

Everyday Heroes: The Boy Who Stopped a Kidnapper

When the young Jocelyn Rojas was snatched outside of her home, a quick-thinking teen sprang into action and became an unlikely savior.

By Melody Warnick from *RD*

Five-year-old Jocelyn Rojas spent all day playing happily with her friends outside her grandmother's apartment building. Her mom, Jaimee, kept her eye on the little girl from a window.

At about 4 p.m. on this lazy July afternoon, Jocelyn walked around the corner of the building to get her bicycle and disappeared.

"I took my eyes off her for five minutes, and she was gone," says Jaimee. The frantic mother called out to her daughter as she searched the complex. "I knew something was wrong," she recalls, especially when she saw that Jocelyn's bike was still there and found an old credit card her daughter had been playing with abandoned near the bike racks. Jaimee called 911.

A short time later, police officers and firefighters swarmed the area, blockading streets and searching the suburban neighborhood. Officers brought in a search-and-rescue bloodhound, and officials handed out a photo of the blond, pixie-faced girl with a gap-toothed grin wearing thick-framed glasses. In all, at least 100 people scoured the streets.

Temar Boggs, 15, was with some friends moving a couch into the apartment of his elderly neighbor when one searcher approached him and asked if he'd seen Jocelyn. According to the boys, none of them had seen her. A little bit later, Temar and his buddies walked over to Jocelyn's block to check out the situation.

By 6:30 p.m., Jocelyn had been missing for more than two hours, and the search team was worried that the sun would set before she was found.

Again, Temar was approached with a photo of Jocelyn. At that moment, he felt an intense emotion he'd never experienced before.

"I felt that I was going to find her," he says. He calmly turned to one of his friends and said, "Hey, can I borrow your bike?"

As he sped away on the borrowed BMX, his friend Chris Garcia, 13, rode alongside him. Temar turned back toward his own nearby subdivision. The boys searched without a plan, simply keeping a sharp eye out as they pedaled past the lush lawns of the wealthy neighborhood.

Then Temar spotted a maroon Chevy veering down a side street and looping back, as if the driver were unfamiliar with the neighborhood. He and Chris followed it.

The Chevy pulled an abrupt U-turn at the top of a hill—a group of police officers and firefighters had congregated there.



The car passed the boys on their bikes as it circled back down the hill. Tamar made eye contact with the man behind the wheel, an older guy wearing a red-and-white striped shirt, and spied a tiny blond girl in the passenger seat. Tamar instantly knew it "was her, for sure."

The boys chased the car. Tamar, a middle school athlete in track, basketball, and football, thought he might jump on the hood or otherwise scare the driver into letting the girl out. For several minutes, Tamar and Chris trailed the car, but the driver kept moving, slowly winding his way through the neighborhood.

Finally, the driver pulled the car to the curb a few hundred feet ahead of them and pushed open the passenger-side door. Jocelyn slipped out of the car. Tamar got off his bike, and "she ran into my arms," he says. "The little girl wasn't crying at all. She just asked to see her mother." The kidnapper sped away.

After being returned to her mother's waiting embrace, Jocelyn was taken to police headquarters and questioned. She told the police that the kidnapper had driven his car up and chatted pleasantly with her about her bike. Then, she said, he lunged across the front seat and grabbed her neck, forcing her into the car. A police report later identified the alleged abductor as a 63-year-old sex offender. He is still at large.

Neil Harkins, chief of the Manheim Police Department, one of the responding units, says the boys' heroics that day are "something we don't normally hear about. For young boys to do [that], it was a very brave thing."

Tamar, now a tenth-grade student at Lucy Laney High School, says he wasn't thinking about bravery. He recounts how his mother, Tamika, exclaimed, "You could have been hurt!" when she heard the story later that day.

Tamar asked her back, "What would you have done for me? I know you wouldn't have stopped till you found me. I didn't do it for attention. I just wanted to help."