

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRED GOLDBERG

BARBARA TABACH

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REMEMBERING 1 OCTOBER

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PREFACE

Fred Goldberg is a tourist from Vail, Colorado, CO, where he works at the ski resorts. Fred averages two visits per year to Las Vegas where he has family and friends.

He details his air travel from the Denver airport on Oct. 1, 2017. With little explanation, his evening flight was diverted to Salt Lake City while en route to Las Vegas. It was much later in the evening when he finally arrived.

Fred talks about waiting in an extraordinarily long line for a taxi. He describes encountering two young women ahead of him in the cab line, both shivering and noticeably distraught. He offered his jacket them for warmth and learned that they were survivors of a mass shooting at the Route 91 festival.

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV



Remembering 1 October

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Fred W. Goldberg 12-3-17
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This is Barbara Tabach. I am sitting in—where am I?

You're in Vail, Colorado.

I am. I'm still in Vail and I'm sitting with Fred Goldberg. Spell your name for me, please.

F-R-E-D, G-O-L-D-B-E-R-G.

You were sharing with me your last trip to visit was on October first.

Yes.

Why don't you tell us that story?

I flew out of Denver and my flight left at ten twenty in the evening on October first. Probably three-quarters of the way into our flight to Vegas, the pilot got on the PA system and said that we had been diverted to Salt Lake City because Las Vegas Airport was in a lockdown security mode. He said it was kind of unusual, but that's all the information that he had and he'd keep us posted. So we stayed in Salt Lake City for probably three hours; something like that. We did refuel, but we didn't get off the plane because the pilot said that there were lots of other planes in similar situations and when they told us to leave, we needed to leave.

So we arrived in Las Vegas right around three o'clock in the morning and still didn't really have any idea at all what had happened. It deplaned. I got my suitcase and went to the taxi line, and that was my first real indication that something was not right. The taxi line was two blocks long and every once in a while one cab would pull up and the person at the head of the line would get in, but, I mean, this was painful.

There were two ladies standing in front of me in this line and they were dressed just in like a skirt and they were shivering. I asked them if they wanted my jacket. I said, "Are you cold?" And they just said, "No, we just had the most terrible incident happen to us." They proceeded to tell me that they were at this music venue and shots rang out. The one woman said,

"I will just never forget the sound of the shots." I later did hear the CNN tape—or watch the CNN tape and I know exactly what she meant when she said that. So that's how I found out what had happened.

I finally did get a cab. I made it to the Hard Rock where I was staying. I got to the Hard Rock and they made me open my suitcase and my carry-on before they let me into the hotel and I thought that was kind of different. It's just a night that I'll never forget. I went down to the craps table for a while and it was just a weird vibe.

When did you actually start piecing it together?

I was just kind of processing the whole thing in the cab ride. I talked to the cab driver and kind of got a feel for what I thought had happened, but not until I got into my hotel room and turned on the TV and was seeing some of the tapes that I realized what a terrible tragedy this really was.

As a tourist, you come to Vegas often?

A couple of times a year.

You live here in Vail. What do you do here in Vail?

I ski. I work at a golf course and I work for the resort company that runs the mountain.

You're a frequent visitor to our city.

Yes.

You really experienced in a unique way that history-in-the-making type of thing. Does this affect how you will come back to Las Vegas?

It won't and it wouldn't. I mean, I have family there and friends. I think Las Vegas did a really cool job with their PR. I've seen their commercials on TV here and I thought they were well done and tasteful. But, no, it would not affect that. I just don't know how you could prevent something like that. We have to live.

Did it have any impact, one way or another, on your personal opinions of guns and gun control in this country?

It hasn't changed my stance on that. I do believe people should have the right to have a gun, but I don't think people really need to have a gun or guns like that. To go hunting is one thing. Protection may be another. But, my gosh, I can't imagine what you would need a gun like that for under any circumstance.

Going back to that night—you were there how many days?

Six.

Oh, six days. So you're interacting with the community during that period of time. What were some of your observations both as a tourist or playing games or you say you've got family there? Talk about that a bit for me.

The next couple of days that was just "the" topic and then Tom Petty passed away, which was just crazy, and staying at the Hard Rock that was a big deal there, too. I could sense the locals feeling the pain. I was struck—I felt like I wanted to go donate blood, is what I wanted to do, and I just heard that the lines for doing that were pretty long. I thought the city really pulled it together from my observation for the week that I was there after the incident.

Did you talk to anyone who had been at the festival other than those girls you were behind in line?

When I was checking into the Hard Rock, there also were some people there that their rooms were at the MGM and they couldn't obviously get in, so somehow they ended up at the Hard Rock and they had gotten one room, and there was about eight people just trying to figure out what they were going to do. This one lady that I was talking to, they were supposed to fly out the next day, but they couldn't get into their room to get their luggage or anything. That was really

the only real conversation that I can recall having with anybody that was actually there other than the two women in the taxi line.

You did mention that at Hard Rock there was more of a security check on your luggage.

There was that and then there was a heavy, heavy police presence. For the three days after that shooting I went to the casinos downtown and the Hard Rock and a very, very high police presence in intersections. They had their lights on. They were just making themselves seen, and I thought that was pretty effective, also.

Kind of a demonstration of that security for the tourists and the locals.

Yes, that was my interpretation of it is that they were showing that they were there to protect and serve.

I'm curious. For the hotels dealing with this going forward in Las Vegas in particular, as a visitor what would you feel like if every time you came now you would have to have your luggage scanned by the hotel or that kind of change? Any thoughts about that?

It wouldn't be my...Checking in is kind of a hassle as it is right now. There's always long lines for checking in. I don't know if that's the next logical step or not. It just seems so extreme to me. But I'm sure somebody was saying that about the airline stuff thirty years ago.

Anything else that you can think of or stories that happened, observations?

Observations...It's another Nine-Eleven in my memory. I'll never forget October first again or it will always have a special meaning for me. I just hope all that were harmed are able to heal.

I appreciate that. I do have one more question as just a citizen of the country. Going to large events, large venues whether it's open-air or even enclosed, did this have an impact on how you perceive it yourself?

I really haven't been a big large-venue kind of a guy for a long time. If there was somebody that I

really wanted to see, I would make an effort and this really wouldn't impact my decision on attending or not. Like I said, we have to live our lives and just learn how to deal with these types of tragedies in as humane a way as we can. We're all in it together.

We are for sure. Fred, I really appreciate you sharing that with me.

You're welcome, Barbara.

You were recalling something more here.

Yes, I forgot one part of the story. When I was talking to the two women in the taxi line who had been at the event, they told me the story on how they ended up in the taxi line at the airport. They said that they fled the event and they got to like a fence, which was the fence at the airport, and somebody took a pickup truck and drove through the fence to allow all these people to continue running on to the tarmac. These two women said that the employees of Allegiant Air took them into their office and got them up into the taxi line. That's why the airport was closed down.

I know you're not a therapist, but do you think the shivering was just the shock of what they had just endured?

Yes, I am totally sure of that.

Were they good friends?

No. That was the other thing. They didn't even know each other until this all happened. They both were separated from their families and they did not know each other until they were running together and then ended up in the line to get a taxi.

Did they talk about fear of their loved ones or their friends being safe?

They had been able to make contact. Each one of them had been able to talk to their families, but they were spread out. They were staying at the MGM, so they didn't know where to go or what to do. They were kind of formulating their plans.

Do you ever wonder what happened to them?

Yes, I do. It was pretty crazy.

One of the interesting aspects of this whole project is how people are trying to locate people they crossed paths with during that time. It's amazing. Thanks.

[End of recorded interview]