

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOBBIE JONES AND CODY JONES

CLAYTEE D. WHITE

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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

**This is Claytee White. It is December ninth, 2017. I am in the home of Bonnie and Cody Jones.**

**Good morning.**

**(In unison)** Good morning.

**How are you today?**

We're really doing good.

**Fantastic. I'd like for you to pronounce and spell your names. You only have to spell Jones once.**

Okay, good. Do you want my maiden name, too, just in case?

**You may give me your whole name. If we were to use this in any form of media, how would you like your name to appear?**

Bobbie Jones; B-O-B-B-I-E, J-O-N-E-S.

*And Cody Jones; C-O-D-Y, J-O-N-E-S.*

**Thank you so much. I know that you're country music lovers, but first tell me where you grew up.**

I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. My mom moved me from there when I was four to Michigan, Grand Haven, a little town. We moved when I was nine to Denver, Colorado, where I lived until I was eighteen and joined the military and served in El Paso, Texas at Fort Bliss, actually at Biggs Army Airfield that whole time. Then when I got out, I moved back to Milwaukee to be with my family; I met my future husband there. Then as a joke we moved out here and I've been here ever since, since '93. It came up as a joke one day because he was out here and he was gambling and got put in jail for using a one-dollar token in a five-dollar slot machine at Binion's, not just once, but sat there for three hours. They didn't like it. So that's what

I'm saying, it came up as a joke for us to move here. I love hot dry. I fell in love with the desert in El Paso, Texas. I've been out here ever since, loving it.

**Wonderful. Cody, you grew up in Las Vegas.**

*Yes, born and raised since '98. I graduated from Rancho High School, Class of 2016. I'm currently in my second year of college, going to College of Southern Nevada, for flight operations.*

**What is that? What is flight operations?**

*It's pretty getting to the point where I can go into the airfields, pretty much as for the job site, and I'm already so much trained, all I need to do is take a test and I'll be either a dispatcher or air traffic control.*

She wants to be a pilot, but to do pilot through college is about a quarter million total for four years. She's taking a little different route so we don't put her in debt for the next twenty years of her life.

**What about going to the Air Force to do it?**

*I'm actually doing Army.*

**Oh, you're doing Army.**

She wants helicopters.

*Yes.*

**Don't you get some training, though, from the Army?**

*Yes. I am actually planning on commissioning as an officer through UNLV's ROTC training program.*

She'll be with you next year because she is going to start in fall at UNLV.

**Fabulous. Just keep my card and just know that if you ever have any questions about**

**anything while you're on campus, just give me a call.**

It's a small town.

**It's a small town. I know a lot of people on campus. I've been there for quite a while.**

*Thank you.*

**So just know that...Just use me. Let's talk about your love of country music. I'm going to start with you, Bobbie. How did that love come about?**

Mainly from my dad. The big one was Johnny Cash. I grew up listening to country music. I have seen Johnny Cash in concert more times than any other country artist, and considering he's passed away about fifteen years ago now, it's saying something. The first time I saw him I was four years old. I don't remember the concert. I remember walking up and down the stadium stairs. It was at Milwaukee County Fairgrounds. My dad just always inbred it. Every time I went and visited my dad—my parents separated when I was four—it was country music all the way, cowboy boots, cowboy hats. I bought him a black Stetson that he just loved until he died. When I buried my father, I buried him in his boots. He was country all the way.

That doesn't mean I don't like different kinds of music. When I was in the Army that was the beginning of MTV, so this tells you how old I am. Beginning of MTV, so it was very much hair metal and the eighties. But I never lost my love of country. In fact, when I moved back out here, the love of country started again and Garth Brooks was starting up and it was bringing a lot of the pop to country. Even though I do like some of the old country—Hank Williams; Johnny Cash, of course, he'll always be my hero—I love the new country and I think that it brings more of a family feel with country music than, say, rap or pop because they're not vulgar; they're not violent songs. The worst you got is I left my truck with my woman and I moved away with my dog. It's nothing violent and that's one of the things, I think, I like about country, and I'm glad

that she doesn't do the rap thing and do the pop thing a lot.

**Tell me about country music for you. What does it mean for your generation?**

*When I first started off, I was very young. She took me to my first concert, was Dixie Chicks.*

**Four years old?**

*Five.*

It was her fifth birthday. I bought tickets to the Dixie Chicks. She still has the T-shirt. It was her fifth birthday present. They performed on her fifth birthday. She loved them.

*That's where it kind of started with me. As I got older I kind of started listening to today's generation of music and it doesn't really appeal to me as country did; that I can really connect to, really get into it. I play guitar and it's something I can do on guitar. It sounds still very soulful. It doesn't sound like a few cords just beating back and forth, back and forth. Actually, the melody of the song is a story itself.*

**Tell me about your generation, your friends. How do they feel about country?**

*It gets hit and miss. I have a few friends that love country music. They were actually there at Route 91. They weren't with us. I still go to class with one of them and he's still recovering, still. I remember walking past his car one day. And 102.7 was blasting on his radio. I also got the friends who will listen to the rap, the very annoying stuff, very loudly. Walking past it, I'm like, "I can hear your bass all the way from across the hallway. Please just shut it off."*

*I was known back in high school as the kid who loved country music. On my drill team now is a tradition of before every competition you play the "Cotton-Eye Joe" and you dance to it. That's one thing, you get the nerves out.*

**Play the what?**

"Cotton-Eye Joe."

**What is that?**

It's a song. It's a country music song. I can't tell you the artist because actually it's older than me.

**So sing it.**

*"If it hadn't been for the Cotton-Eye Joe, I'd been married a long time ago.*

**(In unison)** "Where did you come from? Where did you go? Where did you come from, Cotton-Eye Joe?"

**BONNIE:** Then it's got a dance to it. When she says drill team, when she was at Rancho she was a member of the Air Force Junior ROTC and the unarmed drill team, so it was a lot of slapping and pouncing. Oh, gosh, it's very loud, actually. But they won a lot of competitions.

**Wonderful. So a lot of stomping and a lot of—yes, yes, I know what you're talking about.**

Very, very regimented.

**That's fantastic. Tell me about Route 91. Why is that such an important festival?**

It actually came up as a fluke in 2014, the first year, the first year of Route 91. I still am a big Brantley Gilbert fan. He was one of the ones that turned me back off pop, back more into country about five years ago and listening to it heavily again. I won tickets to a meet and greet, and my now ex-husband went, "You don't have tickets to the concert."

**You can just call his name if you want to.**

His name is Dale Jones. He's a very nice man. He's been very supportive during all of this. He's like, "You don't have tickets. I'll buy you and Cody tickets." This was two weeks before the concert. I don't even think it was two weeks. It was a very short time. At the time Route 91 was not well known. It wasn't the big thing that we saw this year. So I bought tickets. She was still in high school at the time. We went and it was like the mother-daughter thing. We've been doing trips since she was eight years old to Disneyland, but this is the first kind of adult thing because

there is beer being served. There is loud people. There is people showing up in bikinis and guys in G-strings. It's quite the country crowd. But we got into it, listened to, loved it, had an awesome time. We didn't stay until the very, very last because she did have school the next day, Monday, and I had worked, so we kind of missed...

**So in 2014, how many days was it?**

It was still three days, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, every time. Finished and it's like, "Okay, we're going to do this again." So we did—was 2015 me and you?

*Yes.*

It was 2015 we went again, just me and her. Dale did not want to go. He would listen to country music, but I guess it became our thing. In 2016—

*That's the year I missed.*

—that's the year you missed. I actually had bought three tickets—no, 2015, I bought three tickets. My ex-husband, Dale, was supposed to go with us and that's when we had our divorce, and her and I went. She missed one day for prom, but I made really good friends there who live in California now—not now, but they're from California. So you make a lot of close friends. I have a lot of friends that now live across the United States that come for this concert.

I bought my tickets on presale, so I bought them before they went on sale to the general public. This was 2016 I decided to get a hotel room, so I got two days at the Luxor, figuring, okay, I'm going to try doing this hotel room. My friends from Cali came in. They were at the Excalibur. I had no one to go with. The person that was supposed to go with me was no longer in my life. She was in Utah in college for her first semester. So I hung with my friends, but I never felt alone. It was country. I never felt alone. My friends were there. Again, presale tickets, four days at the Luxor. I was like, I'm going in Thursday night because I'm not going to sit and stand

in line to check in and everything else and miss the first three hours. It was me and her. I'm like, "Let's get a room; staycation it; let's really have fun this year." My friends from Cali couldn't make it. They went to Thailand and waited too long to buy their tickets.

Nobody expected it to sell out. This was the first year it sold out. It never sold out before. In 2014, there was probably ten thousand people there. Fifteen, saw an increase. Every year saw an increase. This year it sold out. What was really weird is this year did not have the headliners of last year. Last year had Luke Bryan, Toby Keith, Brad Paisley. The first year had Blake Shelton, Miranda Lambert and Jason Aldean. So there were a lot bigger headliners in the previous year. This year they sold out, though, and they sold out back in June, so it sold out three months before—four months before the show. I was surprised.

But for being very packed and crowded, you never saw a fight. You never saw angry words. It was just really a fun time. Like I said, I felt very bad my friend couldn't be there. Their son managed to snag a ticket somewhere because you know as tickets go on sale, and he was there. I thank God every day he was there and I'll get to that later. Just making new friends. I made some new friends again. You can also find us in the video because the last day they were all wearing red, white and blue outfits. On previous days, one day they wore red shirts. Saturday they wore camouflage, so you couldn't see them at all. You start standing somewhere and that's where you stand; that's where people know to find you. You make friends. "Okay, I'm going to go get a drink." "Okay." You know you can come right back to that spot. You don't have to stand in the back of the line, stand at the back of the concert.

**Describe the venue to me, the two of you together, where you entered.**

*We entered off the side where Las Vegas Boulevard was, so we took—was it...?*

Right outside of the front of Luxor.

**So right across the street from the Luxor.**

Right across the street from the Luxor you go in. Of course, you have to give up anything you're carrying in, like a bottle of beer or whatever, which I was like, I'm not going to bother. You're allowed to bring in water, a sealed bottle of water. If you bring in chairs, you have to go to the chair corral. In the previous years it was really nice because you could spread blankets in the grass and have chairs in the grass. Now it's, nope, you can't do that. It got a lot stricter. I can see why, though, from ten thousand to twenty-two thousand, same exact spot.

We entered the venue. I remember the very, very, very first day. Do you remember when we were waiting to cross the street, to cross Las Vegas Boulevard?

*Oh, yes.*

There was a police officer there and I'm like, "Do you volunteer for this?" Just talking to him. He's like, "I love doing the country concerts better than the rap concerts or better than the pop because you guys are all so friendly. This is always such a good time." That one moment sticks out so much in my head this year because of what he said. Everybody was so nice and so friendly. People standing there, obviously checking you in, checking your wristbands in, checking to make sure you don't have stuff, were still friendly all day long.

**The wristbands you have in advance?**

*Yes.*

They mail them to you about a month prior. I have all four years of wristbands.

**That's all you need to get in and out?**

That's all you need to get in and out. Actually, this year and last year you could attach your credit card to it, so you didn't have to carry cash or your credit card. Basically you had to carry ID, especially when you're young like this, if she was of drinking age to drink; way too many

wrinkles, I don't need that. So say this is like the plastic thing. You just, *boop*, and it *boops* you in so you don't have to worry about carrying a credit card with you, which is very nice because I remember one year—I had a little too much to drink—I lost sixty dollars cash. It's going to happen. What are you going to do if you find sixty? If you go, "Oh, whose is this?" Yeah...No. So it's very nice that they do that. You have the wristband. You don't take them off. I do know people that actually had them on for fifty-eight days and did not take them off for fifty-eight days. We took ours off, but they are on my board with my memories. You walk in and we always like to go to the little—

*The little shops and areas.*

**As you walk in the gate after you go by the people who are checking the wristbands, where do you go?**

*We normally like to check out the little shops and areas before we get settled into a spot.*

**So which direction is that once you go in?**

It's like the center. It's like you go in straight and you go this way off Nashville, which is the up and coming artists that play in between the other artists. I think we just went down one side.

We'll look at one. *Oh, that's all food. Oh, this is the vendors.* So I think we stuck to the right side mainly.

**The up and coming artists are called?**

*Next to Nashville.*

**Next to Nashville.**

Yes. Luke Combs was there. We did not get to see him on Sunday night because he was playing so close in between two of the artists, but we were lucky enough he did a fan appreciation for 102.7 at Gilley's on last week Monday. That's the first time they've ever closed the doors at

Gilley's and said, "We're full." So a lot of survivors were there. I met two guys who came in from out of town just to see this. It's very interesting. But then we go to the vendors and we talk to the vendors.

*Yes, we talk to the vendors.*

**About?**

*About what they selling. But there was a woman there we actually met the day before while we were in line for the Luxor. We did talk to them a little bit.*

**What kind of things did they sell?**

*Everywhere from buckle wallets to bootstraps to flowery hats.*

Flower crowns.

**Flowery hats? So you have a hat already—**

Well, you can, but mainly it's just like a ring of flowers. No, we're not that type. One of the ladies...If you see the wreath on the horn over there with the horse?

**Yes.**

She makes ones just like that. I'm like, "Let me see. I have rope at home." I was going through my stuff and actually the figurine my mother-in-law had bought me and I just made that. I got the idea from her and I made it. It's like, okay, because I never got a chance to buy one. T-shirts, a lot of T-shirts. Of course, our radio stations are there and you get stuff from radio stations.

**Are the radio stations broadcasting from there?**

*Not really. Only the Sirius XM, The Highway is broadcasting because they're kind of like the country venue that puts on the event.*

**Okay, good. Where was your place, the place you decided to stand this year?**

*Right side of the stage on the grass field. There was a median where like the center stage was*

*and then you got the camera crew, then you got a bar right next to it. So we were kind of up that way on the right side next to the camera crew, a little bit towards the middle of that area.*

That's where we pretty much always stand. That's where our blankets used to be, our chairs used to be.

*It's actually really good. You're not too close to the stage, but, at the same time, you're not too far.*

**Do you stand the entire time?**

You stand while the music is playing and then you sit. You sit in between. I wear cowboy boots every day during it.

**How high are your heels?**

It depends on which pair. The pair I was wearing that night has no heels. I think I wore my blues and my browns, about two inches. I think yours are about two inches, too. That's just our standard. The very first year I wore my one Dingo's that have heels like that. I'm like, "No, that's okay; I'm not doing that again."

**It's more like three inches.**

Last year I actually wore flip-flops the last day. My feet were killing me and they hurt in flip-flops. They just hurt. You do that because you're walking around all the time. You're dancing when the music is playing. You're dancing when the music is not playing because they still have music playing just all around, plus you get stepped on. But it's all in good fun.

**Great. What happened when you discovered that those were not fireworks that you heard?**

When we first heard it, she looked at me and she said, "Those are poppers." That's what it sounded like, the little balls of gun powder that you throw on the ground and go, *pop*, or you step on and go, *pop*. That's what they sounded like. We're looking at each other and the guy right in

front of us goes, "No, they're not; they're guns; it's gunshots." I'm kind of like this. He goes, "My girlfriend just got shot." He obviously wasn't that calm about it, but she had been shot. I remember the blood on her arm. Now I think if we would have been one step farther ahead, if we would have been one step this way, it could have been her. Me, I don't care so much about. It could have been her.

Okay, your turn because this is where I lose what exactly I did.

*After she turned around and we noticed she got shot, she actually tried to help her. I'm like, "No, we need to get out of here. We need to separate from this crowd because if this is gunshots, we need to get as far away as we can." She was arguing with me during that whole time. I'm to the point where, okay, I cannot pull you away, nor do I want to get separated from you, so I will listen to you.*

**Smart kid, listens to Mom.**

*Roughly around when, I want to say, the second round of shots, we all just kneeled to the ground. I remember I was kneeling over that injured person with my mom right on top of me. If you look at the video, she's scanning for whoever is shooting. So there was a point where, okay, I need to get low to the ground; I don't care; I just need to get low; everyone else is leaving.*

*So we were still kind of in that center area. We were out in the open. One thing I remember thinking is like, as long as I get out of here with her okay, I'll be fine. Pretty much that's what happened. We both came out of that okay physically.*

**Where did you run, which direction?**

We never ran. I stayed on top of her the whole time that I know.

**So you stayed there and just stayed on...And the woman who had been shot in the arm?**

They were gone. Everybody around us was gone.

**Why did you decide to stay?**

*Separation from the crowd.*

Separation from the crowd. Somewhere in the back of my head—I'm ex-Army. I'm not going to say I was ever at war; I never was, but we're trained for it. Part of my thinking was when I couldn't find a ground shooter—we knew it wasn't on the ground. I had enough people around me saying this is not ground shots. It was too far away. If I'm shooting I'm going to go for the crowd. I'm not going to go for that one person. I'm going to go for those people because I can get twenty of them. I'm not going to go for that. At that point somewhere in the back of my head I knew that was going to happen. Also, out of the five hundred and some odd people that were hurt, how many are actually gunshots and how many are actually injuries from twisted ankle? A friend of mine, one of the survivors, a busted up knee. Her husband busted up ribs from running. So there are injuries related to that. Somewhere in the back of my head I was thinking, we're not running; we're staying. I couldn't protect her if we were running. We are the same size. It is not like she is a baby I can hold like this. But have her lay on the ground, I can at least protect 80 percent of her, even though that little bag I kept putting over your head was not doing a bit of good.

**What kind of bag did you put over her head?**

You know the backpack bags? They're thin cloth. I think it had a cup in it, a plastic cup and a water bottle in it, and a vodka bottle in it, but, *shh*, it was plastic. I had that over her head. I was on her body. The whole time I was there I was also thinking, did I get everything changed to her name as my beneficiary? Making sure everything was in order for her because I need to make sure she can live her life. It wasn't about me. When the shooting finally stopped—we were there for all twelve minutes of it, eleven minutes. To me, in my head it's one minute. I don't remember

being there for that long. She does. She's like, "It was forever, Mom." I'm like, in one minute it was over. That's how my brain works, thank God.

**In between volleys when it stopped again, did you think then that you should have run, Cody?**

*Not really because halfway through the shooting, a guy named Ryan came up to us, double-checked to see if we were okay. He actually got on the ground. I grabbed his hand right away for some odd reason.*

Is that when, halfway during the shooting?

*Yes.*

I thought it was the end.

*No, that was halfway. I grabbed his hand and he tells her, "Yeah, I've got her hand. She's doing fine." She gets up, runs to people who need help. I'm like, why did you do that? In my mind I'm like, okay, you're my mother; I still need you here because I don't want to face a day without you. In the same way, I know it was engrained in her to do that. She has training for this. It's in her blood. For me, I was paralyzed with fear. I remember grabbing onto Ryan's hand throughout the entire thing.*

*It was towards the last shots that a paramedic came up to us, double-checked that we were both okay, and said, "You both need to get out of here now." I remember he had to force me up to start running. That's the time we started running towards Las Vegas Boulevard to the VIP stands to get in between. We were kind of traveling in between. So we got some help towards what was considered the main opening gates and we were told not to run out towards Las Vegas Boulevard. So we ran, like speed bolted towards an open field that no one wanted to be in that moment.*

**Where was the open field? Oh, it was probably north of the venue.**

*Yes. Well, we were still in the venue at the time. We just considered it an open field because it was an open blank spot where people were still standing if they wanted to see the main stage with the vendors around it. So we sprinted out and we went towards a back gate, towards Reno.*

**Where are you?**

When I left her, there was a girl. She was down. Part of me could never in my head...Why would you leave somebody? Why? Why would you leave your sister, your friend, your daughter, your husband, whoever? I don't care if they're down. If she would have been shot, I would have never left her. If my friends would have been...I would have been there the whole time. So I went up to this girl and she's basically right by where the cameraman. She's never heard any of this. Her eyes were rolling back in her head and she was covered in blood. I was like, "Where are you hurt? Where are you hurt?" She couldn't answer me. I'm trying to check. She was actually shot in the back of the head. It wasn't enough obviously to kill her. What do you do with it? You can't do anything with that. It's not like you're shot in the arm and I can put a tourniquet. I remember holding her and her eyes are rolling and she's still alive. This is where events really get jumbled in my head. I know I got somebody to help me carry her out of the way so she was not in harm's way anymore. We did that because I remember I could barely lift her. She was not a small girl. I had to take her legs. Of course, she is covered with blood and she's slick. I had blood on me the whole way. I went up to another group of people and the girl was sobbing because her boyfriend had died, but they actually were around him. There were also a couple of more people I went up to that I was just checking for signs of life at this point because they were dead. I've never seen so many dead people. Another gentleman, I held his hand just as the light was going out. It's like there's nothing you can do. I don't even know what I'm thinking at this point except there's

nothing I can do for these people; they are passed; they're in God's hands now. What can I do?

Then when I look up and she's gone, now I'm panicking. I was never scared. That's the whole thing, I never got scared until I was done. The minute I saw her I grabbed my phone, which was lucky because I did lose my phone at one point and she grabbed it and gave it back to me. But also going around the venue I was picking up phones and purses going in my head, the police are going to need these; somebody needs these. I maybe should have left them where they lied, I don't know. But I got her on the phone to find out where she was. At that time a paramedic came up to me or an officer, I don't even know who, and said, "You need to get out." So I walked straight and we met back up at the Tropicana.

**Because of the telephones you stayed in touch?**

Yes. Thankfully they weren't overcrowded. It wasn't as big as obviously Nine Eleven where we lost all phones; we were able to...I had people calling me. I had people texting me. My friend who I said they hadn't been there, but their son was, his mom called me. She said, "Steven is in his room. Get there now." We were at the Luxor. He was at the MGM. I would have never gotten in the Luxor. Luckily, he was in the MGM. I think by then I had gotten her, hugged Ryan—and I can give you Ryan's name later. We did finally figure out who he was and we have actually met up with him a couple of times at events. Yes, it's very touching.

**Wonderful. The MGM, how did you get there?**

After we met up at the Tropicana. I went right from the back of the Tropicana. I don't know how well you know the Trop. But you park in that parking lot, you go right straight through to the front door; that's what I did, looking for her.

*I kind of went around towards Reno and I did the outside of the building going up to the front, meeting up with her. This is kind of weird, but I'm trying to follow a whistle.*

I have trained her since she was little. We go to Disneyland a lot. How easy is that to get separated? I'm going to go to the bathroom; you wait here. You come out and you can't see them. I have a very loud piercing whistle that most people can hear.

**So do it.**

[Whistling] That most people can hear anywhere.

**Yes, I agree.**

She is trained to hear that. Actually, a lot of the Girl Scouts were trained for that one because she was a Girl Scout and we took them to Disneyland once. It kept us in line. But Ryan, thank God, stayed with her the whole time until we met up. From there I got my friend on the phone telling me get to the MGM. I'm getting texted the room number. I called my parents to let them know what happened. That was the first time I broke down because they live here. My mother lives on Sixth and St. Louis right now. They were asleep, obviously. It's eleven o'clock at night. They don't know what's going on. We make it over to the MGM. If you've ever tried to find an elevator in the MGM, that's fun, too. We're walking through the casino. At this point nobody still knows what's happening. Nobody still knew what happened and somebody yelled, "Shooter." Of course, a whole big crowd of people start running. The only thing I did was get to the slot machines, shove her in between two of them and stand above her. It's like, I'm not going to run; I'm not going to play this game with crowds with people who are so panicked they can't breathe; they just shove.

So we make our way to the elevators, finally meet up with some people who are like, "Can you please take us with you? Can you please take us with you?" I think we took five or six people up to his little room. There was already three guys staying in there; two of them were there, one of them was still out on the streets, helping. One of the ladies went into shock. Who do

I call? You don't. Luckily, I know how to deal with shock. I dealt with that. We're lying on the bed and she started to go into shock.

### **What does it look like when someone goes into shock?**

They get very pale. They start shivering. They're really cold usually. You elevate feet and keep them warm. It's very basic what to do. Try to give them water if they'll take it. Her, I elevated her feet, wrapped around her, and I think at that point is when I finally relaxed and started shaking and then calling people. I called her dad who is in Milwaukee again. Of course, he hasn't the foggiest notion what's going on. It's two a.m. My phone call woke him up and he's like, "What the hell is going on?" I'm like, "Turn on the TV." So I had him on the phone. I called work to say—because we're twenty-four hours—I said, "I want everybody to know I'm fine." Because they all knew I was there. I was the only one from the plant this year that went. I had calls all the next day, "Are you okay?" The plant manager canceled a trip to one of our sister plants.

### **That you were supposed to have gone on?**

I wasn't. He was. But he canceled his to stay. They're like, "Are you off today?" He goes, "Yes, I took that day off." Her work canceled her whole schedule.

*For a week, yes. The first person I called when I was there, I called actually my boss at the time saying, "I don't have this person's phone number, but I need to know if she's okay." Because I worked with her. She's one of my coworkers then. She answers back, "Yes, she's fine."*

*Apparently, the person right next to her got shot, so she's in a little turmoil, too. But it's like having the interconnection. Work gave me that week off. A few days after the effect, I was going back on my schedule to pick up a shift. Nope, that was all gone.*

I never had a hard time at work going back. I work with a few vets that have seen combat. One of my desk mates, you want to call her, saw combat and actually was injured. Daily hugs from

her still. Daily hugs from an ex-Marine, a big guy. He's like, "Nope, you're not getting away today, hug me." There are days I still get up and don't want to get up. I like the fact that work let her off. I wasn't too happy with CSN. The teacher gave her a hard time until she showed her a video because we are in a couple of videos I didn't know about. A friend said, "I just saw you in the video. Are you okay?" I'm like, "What video?" I said, "I bet you can't tell it's me." He said, "Are you wearing a black shirt with white lettering?" Yes, it's me. The hair gave it away, I guess. All my friends have been very supportive. I heard from people that I haven't heard from in years just because they know I love country music and they know I live in Vegas. My mother, on the other hand, couldn't be bothered. I even invited her over for that Saturday to try to heal the little rift that was developing and she was cleaning her house. I'm like, okay, fine. I need to separate myself from negativity. My best friend, her husband, he put these lights in for me, actually. He helps a lot around here; so does she. Again, new friends from Route 91.

We all were there. We did not have the same experience; nobody did. We didn't even have the same experience. So you can't pooh-pooh somebody.

**Everybody I've talked to—oh, yes. Where did you work that gave you time off?**

*Cafe Zupas.*

**Yes, of course.**

She loves it. I love that place.

**Yes, love the food. But CSN wasn't as...?**

*My teacher wasn't as—because I have classes Monday, Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.*

*My Monday teacher and my Wednesday teacher was really sensitive towards the topic, I should say, because I had an assignment due that Monday and she was about ready to give me the late penalty fee because I had to turn it in the Wednesday after. I was like, "No, I was here. I was*

*actually planning on going to class."*

She was because we were going to check out of the hotel early and go. We didn't get home until seven a.m. Monday morning. We stayed in his hotel room. As you know, Excalibur was locked down. The Luxor was locked down. I don't know who all was locked down. They were locked down. We're watching it on TV and I remember the first TV report saying two dead. I'm like, I saw five myself. I know you said you actually—

*I saw at least two.*

—tripped over one or something like that.

*Stepped over.*

Yes. So I'm like, "That's wrong. Something's wrong." We stayed in his hotel room until five a.m., awake the whole time, obviously not able to sleep one lick. Finally I just said, "I've got to get out of here." We went and sat in the lobby at the MGM and we heard that the hotels were open again, at least ours was. We walked right in, got our stuff and left. It was like, no, I'm not even going to try to stay here. We live straight down Tropicana. Then people were calling me in the car. It's like, "Okay, we're fine." I was getting calls, lots of friends, lots of people. We came home and I don't think we slept at that point.

*No, I did.*

**What did you learn about Las Vegas that surprised you?**

*For as much as you hear the turmoil around the world, like wars going on and battles, after that event happened everyone was up there. They were standing in line to give blood. They were giving supplies. Pretty much it was help a friend out. It wasn't just about the country community anymore. It was Las Vegas, Clark County, even Nevada as a whole.*

Also, it's just not Las Vegas. I know obviously there was a ton of people from California there. I

met a man from Michigan. I met a man from Minnesota. I made friends when we did the Las Vegas Strong Run from Canada. I think Carol lives in Alberta. She came down for the run. I'm like, "I'll get your stuff for you. Meet me there." We didn't get to go out and party or have dinner or anything. It was her birthday, too. But how many people from around the country love country music. There is a Stagecoach festival in California that I'm sure brings in a lot of people. That's too expensive. There's one in Utah that I'd love to go to. It's a lot less expensive, but you have to camp the whole three days. I'm good with camping, but three days plus a concert, I don't know.

Right now it takes a lot for me just to drive past the Strip. We've been going the last two days; we're going to the Shootout at the Orleans, which is like a miniature version of the NFR, of the rodeo. It's the rodeo. It's guys that didn't make the top fifteen. It's still an awesome rodeo. They did a great tribute Thursday, not to the victims, to the responders, which I really loved. I think they also needed to have it. But driving down, pretty much when I get to Hooters on Tropicana and the Mandalay Bay, I start really getting a little nervous. Fireworks, not fond of now, no, not fond. I didn't think they would bother me because fireworks are fireworks. No. I could have crawled under the chair last night when the first one went off. I wasn't expecting it, so it was like, *poof*; we both did. I've already warned her father; I was like, "Watch the fireworks for New Year's Eve." I'll be here with the dogs. I'm not going anywhere. It's the little things. I'm not much of a drinker. As far as alcohol, it's social gatherings. I couldn't even take a drink of alcohol for over two months because I sat in clothes that not only I had been wearing for twelve hours, obviously sweating, they were soaked with some alcohol because I was on the ground, and then blood. So I had that mixture in my nose for a long time. It's little things that will make you anxious. Too many people crowded around my desk and start wanting stuff, I'm like, back off; I can't deal with it.

Same with her. She ended up on an antianxiety medication now. We are very lucky as she had been seeing a counselor during my divorce and she called to make an appointment for the following Thursday. I called them back when she was in the shower because I really didn't want her to hear me, and I'm like, "Number one, is Dr. Ann trauma certified? Because if not, I'll go through the VA if I have to." "Yes, she's a first responder." I said, "Okay, I need something now." They had us in the next day. Dr. Ann saw both of us and then I saw somebody else. She's going to make another appointment before she goes for the New Year's thing to just help deal with it.

**What are you doing for New Year's, Cody?**

*New Year's I'm going to visit my father and his side of the family. It's kind of like my annual trip. Since I don't get to see him down here anymore, I go up there.*

**Where is up there?**

*Wisconsin, Milwaukee.*

It's going to be cold. It's going to be very cold.

**Yes, too cold.**

It's a good thing she's got boots.

**Your father doesn't want to come here?**

He lived here with me for a long time. It's better for her to go up there and spend the alone time with him.

**That's really wonderful.**

Yes, so they're looking forward to that.

**Tell me about some of the events you participated in with other survivors since October one.**

*There was the run.*

**So L.A. Strong Run, what was that?**

Vegas Strong Run. You're in L.A. I don't know. Vegas Strong Run was held December second, last week, Saturday. They had a one-mile walk, a one-mile run or a 5K. It was put together by the company called JUSRUN, J-U-S-R-U-N. Obviously it was put together in a very short amount of time. The people that own the company spoke on the stage and they said, "What can we do?" They raised over sixty-five thousand dollars for the victims. That's this band here, Vegas Strong, Vegas Proud. I met a lot of the survivors. There were a lot of survivors there. A couple of them we're going to see next week for my fire pit.

**What happens next week?**

My fire pit. I have a fire pit. We're going to have fun.

**Tell me about it.**

We're going to have a fire pit going outside, fire inside, just lots of food. If you want to bring something to drink, bring a drink. Just some friends and some sharing and maybe playing some Cornhole. Oh, apples to apples. I've got Apples to Apples.

**Great. What is Cornhole?**

It's a board with a hole in it with a beanbag and you toss it.

**You put it across the room?**

There's two boards, so you each stand on the opposite and you toss and you want to get the beanbag in the hole. It's very country.

**But Apples to Apples, yes.**

Yes, I've got Apples to Apples. Cards against Humanity, if somebody brings those, too. That's the X-rated version of Apples to Apples.

The biggest and best thing that helped me was the survivor Thanksgiving.

**Tell me about that.**

That was put on at the Henderson Convention Center by Stacy Amersturd and Sherry Burnett were the biggest ones. We went there and met people and became friends. I didn't feel like I had to hide anything. Today I was talking and I told people at work when I had to leave. I said, "Yes, I'm going to be talking to a historian from UNLV. I think it's very important to get this in history." One of my bosses was asking about the rodeo this last couple of nights and she quickly changed the subject because as soon as I started to talk, she said, "I just saw your eyes glaze over because you were starting to get to part of the subject that was going to hurt again." They're very thoughtful at work to not push me.

**That's wonderful.**

But that Thanksgiving was the best event they could have held.

**Describe that event to me. It was in the newspaper before and after, but they didn't tell us where it was going to be until after.**

Channel 8 was there; Channel 5 was there; all the channels were there.

*Channel 3 and Channel 13.*

Yes. Guess what? We're on TV again. I don't like—the point to me of being on TV; it's not my goal in life. You walked in and everybody hugged everybody. There was no handshaking. There was no, oh, I don't know you. Even Miss Non-hugger was hugging people. You kind of touched on a little bit of your stories and everything else.

One of the things I love about my job is we hire for attitude. You may not know how to do that job perfectly, but your attitude is awesome. Guess what? We'll train you. A gentleman there, Stacy's husband, David, had lost his job the week of the event. He broke his ribs. He was

about to start a new job. Well, guess what? He didn't start a new job. So he's been unemployed for two months. I met the man. The man is smiling washing dishes. Anybody that can smile and wash dishes, they have a good attitude. But talking to her and listening to her stories and talking to him, I'm like, "Send me your resume. I know we're hiring. I can't do anything, but hand them your resume and tell them, 'I think you have a good attitude.'" He got a phone call and the person that called him went on vacation, but she's back this week. I'm hoping we at least give him a shot; that we can do something.

I just found out—I don't know who it was—oh, Leah, the girl we met at the Vegas Strong Run, the older lady, she just lost her job this week. Her boss doesn't like...She's not the same person she was two months ago. I'm like, "Well, I know what you do." She works for the building industry. I know nothing we have would probably fit her, but I will pass her resume on, but I will also pass it on to two other people. Like I said, this is a small town. I stayed employed during the whole bust and boom because of who I knew and it helped. If I can help one person out of this...

Another thing that's come out of this—which is sad to say it takes a tragedy to make something good. You've heard honor the fifty-eight or the fifty-eight random acts of kindness. My first act—I'm not a bragger, but this is something I'm actually doing, which is unusual for me. I was driving to Smith's. We go to the Smith's grocery store up in Green Valley and Sunset. I'm driving there and I'm at Russell and Mountain Vista and I see a man looking like he needs a meal. I hand him a five-dollar bill. Go on my merry way to Smith's. On my way back home I see him coming out of Jack in the Box that's right there. That warmed my heart that I may at least got something in his belly. Then I was reading, with Christmastime coming and everything else, people don't need you to give them food. There's plenty of food at the shelters and everything

else. One of the things that Ocean Spray does, in addition to an Angel Tree, is we collect shampoo, body wash, soap; things like that. We have raised some money at our picnic, three hundred and fifty dollars that we'll go to the Dollar Store and spend three hundred and fifty dollars to give to the school. We support a school in Henderson that's low income. So I went to the Dollar Store and put together twelve bags' worth of stuff. I have them in the car because Thursday night I was handing out money again, but I handed one to a homeless vet and he's like, "Thank you very much." If it can help them, even if they have to trade this stuff for something else, I feel good helping. People are like, "Well, I paid for the guy behind me in Starbucks." If they can afford Starbucks, you really don't need to pay for them. I did see the one lady who said she picked up her dry cleaning and she saw a cop's uniforms and paid for his uniforms; that I can see, too.

*One thing I can share how my work is. I just wanted to pay for an officer's meal one day, so I went up and paid for it. Now every day someone at work is paying for an officer's meal.*

**Oh, I love that. I love passing it on.**

That's awesome because her work is mainly high school and college kids. It's not us old folks. But it is that they can learn something at that age.

**One of you used the word *safety* a few minutes ago. Do you feel safe yet?**

*It depends on where I'm at. At home I do feel safe. At work it's give or take. I can no longer work the lobby because if I do see that fire arm come out and I see the person behind it, I will freak out. They've been accommodating with that, so I've been working—*

**What do you mean firearm?**

Conceal carry or carry. This is an open carry state.

**Exactly. So sometimes you actually see a firearm, I see. But you felt safe at that survivors'**

**Thanksgiving?**

*Yes.*

That was very good, yes.

*That was lovely. I actually met a fourth grade teacher there. She wrote a poem that I asked her politely if I could use some of those verses from a poem to write a song because I have been doing a lot more of my music lately ever since that happened to help me with my anxiety. I could always write the melody, but I could never find the words. What she wrote were the words I was thinking in really good fashion.*

**Do you know Danny Cluff? Have you met Danny?**

I've seen his name on our survivors' thing, but I've never met him.

**Danny writes songs and poems. So if you meet him...I interviewed him yesterday. He might have been able to help you with some words, as well.**

I've seen his name on my websites. I think the Internet, for a change, has done a lot of good with this because it does keep you connected. A lot of us are very into buying merchandise, not as much as I should—not necessarily should, but buying things because I don't want people to forget. I don't necessarily want to say, "Oh, I'm a survivor; I was there." But I don't want you to forget. People that know me know I was there. We get comments on our tattoos. We finally did get a mother-daughter tattoo.

**Let me see. Oh, so it's a Vegas Strong.**

It's Vegas Strong, the date and "survivor" on it. Hers is much more colorful because she's so white.

**I love both of them. Those are beautiful. Did it hurt?**

*Not really.*

After about hour three, yes. Yes, I was after you. He was like really getting my color in good. We were always going to do a mother-daughter tattoo. I have Mickey on my back with her name scrolled in it. But we were going to do the wings because I'm Army Aviation and that's what she wants to be, Army Aviation. We probably still will. But this was something we've lived through and I think bonded us closer. We were already close, but I know I can rely on her to either listen to me or to actually be a clear voice to me if I need it. She has learned that Mom actually does know what she's talking about sometimes, so that's always good.

**With military backgrounds—and you are almost in the military—tell me your attitude about guns and if it changed either way because of this.**

The right to bear arms. We own a gun. It's one that she bought. It's her gun, actually. It can kill an elk. I don't know why we have a gun that can kill an elk, but it can kill an elk.

*Because it's fun.*

It used to just sit in the closet in its case. We don't lock it up. I have no young children that come here. It actually is now standing by my bedside.

*Actually, no, I put it back in its place.*

Oh, she put it away. I was very freaked out a couple of weeks ago. It just gave me that extra sense of protection. I don't have a problem—when we went to the air show, I don't have a problem with guns. I have a problem with people holding the gun. We're there. Of course, we have the Air Force. It's on the Air Force base. You've got these guys carrying—M-16s, M-15s?

*M-4s.*

M4s. They've got their sidearm. They've got enough ammo...I don't know what they had all that ammo for. But my brain is, when are you going to snap? When are you going to snap? It sounds weird, but actually a couple of weeks after Route 91 happened, at work they had a guy snap, not

at work. Thank God he was not there. He was in a bar drinking. But all the sudden he's calling his boss saying he's going to kill himself; he's wife is leaving him. All the sudden, he's snapping. It's like, what little trigger is going to...? This wasn't ISIS. This wasn't...I want to say Obama and it's not Obama. Barrack, his name is too close. It's not the Muslim or whatever religious sect wants to say America is wrong. It was some nut job who decided he was losing too much money or he didn't get tickets to Route 91 or whatever.

**Is that why? Does anyone know why yet? Are you just speculating?**

Speculating. They're saying he lost a lot of money in the last two years.

**Yes, I heard that.**

Yeah? Okay. A lot of people lost money in 2007, 2008, 2009. A lot of people lost their homes back in those times. They didn't go kill people. Was it the notoriety because his dad was a bank robber? Who knows? I mean, who knows? Was he actually a psychotic person and he hid it that well? One thing I don't agree with what's happening is all the lawsuits.

**Tell me about the lawsuits against the MGM. What do you think?**

We discussed it because anything I'm going to do, she's going to be a part of no matter what. She is my train of thinking. The MGM did nothing wrong. Mandalay Bay did nothing wrong. The venue did nothing wrong. I, as a citizen of the United States, do not want my luggage checked every time I turn around. It's bad enough you fly. All the times I flown, my luggage has been checked once. You get the little tag, "We looked through your stuff." Great, you saw my pink panties. I hate the idea that I can't walk her to the gate when she flies; that I have to leave her at security because of what these people did.

**Now, you can get a special pass and you can walk her to the gate.**

But she's nineteen.

**I know, but you still can do it.**

She's mentally ill, no.

**But you don't have to tell them why. They can't ask.**

Ah. Maybe I'll do that.

**Just know that you can.**

If you need me to, I will. You let me know.

**Yes, any time that you need to, you can do it.**

That's good to know because I actually kind of think I want to this time.

**Just sit there and chat, yes.**

You have to be there so early now.

**I used to love that, just sitting there chatting with the person or they're chatting with me before I fly away.**

And the hug right before they get on.

**Yes. That's amazing. We can't do that any longer.**

I just think the lawsuits are stupid. I can see suing his estate. I'm not going to. I don't need it. My insurance pays for most of the mental treatment we need, her medication. Dale has been very supportive, in fact, giving us money, so he makes sure we go. I don't need it. But do the families that need it that their major breadwinner was shot? Did they have insurance? I don't know. A lot of younger folks don't believe in insurance, it seems. I'm insured. That's one thing I was making sure of, is she getting everything? And, yes, she will. I'm hoping that every bit of that money goes to help the people that were injured and that hadn't been able to work.

Like I said, I know of two people that have been fired. There has actually been four people that I know of that have been fired, but one got fired inadvertently and got rehired for

Amazon; another one was a nurse. The reason that they're saying on Facebook is their attitudes have changed or their demeanors have changed. Has my attitude at work changed? Yes, it has. I'm actually more pleasant, I think, but I'm also a lot quieter. I used to be very outgoing. My job is actually, if you come into our building, I'm your hostess until you know where you're going, as part of my job. Until you your representative gets there, if I pass you, "Hey, how it's going?" That's how I am. I'm the face of Ocean Spray for Henderson plant. I love my job. I love meeting people.

But I don't think that suing the MGM and Mandalay Bay...I don't think Mandalay Bay is at fault. Right now, though, I see the hotel and it makes me shake. I don't know why. That will always happen. But think back to '87 when the fire at the MGM killed eighty-seven people. Well, we sold that building, didn't we, and it became Bally's. You asked 90 percent of the people that are on that Strip, do you know what happened here?

**No, no one knows.**

No clue. No clue at all.

**What do you think should happen to the venue?**

It's a prime venue and that's the whole thing, but is it honoring them to use it again, or is it disturbing their memory? I'm like fifty-fifty. That's the perfect venue. We went to Helldorado there earlier this year. It's used for more than just Route 91. It is used for iHeart Radio. It is used for Helldorado. I don't even know what all it's used for, but it's used year round. I think Route 91 is the last thing of the year before winter sets in and it's kind of too chilly to be doing an outdoor. We have been very fortunate every year at Route 91 to have eighty and ninety degree weather and beautiful sunshine. Last year right as Luke Bryan went on, it got cold and windy. So the last performer of the last day, cold and windy.

I don't want it to be a memorial. I don't think we need like the Twin Towers have. I don't think we need that. I don't think I want that. I don't think it needs to be something that big. I do think we need to remember it and keep it in our history. If you look back at Vegas history and all the deaths even from gangsters, how many people died in different places in this town? It's horrible when you think about it. I think they need to just leave it be for a couple of years at least. Any venues, they can do it across the street from the SLS where they held Rock in Rio a few years ago. That's a nice big place. It's huge. It will hold anything that Route 91. If it held Rock in Rio, which was pop and rock, for two weekends, it can hold a Route 91; it can hold an iHeart Radio; it can hold something like that. Traffic, no different than the traffic...We're there. Hotels, there aren't as many hotels right there as they are on that side, but maybe it would give a boost to the economy on that side of the Strip.

**Exactly. What have you learned about yourself from this?**

*From this I'd have to say I learned that—I went through a lot of, do I want to go into the military? It makes me want to go into the military more. It just kind of solidified everything I want, especially with my work. They're helping me try to get over my anxiety. I'm working every day with my boss. She's standing right next to me on the line and if I have an anxiety attack, she'll be there to calm me down, and especially so I don't get over stressed out. All that just kind of comes in together. I'm learning about everything new. I've never had anxiety before. I've never had stress. I'm learning how to cope with it.*

When you think about it, being old, you're always like—

**Stop using that word. I'm so much older than you are.**

What are you going to do if somebody attacks you? What are you going to do if somebody happens? Everybody you talk to, "Well, I would stand up; well, I would run." It's like you never

really know until it happens. I learned that I'm going to stand up and try to fight and I'm not going to run. I guess I don't have a runner's instinct in me for something like that; that I'm braver than I thought I was. The instinct to protect is very strong whether it had been her or whether it had been my friends there. It is a learning experience.

**In closing, is there anything you want to tell me about your wall?**

My wall started actually with the first two pictures on the left and the right, 2014 and 2016. I'm missing 2015. I haven't yet been able to obtain a poster. I couldn't buy one there. I haven't been able to get one after. I don't know if they didn't make them that year or something. I just like the looks of the posters. I finally framed them before we moved into this house. I talked to her and said, "We've got a lot of wall space. Let's do something." I always had our wristbands and that's because Route 91 meant something to me. It was her first major concert where we actually got to hang out and chill as mom and daughter. It wasn't mom-daughter as an eight-year-old. It was a miniature adult. Now I'm a full adult. To be able to put that up...

We actually bought this year's poster the first night. I was like, "Let's get it and let's get it in the room; let's have it." When Ten One happened and we had it at home and we talked about it, I said, "I still want to put it up, but I want to put a black ribbon on it." I want to honor the people that were there and remember them. That's her hat for Route 91 from—

*Two thousand fourteen.*

—2016.

*Sixteen?*

It matches the '16 poster. She actually does have the hat for this year. She's a hat person and I'm a poster person. We have tank tops and stuff. Then everybody started with the wristbands, so I have wristbands. I got a Channel 13 wristband and a couple of others, a law group that was doing

the support of the Vegas Run, Hardagee Law Group.

*I don't know.*

Then other people have made them. If you go on the website, there are so many people doing fundraisers with shirts. I just bought a Country Strong one for her and I got her a hoodie. Then mine, I also got a Route 91. We do have Vegas Survivor T-shirts. Survivor is kind of a...I don't know if it's the right word for us. A lot of it is going around and it's been a big discussion on the websites. Is *survivor* a good word? Did we survive? Yes. But we also fought. We're warriors. We're not lying down and taking this. We're out there fighting still.

**The word *survivor* may be too...**

Passive.

**...passive for you. Okay, I see.**

I feel more like a warrior. I agree with the gentleman. I didn't just lay there and take it. I was protecting my daughter. I tried to help. She tried to help. Her calming voice kept me calm. Her listening to me and not fighting me helped. If she would have been fighting me or something like that we could have a whole different story right now. I think *warrior* is a better word for a lot of people because I don't think there was anybody there that night that was out for themselves. I don't want to say it's because we're country music fans, but because of our love of our country that we love the people in it, too, and that's what you find a lot. The rodeo, we open every rodeo with a prayer to our God and the National Anthem. There is nobody kneeling. There is nobody, well, I'm going to protest this. What's there to protest? You didn't die for that flag. Sorry. You didn't fight for that flag. I have a big issue with that. You'll never see a Green Bay Packer kneeling. Packer, Packers. Country also means we're going to fight for each other; we're going to be there for each other. We are there for each other now. If one person posts on that website, "I

need somebody," they'll have twenty people at their doorstep in a minute. I'm very fortunate I have her. I'm very fortunate I have my friends. They've never asked what happened. They don't want to know. I did show my best friend the one video Fox did. They did the hour-long special on YouTube. When did that come out, beginning of November?

*Beginning of November, yes.*

**We're capturing all of those at UNLV.**

It was by Fox News. It's on YouTube. I want to say it was done November first. It takes from, just kind of like what you just did, the very beginning of the fun loving, showing videos.

Actually when we heard it, of course, the gunshots is when all the sudden my heart rate went up. I'm looking at it when I'm watching it with my best friend. I wanted her to know what we were going through. It kind of helps. Then I saw us in it again—I'm like, oh, yea, we're in it—to the very end, to the rescuing of people, to the helping of people. I think it's very important that everybody knows there are so many more heroes than the guy who stole the white pickup truck, which awesome for him, awesome. I'm not demeaning him. But there were a lot of unsung heroes there. Ryan, the gentleman we had—and I'll give you his name—he's an unsung hero.

**Do you think it would be okay for me to have his number?**

I don't have his number, but I can message him. I have him on Facebook. He's my unsung hero. I think she tried for three weeks after to find him, calling the MGM Grand because he said he worked in the MGM IT Department, unable to. One day on Facebook in the survivors group, I saw him. I'm like, "Are you this man?" He goes, "Yes, it's me." I said, "I can't thank you enough." Because I wouldn't have been able to do what I needed to do if it wouldn't have been for him. So there's a lot of unsung heroes out there.

*Even like the people—I hang around with the Huntridge community a lot down at Sportsman's*

*Warehouse and all that—ex-fireman, ex-policemen. I shouldn't say ex; I should say former. They've gone through crisis management and they are helping me through it. They're making sure I'm there. I'm still there. We're planning out a shooting trip to help me get back used to being around that firearm again, being used to gunfire and not going and hiding in a hole.*

**That's good because you want a military career as part of what you're going to do, so I respect what they're doing for you. That's wonderful.**

It's very nice of them. She's known Danny since she was about—twelve?

*Yes, twelve.*

When she first took up archery, he was her coach. We'd go shooting up at the Clark County Range, shooting archery. Yes, we have a full complement of bows and arrows, too. We're ready for the zombie apocalypse because you can run out of bullets.

His name is Ryan Dayley; R-Y-A-N, D-A-Y-L-E-Y. I will message him. Like I said, unsung heroes out there. Even right now there is a lot of people that aren't handling it as well. I was told my whole life, you need to be strong; you're a woman in this world and you need to be strong. There are times I break and she sees it mainly. I hate the fact she does, but she does understand.

**I don't think it's breaking. I think we are just taking a breath.**

It could be.

**I think that we are just gaining strength and I think we're supposed to let it out like that.**

Yes. It took six weeks to get a decent nights' sleep. I would wake up, until the time change, it was actually one a.m. and then it was midnight. I never realized while I was waking up until one day I looked at my Fitbit and my heart rate is over a hundred. While I'm sleeping? No, my heart rate's at sixty. I was reliving something every night. I just don't remember. I don't remember the

nightmares. You hear people with nightmares. I don't remember, but obviously I was doing it because I was waking up. One a.m. is about when we were safe, is when I finally had her in my arms and we were okay. Nobody is coming to get us. We're done. It was the experience I never want to live again. It's made it hard to go to places just because, where is the nearest exit? When we were at Luke Combs in Gilley's, one of the other survivors, he noticed I'm just looking around. He was like, "We can get out the glass windows." Okay, we can. It's one of those things. It's, where can I get out? There's a crush of people. Well, what am I going to do? It's a big survival thing to be aware of your surroundings. My work actually does train for active shooter ever since people want to come into buildings. Even though we do have a guard at our gate that does not mean they cannot get in that front door. We're not fenced in. They come in and you never know what to do, where to go, how to act. To be aware of your surroundings.

**We've been taught that we can act differently whenever we need to. So people were beginning to do that more and more.**

*In my work if I'm not in the back somewhere near the kitchen or on the front line, I'm always making sure I have both of my exits in my line of sight.*

It's just a new normal.

**A new reality.**

Yes, a new normal.

**I appreciate this so much. Is there anything else that either of you would like to add?**

No, but I don't think gun control is going to stop this. I don't think telling everybody, okay, you've got to wait sixty days to own a gun and, no, you can't own this type of gun or you can't have a bump stock or you can't have this; that's never going to be the answer.

**So even bump stocks don't bother you?**

No. I think the answer is being aware of the people you know. All the sudden Cody is starting to act different. Why is she acting different? Is she on drugs? Has she got a new influence in her life? Being aware and not being afraid to say, "Hey, I noticed. You want to talk or you want to do something?" Even saying, "I don't know this person very well, but they're not acting their normal anymore." Or, "Hey, I just saw my neighbor stock up on fifty rifles." I don't think he needs fifty rifles. I don't think anybody needs fifty rifles. Not being afraid to call the police and saying something. I think it's just being aware of our surroundings in this day and age.

**I think courage is underrated. I think courage is important. You said that you found that you are more brave. But doing something like, too, just being mindful and having the courage to take the next step; that's wonderful. That's the way we have to live.**

Yes. That's the day and age we live in nowadays.

**Yes. Ladies, I appreciate this so much.**

Well, us, too, because I definitely want this in our history. I want her grandkids to be able to say, oh, this is what happened to them.

**Yes, exactly. So I thank you. Anyone else that you know that feels the same way you feel and would like to have their memories recorded, we want to do it. If you know any first responders...We have not started talking to any of the first responders yet because police departments and fire departments have become very, very protective.**

Right. Because everybody right now thinks this is a conspiracy theory; that there is more than one shooter; that the cops were in on it. I've heard that so many times.

**Okay, so that's what happening.**

Yes. Your police aren't going to talk to you until this is closed. That's a given.

**I can understand that. I'm okay with that.**

That's it. I do know a nurse who worked at Sunrise that night. I will talk to her.

**If she would like to do it without having to say anything to Sunrise, we would love to have her. We don't want it to interfere in any way with what she does at Sunrise. We'll go to her house and talk to her.**

We know her from the gym. I know two nurses. I always make sure they work out next to me in case I keel over.

**How old are you?**

Fifty-two.

**Oh my God, you're so young. She's so young.**

But she was there. I wasn't sure if either one was there working. Orangetheory is our gym. When I finally went back, I got hugs. I had one of my friends there talk to me the whole time because they know when I'm running my brain is in itself. She's talking to me the whole time. She did not shut up. I'm like, jeez, how can you be running this fast and talking? But it was like coming back to another family, so I was very, very grateful. They've been great to both of us. I know she was there because when I said, "Were you working?" She goes, "Yes." She was very upset because one of the girls that wasn't working the ER and the triage and all that said, "Wasn't that an exciting night?" She's like, "No." It's kind of like my stepfather said when I called him on the way home—this is one of the reasons I'm not upset—"So are you all over this now?" "No. No, I'm not. No, we're not. Goodbye. We're just on our way home." So they think, okay, it happened; it's like falling down and scraping your knee and you get back up. Yeah, you're over it. Are you going to be a little more cautious the next time you skate? You can be a little more cautious. But this was a life-changing event. But I will ask Jess if she wants to—not Jess, Jill. I'll reach out to Ryan.

**Thank you so much.**

**[End of recorded interview]**