

A student died the other day, but he had it coming. At least that's what everyone's been saying. I didn't know him. I don't think anyone knew him. They say he suffered a nervous breakdown. They say it was the heat that did it to him. The lady he kidnapped said she saw the Devil in his eyes. She said she had to jam a tire gauge in the right one in order to save her and her child's life.

Four police officers were pursuing a stolen vehicle at the same moment this student was being stabbed in the eye. He had stolen the car. One of the officers said he saw the car swerve right, then sharply left into a traffic barrier. He said he had never seen a body flung out of a windshield before. His eyes were wide and white as he told the story.

The child wasn't upset at all. She thought she was famous. She told all the newscasters and cameras how she always listened to her mother and how she always wore her seatbelt. Her smile was dissonant but contagious. She held a stuffed animal.

Several people who lived in the same dorm as the student were interviewed. They said he was nice. Quiet. Normal. They said that changed when it started getting hotter. He would disappear for days at a time. He lost weight. He looked sedated. Scared. The contour of his skull had become so prominent that one morning his roommate had mistaken his sleeping body for a Halloween prop. He was probably ten pounds from death.

A professor at the college didn't think it was the heat. He blamed it all on stress and the current socio-economic climate. He said that students have never been as exploited as they are today—that “this is concrete evidence that we live in a Marxian society.” Or maybe he said Kafkaesque. There were a lot of phrases he used that I couldn't remember. He sounded smart, but his bow tie was crooked.

A nearby witness said she saw the whole situation go down. She said she noticed someone following this mother and daughter through a store parking lot. She thought she saw him holding a kitchen knife, but that the glare of the sun from the sea of car hardtops made her second guess herself. A minute later there was a scream. She said she immediately called 911, but her eyes darted right, then sharply left. I didn't believe her.

I turned off the TV.