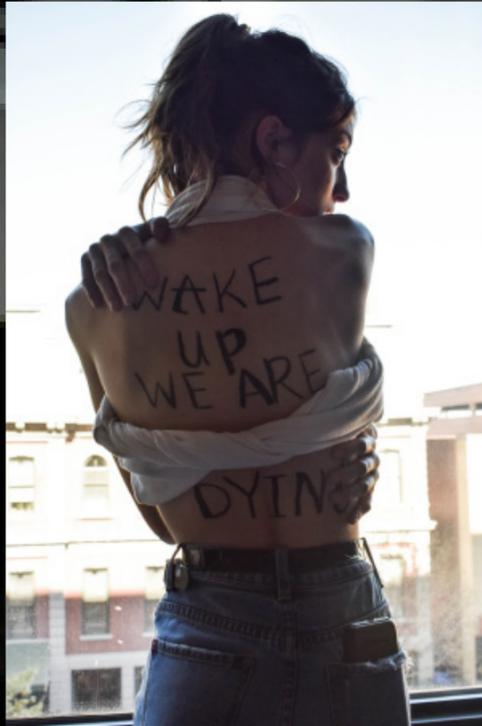


PRESCRIBED DEATH

Students and advisors reflect upon the opioid crisis at hand

By: May Nguyen



all pictures taken by a.reynolds; designer s.ray

WHEN DOES IT END (left): Legend's editor in chief, **Greyson Webb**, sends out a wakeup call and demands a solution. "When people think of deadly diseases it's likely that they'll think of cancer or heart disease, but there's the disease of addiction spawning from our hospitals. There are over 100 deaths each day in America due to opioid use and more common than not these addictions begin from the pill bottle a doctor prescribes," Webb said.

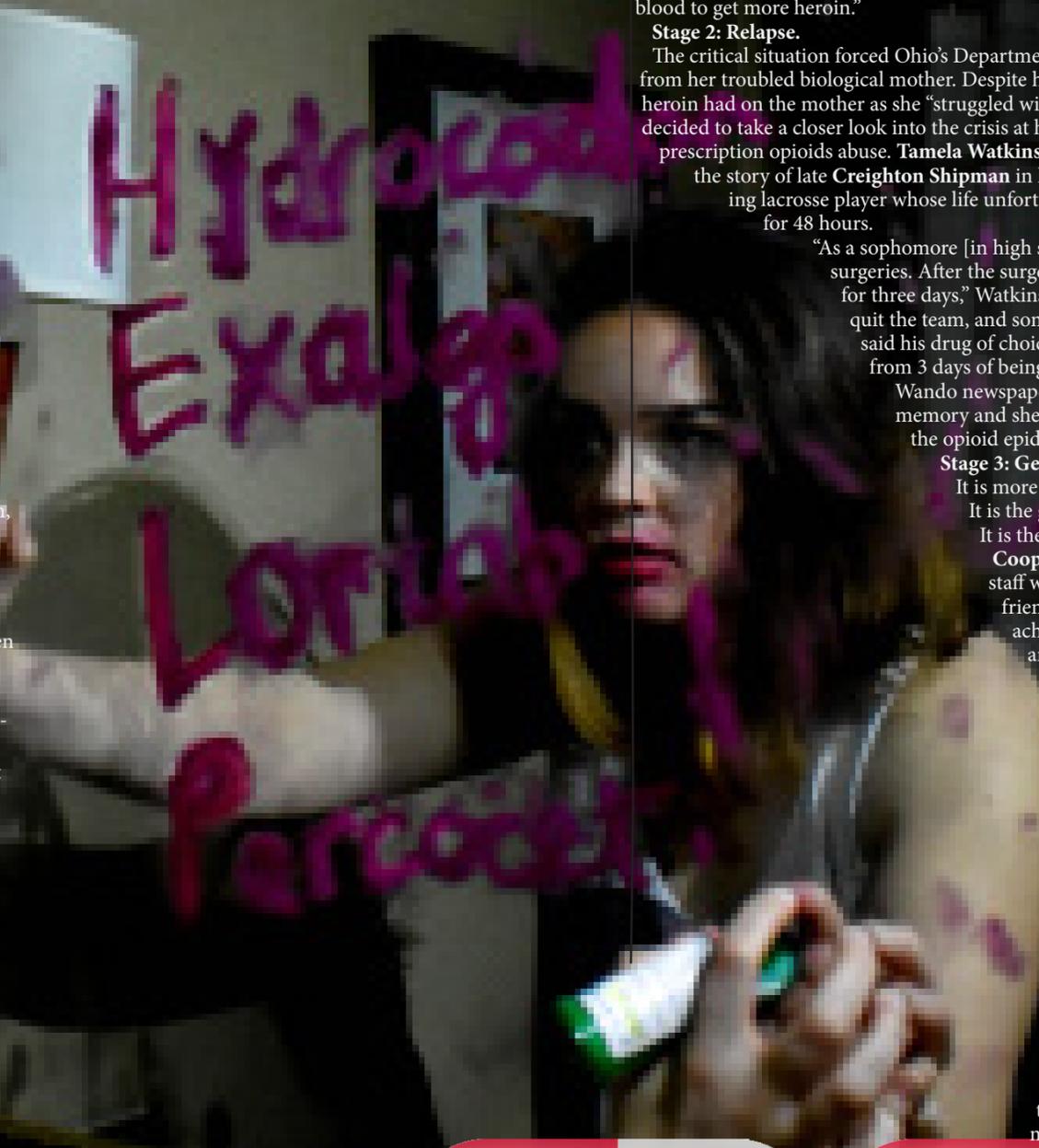
A CALL FOR HELP (inset): Looking at her own reflection in the mirror after extensive opioids use, **Savannah Scott**, a senior and lacrosse player from Wando High School, reaches out for help. "It's our responsibility as student journalist to inform the community on the real issues of this crisis we face so no one has to suffer such a horrible loss again and be aware of what's going on in the world," Scott said.



STAND UP, SPEAK OUT (left): At SIPA convention, **Alex Robinson** from Clarke Central High School, Georgia, decides to stand up and speak out about the ongoing crisis of opioid epidemic. "I know that [opioids] affect a lot of people. I know that it's been really devastating in the rust belt. I know that it's been spreading and I know that it has become a real national issue, so much so that the federal government is starting to take steps to improve treatment in communities. I know there was some controversy a little while back with the Trump administration, calling it a Public Health Emergency, or Crisis... I know that it's more governmental response now and it's probably gonna keep on increasing," Robinson said.



SILENT KILLERS (left): Sophomore and aspiring football player **Will Bumgarner** slides down onto the bathroom tile after sustaining a serious injury and contemplates taking painkillers with opioid as one of the main ingredient. "A solution to avoiding the use of opioids while you're involving in sports will probably staying away from painkillers in general and stick to more alternative ideas for pain relief. There's always good stretches. Ice bath is also a good idea to use," Bumgarner said.



Stage 1: Nausea, Sweating, Shaking, and muscle spasms.

Heroin. A surge of pleasure directly shot into the bloodstream. Agitated, warm flushing of the skin as the aftermath. The brain grew hunger for the same rush. Again and again. Nothing can stop the craving once the morphine compound enters the body. Not even a newborn baby, just shy of two months old. Not even her soulful cries, nor the helplessness in every abrupt movement she made, nor the vacant stares of her baby blue eyes, dredged in a curtain of hot sweat and tears.

For two hours, young **Liz Hipes**, a SIPA student, was stuck in the backseat of an overheating Camry, with her tiny lungs pulsating, hyperventilating, choking in desperate need for air.

"My birth mother was a heroin addict. She would use every single day, and it became a very dangerous place for me to live in," Hipes said. "At one point she was so desperate for drugs that she would leave me in her car to sell her blood to get more heroin."

Stage 2: Relapse.

The critical situation forced Ohio's Department of Social Service to step in and separate the two month old infant from her troubled biological mother. Despite having found a new and forever home, Hipes never forgot the effects heroin had on the mother as she "struggled with trust and forgiveness towards her birth parents" growing up. Hipes decided to take a closer look into the crisis at hand, and discovered how heroin addiction frequently sprung from prescription opioids abuse. **Tamela Watkins**, a SIPA speaker and Wando High School newspaper advisor, recalled the story of late **Creighton Shipman** in her Friday's class session, "Covering Tragedy". Shipman was an aspiring lacrosse player whose life unfortunately ended early due to drug overdose after being out from rehab for 48 hours.

"As a sophomore [in high school], Creighton Shipman sustained a serious injury and had to get surgeries. After the surgery, he was put on Oxycodone, which is an opioid based painkiller, for three days," Watkins said. "After he went to college, his life just spiraled out of control. He quit the team, and something just didn't seem right... He called his mama from rehab and said his drug of choice was heroin. Creighton confessed he was seeking the high he got from 3 days of being put on Oxycodone."

Wando newspaper, Tribal Tribune, ran a special 8-page issue in honor of Shipman's memory and shed light on one of most preeminent crises facing America nowadays, the opioid epidemic.

Stage 3: Get help. Make it known. Create an echo.

It is more than just painkiller.

It is the gateway to heroin addiction.

It is the excruciating and enduring grief for those left behind.

Cooper Lockett, SIPA student and Tribal Tribune's sport editor, was on staff when the Shipman's story made its way onto the paper. Having been friends with Creighton Shipman's little brother, Lockett experienced the aching agony in his heart and a determination to provide momentum and make the issue known to student athletes and the student body alike.

"The opioid issue is a national epidemic, it really is, because they are purposely over-prescribed. Something really needs to be done about it to make people accountable," Lockett said. "I think, really, we taught people so much with the last [issue] because it hit so close to home... [Shipman] had always been a good kid and they had always been a happy family. When we cover that and we show somebody that was part of a good family and never got into troubles with the law, and just to see how over a course of few months his life just collapsed on itself, it wakes people up. Unfortunately, sometimes it take a story like that to wake people up on the issue."

Upon hearing the late Creighton Shipman's story from his son, **Mark Lockett**, an MUSC surgeon, provided professional insights to the critical matter facing the nation.

"I will say that we don't know which patients are at the highest risk [of addiction]," Mark said. "But we, as a community, and physicians, and family members, have to be aware of that, recognize the risks that are involved and try to really stop the problems before it picks up momentum"



"I play soccer. I think that opioids should be the one of the last thing to resort to, after other forms of extensive cares such as people wearing ankle braces, they'll have ice baths, and then warm baths, just sort of release tensions... I don't think that opioids should be the first thing people resort to, just because how harmful it could be in the long term." Kevin Cao, Richland Northeast High School.



"I wouldn't be the best to speak on that because I'm not a medical professional. If a doctor said 'yes you really need this opiate based pain medicine', then yes they should take it. But with all the news about opiod addiction, it has to be closely monitored, just to make sure they don't get that addiction." Steve Hanf, advisor, First Flight High School.



"I know someone that's involved in sports. Opioids is very addictive. But I mean, when they are in pain, they need medication. They should be able to use opioids, but have a lower dose of opioids, so they won't be addicted to it." Toni Thweatt, Prince George High School.