

worked for *The Chronicle* as a reporter for the city desk. But when *The Post* beckoned again, offering me a full-time, two-year paid internship that I could start when I graduated in June 2004, it was too tempting to pass up. I moved back to Washington.

About four months into my job as a reporter for *The Post*, I began feeling increasingly paranoid, as if I had “illegal immigrant” tattooed on my forehead—and in Washington, of all places, where the debates over immigration seemed never-ending. I was so eager to prove myself that I feared I was annoying some colleagues and editors—and worried that any one of these professional journalists could discover my secret. The anxiety was nearly paralyzing. I decided I had to tell one of the higher-ups about my situation. I turned to Peter.

By this time, Peter, who still works at *The Post*, had become part of management as the paper’s director of newsroom training and professional development. One afternoon in late October, we walked a couple of blocks to Lafayette Square, across from the White House. Over some twenty minutes, sitting on a bench, I told him everything: the Social Security card, the driver’s license, Pat and Rich, my family.

Peter was shocked. “I understand you one hundred times better now,” he said. He told me that I had done the right thing by telling him, and that it was now our shared problem. He said he didn’t want to do anything about it just yet. I had just been hired, he said, and I needed to prove myself. “When you’ve done enough,” he said, “we’ll tell Don and Len together.” (Don Graham is the chairman of the Washington Post Company; Leonard Downie Jr. was then the paper’s executive editor.) A month later, I spent my first Thanksgiving in Washington with Peter and his family.

In the five years that followed, I did my best to “do enough.” I was promoted to staff writer, reported on video-game culture, wrote a series on Washington’s HIV/AIDS epidemic, and covered the role of technology and social media in the 2008 presidential race. I visited the White House, where I interviewed senior aides and covered a state dinner—and gave the Secret Service the Social Security number I obtained with false documents.