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Alumnus Living His Dream on Broadcast Journalism's Biggest Stage

By Lawrence Lerner

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Former journalism major is making his mark as an editor for a major news network.

Joshua Hoyos (NCAS '14) works the late shift from 4pm to midnight. But when he goes into work most days, there's no guarantee he'll head home when the clock strikes 12.

Such was the case on September 19 of last year, when a bomb exploded in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood at 8:30pm, upending an otherwise tranquil Saturday evening. Hoyos, an assignment editor for ABC News, spent the second half of his shift furiously calling officials and arranging coverage of the story.

He might have gone home at midnight, but reports emerged of bombs also found in a backpack at the Elizabeth, N.J., train station. So, he grabbed some equipment and headed out to Elizabeth with an assistant, arriving there at 1:30am before moving on to Linden, N.J. for an early-morning stakeout that ended in a police shootout with the sole suspect. He filed reports and live video while there and got home at noon.

"I could have handed the story off to other producers at the end of my shift, but they needed to be fresh for the next day's shows," says Hoyos. "So, I decided to cover it myself, knowing they'd have their hands full the next 28 to 48 hours."

“It’s a high-stakes environment, but it’s important to stay calm under pressure so you don’t burn out.”

At the age of 24, Hoyos is working his dream job on one of the biggest stages in broadcast journalism. He got there through hard work, intense focus and a little help from RU-N's alumni network. And while he may seem like an outlier, his story is the kind Rutgers University–Newark is well-known for: catapulting students who are the first in their family to attend college to successful professional careers.

Hoyos, who hails from Parsippany, N.J., is the oldest of two children of Colombian parents who emigrated to the U.S. in the late 1980s. His mom and dad arrived with high school diplomas and worked odd jobs at first, while attending ESL classes.

What they lacked in formal education and professional status they more than made up for in vision and intellectual curiosity: They set their sights on college for Hoyos and his sister, 21, and they traveled extensively with the kids, not only to Colombia but throughout the Middle East and Europe.

"My dad had actually worked on an Israeli kibbutz before moving to the U.S.," says Hoyos. "And my mom wanted to see what she'd read about in school. My curiosity stems from that."

Hoyos' parents were also interested in current events and history. TV news was on constantly in the house. ABC News. CNN. You name it.

Hoyos was enamored. He wondered, Where will Peter Jennings be tonight? and followed him around the globe. He was glued to CNN during the second Gulf War. The news anchors and correspondents brought people the world through the wonder of a little box streaming pictures and sound. Hoyos was mesmerized and knew he wanted to be a part of it some day.

After arriving at RU-N in 2010, where he majored in political science and minored in journalism, he worked as a reporter, then Editor-in-Chief for the student newspaper, *The Observer*. He also interned for NCAS' Office of Development, where he met then Development Officer Marcel Vaughn-Handy, who introduced him to David Sloan (NCAS '76), an Emmy Award–winning executive producer at ABC News, and Susan Somers Kozinski (NCAS '76), who had also worked at ABC.

The pair helped Hoyos get his foot in the door at ABC, where he interned with *Good Morning America* (GMA) the summer after his sophomore year, then interned throughout his junior year with *World News Tonight With Diane Sawyer*. Hoyos then became a full-time staffer for *Good Morning America* the next summer and throughout his final semester at RU-N, after finishing his coursework in December 2013, one semester early.

"My first internship at GMA was part of the impetus for me to finish early. I wanted to be done so I could get out and work," says Hoyos, who juggled school and his full-time gig as his RU-N career wound down.

Hoyos moved to ABC's news desk in 2014. He describes his current assignment-editor role as "moving pieces on a huge chessboard to coordinate coverage for news cycles spanning the next 24, 48 or 72 hours."

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That means monitoring a slew of news sources and deciding which stories rise to the national-network level; lining up correspondents and field producers to cover stories; good old-fashioned reporting; updating show producers as stories develop; navigating social media; and writing, shooting and editing pieces as necessary.

The pace is fast and furious. "It's a high-stakes environment, but it's important to stay calm under pressure so you don't burn out," says Hoyos.

He'll mark his 5-year anniversary at ABC at the end of this month. His advice to current RU-N students: If you're going into journalism, know how to do it all—write, shoot, edit—because that's what's expected. For everyone hitting the job market: Don't give up or get too much in your head, and keep working.

Hoyos is eternally grateful for all who supported him at RU-N, and to his parents, whose example left an indelible mark on him.

"They sacrificed for us, wanted to live the American dream and have their kids do better than they did," he says. "If they did what seems insurmountable, then I can certainly sit in a classroom and do a job I absolutely love."



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