to be another George Floyd. Unless something changes, I'm afraid there will be."

Lundgren says local media covered the peaceful protests in addition to the scattered violent ones.

"They covered both, but the night the riots were happening, they were live

"The whole city of Minneapolis is going to have to reinvent the police department."

– Gary Lundgren

covering it because when your city is burning you have to cover it," Lundgren said, "The peaceful protests were covered, but a peaceful protest never gets as much coverage as a riot."

Lundgren hopes the newly renewed interest in the movement will help spark serious change in the local government.

"The whole city of Minneapolis is going to have to reinvent the police department," Lundgren said. "While there's general outrage about the whole George Floyd situation, I do think people in Minneapolis are reasonable and educated and realize that every police officer is not a bad cop. There certainly are good law enforcement people trying to do their very very best job and people respect that. Most everyone in the city would say there's some problems here that have to be fixed. That may be the good thing that comes out of all this."

Lundgren recognizes that while many face difficult times right now, police are under very huge scrutiny.

"It's not an easy time to be a cop," Lundgren said. "In Minneapolis and across the whole country there's distrust for police. It would be really hard to be a really good cop who cared knowing how I was perceived by a lot of citizens."

Lundgren also recognizes general confusion around the "defund the police" idea.

"There's confusion since Minneapolis is one of the cities that talks about defunding the police department," Lundgren said, "That in itself kind of sends a wrong signal because they want to study how their money is spent and study different approaches. The mere fact that the phrase says 'defund the police department,' sounds like the people that support that are saying 'let's shut down the police department and take all their money,' which is not the case at all."

Hitting near home Protestors march through the streets of downtown Dallas hoisting signs that read "Defund the Police" and "Silence doesn't lead to justice". The former is a common phrase protestors have shouted and put on signs.



Taking to the streets Wearing Black Lives Matter t-shirts and George Floyd masks, protestors carried signs with phrases such as "Black Lives Matter" and "justice for Breonna Taylor & George Floyd" throughout downtown Dallas.

WHERE IT HAPPENS

Not unlike the rest of the nation, Dallasites turned out to a series of **political protests** throughout June. We spoke with the protest's **organizers** and a Texas **political candidate**.

Police officers and vehicles stood halted, blocking off lanes, streets and entire city blocks of downtown Dallas.

Protesters marched beginning at Klyde Warren Park, turning onto Harwood Street, then right onto Ross Avenue, then left onto Akard Street. The group of more than 100 marched past financial towers, apartment high rises and hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Their destination was city hall, and the tension between protesters and police was palpable.

But instead of quelling an uprising, the police vehicles were helping lead a protest against their own department.

Zachariah Manning, the organizer of the June 14 protest, decided to put the event together after learning about the death of George Floyd.

"When I saw the video of the officer on Mr. Floyd's neck, I just said, 'Hey, I've got to do something,'" Manning said. "I'm all about things that are right, and it really tore at my heart to see an officer just kneeling in a pose on a gentleman's neck. I could not believe it. It was as if he had just hunted down a game animal and was doing the photo op. It was sickening."

A real estate investor, entrepreneur and business owner, Manning hasn't been particularly involved in civil rights in the past, but George Floyd's killing spurred him to take action.

"I've always been an advocate for children," Manning said. "I was PTA [parent-teacher association] president for one of the Dallas ISD schools. I was a candidate for county commissioner in Dallas, and I've always wanted to make a change some other way."

Manning worked with the office of Dallas Police Chief Renée Hall and

ZACHARIAH MANNING
Real Estate entrepreneur & candidate for Dallas County Commissioner

invited her to speak to the crowd, and he worked with the Dallas Police Department to have downtown streets blocked off to traffic so that the protesters could safely march through their designated route starting at Klyde Warren Park.

"I literally just formed everything in a week and went through the proper channels to get permission to be at Klyde Warren Park — proper permitting with the Dallas Police Department," Manning said. "I was pleasantly surprised that I got a response from Chief Hall's office that they would like to come, speak and address the crowd."

In his speech to the crowd, Manning discussed legislation he would like to propose to require more accountability for law enforcement. One change he suggests is to make it possible for police officers who unjustly kill citizens to be charged with capital murder.

"The police officers that were standing there in the presence of that police officer that committed the crime should also be held for capital murder as well," Manning said. "If this law is passed, then it's going to behoove a police officer that's witnessing something like this happening to try to prevent the death of another citizen going forward in the future."

Manning's legislation would give officers who have witnessed the crime a certain number of hours to report the crime.

"If that police officer does not report a good faith report, then that officer that witnessed it and did not report it can be held liable as if he or she committed the crime themselves," Manning said. "What I would like to see is protection for those police officers that blow the whistle on situations like this. There needs to be protections put in place for those good officers who see bad things go down in their department so that they're not retaliated against."

Jasmine Crockett, a criminal defense and civil rights lawyer who also delivered a speech to the crowd, says her unique

background in law strongly qualifies her to run for Texas state representative. She's an attorney who's been licensed to practice law in Texas, Arkansas and federal courts for the past 14 years, primarily handles criminal defense cases, including capital murders, aggravated sexual assault, burglary, drugs and civil rights



JASMINE CROCKETT
Criminal Defense lawyer & Texas House of Representatives Candidate

Real Estate entrepreneur Zachariah Manning delivers a speech on his proposed bill on law enforcement accountability. "We're proposing legislation that will make a difference and hold police accountable — not only the police that commit the crimes, but it's going to hold the police officers that witnessed the crime accountable. That's the most important part right there: holding everybody accountable."



cases. "When we're talking about criminal justice reform, people never know what that really looks like, tastes like, feels like," Crockett said. "But I'm that person who's lived within this area, so I know what needs to be changed. Right now, what we end up getting is a lot of lip service and a lot of people saying, 'Oh, this sounds like a good idea.' But they don't understand how laws need to be written so that they can actually have some effect."

If elected as a state representative for Texas House District 100, representing much of South and East Dallas, Crockett would like to propose legislation that requires law enforcement to be insured by Dallas.

"If the city has to insure a police officer — which they should have to because they're walking out and have a deadly weapon on their hip," Crockett said. "That way, if we have a problematic officer, that officer starts costing the city too much money. So we can get rid of that officer, just like when you're a bad driver, your insurance premiums go up."

Crockett says because the municipality is not a for-profit agency, it always receives money to fulfill its budget through taxes.

"We can't just shame them into doing the right thing," Crockett said. "They're going to make their money no matter what. You still have to pay your property taxes even if you disagree with how they're running the city government. But if we do other things that can uniquely get to their actual budget, then number one, we're protecting citizens."

For example, if Crockett's legislation were applied to the case of Botham Jean, in which Dallas police officer Amber Guyger entered 26-year-old Jean's apartment and fatally shot

him in September 2018, Jean's family would be able to receive monetary compensation from the government because of the incident.

"In addition to that, if Guyger was consistently having issues prior to this, Guyger probably would be let go because she would be too expensive to just have as an officer," Crockett said. "It's just about truly understanding how all of the pieces of the puzzle work that makes me uniquely qualified to come up with legislation that's out of the box to get the things that we really want done. At the end of the day, we want to get bad officers off the streets."

Crockett says citizens should demand transparency from elected officials who create the policies that govern law enforcement.

"If we elect you and put you in that position, then we need to start knowing that we can come to you and get answers from you," Crockett said. "A movement doesn't happen over a day, two days or weeks. I want people to stay engaged and make sure that they're consistently asking the hard questions — asking people, 'Hey, I elected you. What have you done? Even if you didn't get legislation passed, what did you fight for?'"

Manning says having young people vote is crucial to instituting change.

"I would say to young people that the actions are great, the talk is good as well, but we have to keep fighting," Manning said.

"The only way we're going to keep fighting is by having young people vote to get people in place who are going to do the things that, as a whole, the community and the public want done. We need younger people to get out and actively vote."

STORY Sai Thirunagari, Jamie Mahowald
PHOTOS Jerry Zhao



A protester and teacher marches with a home-made sign at the corner of Main Street and South St. Paul Street, adjacent to Main Street Garden Park several blocks from City Hall.



Manning and several protesters cross Commerce Street down South St. Paul Street holding a bold banner bearing UnitedJusticeLeague.org, an organization of full- and part-time volunteers.



Police chief Renée Hall (right) stands with armed guards, anticipating giving a speech before a crowd of protestors. For coverage of Hall and other governmental reporting, see pages 10-11.



A girl marches down Akard Street toward City Hall with a sign reading, "You know it's time 4 change when children act like leaders and leaders act like children."