

1<sup>st</sup> Place

9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Grade

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Student Essay Contest | Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum

### Waiting

“We waited. That’s mostly what I remember; it was just waiting.” This quote was found within the first couple of minutes of the video. It is relevant today because of many different things. In this day and age, we are all waiting. We are waiting to be healed from the trauma of different massacres; we are waiting for the monsters of destruction to be caught and tried for their decisions; we are waiting for the next deadly massacre to happen; we are waiting for hope to appear.

The people at the center of the bombings, the shootings, and the massacres that occur in this day and age have been left with layers of trauma. People who were not even involved have higher stress and fear levels, terrified of what could happen to them. The trauma of these events leaves people in fear of these types of massacres occurring more in more public places. The Oklahoma City Bombing shows how much these mass homicidal events affect families. With the bombing being so close to a daycare and right next to an office building, many families are left without their loved ones and in fear of what else could have happened.

Recently, violence has been on the rise. School shootings are taking children away from their parents, and bombings are taking parents away from their children. As these violent acts are on the rise, all we can do is wait for the next one to happen and hope that it is not somewhere our loved ones will be in harm's way. We wait for the call, we wait for the news article, we wait for the faint sound of gunshots or the quaking earth of the explosion. Since 2020, there has been a lot more violence, including guns and bombs. Gun violence peaked in 2021 with 20,958 murders.

While we are waiting for the pain to stop and the death tolls to lower, we are also waiting for hope. We see minor impacts and realize that that is what we were waiting for. There is hope in a child's eyes when they see their mother safe and sound. The hope gleams from a mother's tear-stained smile as her child runs to her with open arms. We wait for these little moments of hope, which are infinite within the minds of the parents and children. We are waiting for the hope to be constant. For there to be more than just these little moments.

In all, we are waiting for healing, for another violent act to happen, for hope of the end of this violent age. From the Oklahoma City Bombing up until this day and age, there are so many violent acts killing innocent people every day. We just have to keep our hopes high and cherish every little moment we have.