



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

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Framing life and death by Gary Boyle



Photo by R. Scott Davis

Read the following story by Gary Boyle from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Some nights nothing happens, and some nights too much happens. For one crew of rescue workers — volunteers at one of Thailand's largest rescue organisations, Ruamkatanyu Foundation — each shift is unpredictable. Nights at their base beneath a Nonthaburi overpass are spent monitoring the police radio channel for its most commonly used word — accident.

RIDING SHOTGUN

While the crew waits, Ploy* is shopping. There's no food at home so her boyfriend has driven her to 7-Eleven. It's a couple of minutes by motorcycle and they grab some snacks. On the way back, at the intersection within sight of Ploy's condo, a taxi goes through a red light as they go through on green.

Motorcycle accidents can be the worst. The police channel broadcasts the accident location and the volunteers jump in the ambulances and race to the scene. Ploy and her boyfriend are given emergency first aid. They'll probably survive, but it's not guaranteed. They're taken to hospital while the rest of the crew head back to the base to wait for the next accident.

The work of these volunteers is the focus of an upcoming art exhibition by R. Scott Davis, an American photographer and professor at Stamford International University in Bangkok. He's been riding in the ambulances for nine years, photographing the aftermaths of stabbings, shootings, drownings and the countless road traffic accidents. Recently he started taking his students along to witness the work of the volunteers.

“I was teaching a photojournalism course and a couple of students were interested in more extreme aspects of photojournalism, for example conflict photography,” Davis explained. “I wanted to give them an experience that would be as close to that as possible, as a way of developing technically.”

Davis believes that for his students, a night with the volunteers is an important part of their technical and artistic development. But coming face-to-face with trauma and death is stressful. Davis monitors each student carefully, both during and after the event, only inviting those he thinks will be able to handle it. One Vietnamese student, My Linh T., known as Lilly, was in her early 20s when she first went out with Davis and the volunteers.

“I was thinking, OK, I know it’s hardcore, and I have no clue what I’m getting into, but let’s just go and try,” she said. “The first night was the first time I saw a dead body — a homeless person — and I couldn’t sleep. But it gets easier.”

UNBELIEVABLE DEATH TOLL

Davis and his students have put their best pictures into an art exhibition. The show, called Dispatch, opens at Ilford Galerie in Bangkok on Saturday August 17. While most of the prints focus on the crew’s first aid work, other parts of the story are covered, from the bystanders and beyond, taking in skulls and DNA swabs in the labs of the Central Institute of Forensic Science.

“When you spend time with these emergency service people you realise the massive amount of death that occurs due to motorcycle accidents,” Davis said. “The death toll in Thailand is unbelievable.”

A 2018 World Health Organisation report named Thai roads as the deadliest in Southeast Asia and among the worst in the world for vehicle accidents and fatalities. Motorcyclists and their passengers accounted for 74% of all road deaths in Thailand. Davis hopes his show will make people understand the situation.

“I want to show people that it’s not just a statistic,” he said. “Someone maybe had a drink or two too many, got on their scooter and just happened to slip a little bit, and the next thing it’s game over. I would say that if there’s one idea that we would like to express, it’s that people take that and have it stay with them as a cautionary tale.”

**Not their real names*

Dispatch runs from Aug 17 to Sept 7 at Ilford Galerie, Surawong Road. Admission is free. Visit facebook.com/dispatchstudio for more information.

Section 1: Read through the story and answer the following questions.

1. Which organisation do the volunteers work for?
2. The volunteers know what to expect every night. True or false?
3. What word is heard most often on police radio?
4. What is the American photographer's surname?
5. What is Lilly's nationality?
6. Lilly saw a dead body on her first night with the volunteers. True or false?
7. Dispatch only features photos from accident scenes. True or false?
8. When does the exhibition end?

Section 2: Decide whether the following words are a noun, adjective, adverb or verb.

9. commonly 10. intersection 11. survive 12. shootings 13. witness

Section 3: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

Some accidents ...14... need a few Band-Aids. Sometimes all the equipment in the ambulance is used, and sometimes it's ...15... too late. On one of the nights we spent with the team, Sumet* was making burgers in the ...16... KFC. He was 21 and a heart attack killed him ...17... . There's no need for sirens when it's a corpse. In the back of the ambulance, a volunteer ...18... his fingerprints for the death certificate, working in a detached ...19... efficient manner.

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|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| 14. a. just | b. very | c. to |
| 15. a. very | b. simply | c. mostly |
| 16. a. near | b. local | c. next |
| 17. a. instance | b. instant | c. instantly |
| 18. a. take | b. takes | c. taken |
| 19. a. however | b. yet | c. also |

Section 4: Find words that match the following definitions.

20. a period of time worked by a group of workers
21. certain to happen
22. the situations that exist as a result of an accident
23. a violent situation or period of fighting between two countries
24. an unpleasant experience

For the answers, find the story online at www.bangkokpost.com/learning. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at garyb@bangkokpost.co.th