

For five days a week for ten months, a poster hung above the desk of my US 1 History teacher. It was a blurry black and white image, caused by the effect of an out of focus lens. A lone figure stood against the imposing force of four military tanks on an empty street, an ambiguous face captured on film in defiance. This photograph of the actions of one bold individual which had circulated the newspapers, magazines, and television news reports of the world had found a place in my small town history class. Somehow this moment captured in history found itself in the most appropriate place. Every day this photo of Tiananmen Square hung ignored and forgotten, mere decoration on the wall among the replicated Constitutions and posters naming our presidents. An image taken for granted. Twenty-five years ago, across the world in a similar classroom to my own, the students of Beijing, China did not see this image of defiance hanging on their wall. They did not see it in their newspapers, their magazines, and their television news reports. This image was not shown by any form of the media, as it was hidden from these students and from the people of China. The Tiananmen Square Massacre, an event represented by the single protestor who stood against the tyranny of the Chinese government, would never be seen by the Chinese people whereas the rest of the world did. The massacre would remain hidden, distorted by fallacies made by the Chinese government. The picture did not exist. The massacre did not exist. The hundreds of people who died in protest from June 3-5, 1989 did not exist. The world learned of the horrible killing that took place and the later horrific fate of the lone figure, who stood against oppression, through the efforts of independent media outside of China, but the Chinese people ignorant of this information because of censorship conducted by their government. By suppressing this image from the eyes of people by controlling the media within the country, Communist China could claim a moment in history to have never happened. The Chinese government did not acknowledge the rights of its people like the students of my class who did not acknowledge the picture tacked up to the

wall each day. These students forgot the importance of a truthful government and country. This poster which hung on the wall of my history class was not a decorative image meant to take up space, but tangible evidence of the efforts made by a free media and reporters of history, a history meant to be shared and never ignored or concealed. This poster meant the truth. The hazy face of the lone figure of Tiananmen Square was shrouded in mystery, but his story was not and it was told to the world. For five days a week for ten months, a piece of history hung in my class intact and pure, free of any alteration.