

Original Version:

It was early when the quite early morning calm was suddenly broken by an explosion, as my head snapped back. The thick smoke came towards us in an instant. In matter of seconds, the silent and chilly morning was transformed to chaos and people shouting and preying to their maker. The realization came to me that the enemy finally has taken the fight to us. Acting on instinct, I grabbed my first aid kit and rushed to the closest wounded person. An old man walked in my direction, who for a second looked like a zombie. I tend to his injured ear and proceeded to attend to the other wounded. The boy on the ground was another case where his life was not in danger. Nevertheless, he was in shock as he took a glance of a huge hole in his shoulder. Everything in his left shoulder was shredded and my guess was in this land where strength and manual labor are of essence, he would forfeit his status forever. Least I could do was stop his bleeding and pain and stabilize him. As I walked over to the impact site, only eighty meters away, the wounds were more gruesome. Nothing that I have been taught showed me how to deal with a man on the ground with his ribcage sticking out. I paused for a second and our eyes met. His look was a mixture of shock and apathy. As if he was telling me “are you going to do something about this?” The glooming reality was hitting me and I had to decide what to do. If he was an American I would not leave him there, even though my skills were limited for that severe an injury.

Comment [EA1]: This becomes redundant when you use “early” twice, and it doesn’t really add anything, so I’ve eliminated it.

Comment [EA2]: Typo – should read “quiet.”

Comment [EA3]: This is an example of the passive voice, which I strongly recommend you remove. Overuse of the passive voice can cause your prose to seem flat and uninteresting, and undermine your otherwise dynamic narrative. You can recognize passive-voice expressions because the verb phrase will always include a form of “to be”, such as “am,” “is,” “was,” “were,” “are,” “being,” or “been.” I have underlined all uses of the “to be” verb to underscore your over-reliance on it.

Comment [EA4]: These phrases (“in an instant” and “in a matter of seconds” are redundant.

Comment [EA5]: Typo – should read “praying.”

Comment [EA6]: While not the passive voice, this is still a passive way of expressing your action of realization. I have made it more active below.

Comment [EA7]: Incorrect punctuation here, as the thought dangles awkwardly in the middle of the sentence and needs proper punctuation to partition the qualifier “for a second.” Moreover, the phrase adds little value, and you should consider removing it entirely.

Comment [EA8]: You have shifted tense here, from past tense to present tense. You must be sure to remain consistent.

Comment [EA9]: Past tense.

Comment [EA10]: Redundant usage of the “to be” verb (“was”) makes this sentence flat and uninteresting, so you risk losing the admissions committee reader’s attention. Additionally, by writing about what the boy did, you draw attention away from the most important subject: yourself.

Comment [EA11]: This is a colloquialism, which comes across as far too casual in the formal context of an admissions essay.

Comment [EA12]: Your number format requires correction, as numbers greater than nine should be written out numerically (i.e., “80”).

Comment [EA13]: This is another fragment, as it lacks a true subject and predicate.

Revised Version:

A deafening explosion shattered the early morning silence, immediately transforming the quiet calm of dawn to a dusty chaos of shouts and prayers. My head snapped around to see the thick grey smoke billowing towards us as I realized the enemy had finally taken the fight to us. Instinctively, I grabbed my first aid pack and rushed to the closest casualty. An old Afghani man walked towards me, resembling an extra from a zombie movie; I tended to his torn ear and proceeded to search for other casualties. As I walked closer to the impact site, I found more gruesome injuries. None of my training had taught me to deal with a man lying on the ground with his ribs protruding from his side. I paused for a moment as our eyes met, the look on his face a mixture of shock and fear that seemed to ask if I planned on doing anything about it. The sobering sight of the first American casualty fighting for his life momentarily broke my concentration. As I felt his shallow and labored breaths, I could not help but feel a sense of helplessness at my inability to do more to save his life. I had received training for traumatic injuries, but only with the aim of stabilizing a gunshot victim until a Special Forces medic could arrive. I assisted the medic as best I could, watching impotently as the soldier struggled for life. I spent the next hour packing curlex gauze into gaping wounds, all the while wishing that I could do more and knowing that I would need a formal medical education in order to make the impact I wanted.

Comment [EA14]: I have revised this to make the introduction more dynamic, so that it grabs the admissions committee reader immediately.

Comment [EA15]: A subtle change here concerns paragraph structure; we must balance the importance of stressing what you did (as opposed to what other people did or what happened to you) with the reader's natural desire for sentence structure variation. On the one hand, we would like to make every sentence an active sentence, describing an action you took, what you learned, what you thought about it as a result. On the other hand, an essay with every sentence using "I" as the subject quickly becomes unreadable. As a result, we must strike a balance, making sure that we only use "I" as the subject for those sentences that truly describe the unique actions and decisions that differentiate you from every other applicant. Throughout the essay, I have worked to ensure that we maintain that balance, concentrating such "I (predicate) sentences" are used on the most important, most descriptive subjects.

Comment [EA16]: This sentence flows better without the artificial interruption of the quotation marks that you used in your original version.

Comment [EA17]: Your original paragraph was strong in content, but ultimately failed to convey its purpose: namely, why medical school is right for you, and why you want to serve the world as a physician. I have inserted this draft sentence so as to bring your reader to the point. This allows your introductory paragraph to grab the reader's attention, but sets up a smooth transition into the second and third paragraphs, where you will elaborate on your desire for a career in medicine.