From Chaos to Change in Paris, Texas

About a week ago, I went to the Civic Center in Paris, Texas, to play pickleball with some friends. It was around 9:00 p.m., which is not unusual for people to still be there. But as soon as we pulled into the parking lot, we saw something completely different from a normal night out. A fight had broken out involving around 50 students from rival schools, Paris and North Lamar. People were yelling, recording, and running in every direction. What started as a normal evening turned into chaos in seconds.

In the middle of it all, I told my friend to call 911 while I moved toward the crowd to help break things up. Looking back, that was not the safest decision, but in the moment, I felt like I had to do something. As I tried to pull people apart, I ended up getting hit in the face. The situation only grew more intense until officers arrived and the crowd quickly scattered.

What mattered most, though, was not just what happened that night, but what happened after.

The next day, I spoke with the Paris Police Chief about the incident and about a larger issue behind it. A public space that should have been safe for families, students, and community members had become a place where supervision was clearly needed. After that conversation, the department released a public statement, and the message spread throughout the community. More importantly, a solution was put into place: there is now an officer routinely present at the Civic Center at night to help supervise the area.

That is what Crime Stoppers is really about. It is not only about responding to crime after the fact. It is also about prevention, communication, and taking action before problems grow worse. Sometimes leadership looks like stepping in. Other times, it looks like speaking up afterward and helping create a real solution. In this case, one dangerous night led to a safer environment for everyone who uses that space.