

AN INTERVIEW WITH ASHLEY NITZ

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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVE

**This is Claytee White. It is February sixth, 2018. I am downtown Las Vegas today in this wonderful building.**

**Give me your name and spell it and tell me about this building.**

My name is Ashley Nitz, A-S-H-L-E-Y, and the last name Nitz, N-I-T-Z. This building is my father's building. He's an attorney. I'm an attorney. I have worked for him my entire career. We used to have a building down on Third Street—not we, my dad had a building on Third Street. It's where the new parking lot for the Regional Justice Center is, so it's Third and Bonneville basically; our old office building was there. They took it by eminent domain. He got paid, but they took it by eminent domain. He had to find new property and a new building. He built this building in I'm going to say—I'm terrible at this; I should know better—but it's been at least fifteen, twenty years probably that we've been here.

**This building is on the corner of—**

Tenth and Bonneville.

**Tenth and Bonneville. It is beautiful.**

Thank you. Thank you. My sister designed it. Obviously she didn't build it, but she did all the decorating and all the design inside the building.

**I like the artwork.**

That's my dad's actually. They're all photographs and they're all photographs that my dad took.

**In the lobby downstairs?**

Oh, in the lobby downstairs, no. Some of them, yes. The big pictures of the waterfalls, that's Victoria Falls—no, it's not. It's not Victoria Falls. It's a falls in another country. It's not Victoria Falls. In any event, I don't know where it is. He would be able to tell you, obviously. But, yes, if it's a photograph, then it's a photograph that my father took on all of his travels around the world.

If you go through the hallways out in—this office is Suite 201. We're in Suite 201 and there's at least five or six offices inside this suite and then there's other suites that are different attorneys' offices and stuff like that. Down the halls and downstairs throughout the halls there's pictures that my dad took and had blown up and put throughout the building.

**Are you a traveler as well?**

I wish. No, unfortunately.

**So he didn't take you on those travels.**

He did. Some of them he did. We went to Europe a couple of times. My mom and dad were big travelers and they've been all over the world. They haven't been to every country, but they've been to a lot of them.

**Oh, I love that.**

My mom has a whole wall of bookcases and probably three-quarters of it is filled with all kinds of memorabilia from all the places they've been.

**Oh, that's great. What a wonderful way to...**

Yes, yes, yes.

**That's great.**

Yes, it is.

**Where did you go to law school?**

I went to Whittier Law School. They didn't have a law school back then, here in Las Vegas. I started at UNLV and then transferred to UNR and then went to Whittier Law School, which is in L.A. proper. It was a small school when we went; my sister and I went together. There's three girls—me, Stacy and Gina. Gina actually works in this office as well. I was hoping you'd get to meet her, but she wasn't at her desk.

I took a little bit longer to go through college than I should have, but I just didn't know what I wanted to do when I grew up. I played around a little bit when I went to UNLV and then I transferred up to UNR to go where my sister was. Then we graduated from UNR together and then we went to law school together and graduated from law school together. We took the bar together.

**All three sisters attorneys?**

No. My little sister, Gina, she didn't really like school, as I didn't, either, but then I didn't have a choice. I had to figure out what I wanted to do in school or get a real job. But she has always run the office. She's the office manager and she manages this building now. She takes care of all the tenants and all of that.

**She's the one who did the artwork in the hallways?**

My dad did all that. He had it done. It was his photos. He blew them all up and then he took them and had them put on the canvasses and stuff like that.

**Which sister is that helped design the building?**

The middle sister, the other attorney. She kept her license up until about last year, but she hasn't practiced law since her second child was born and that was nineteen years ago.

**Wow. Is she coming back?**

No.

**The family is from Nevada?**

My mom and dad were from Brookings, South Dakota. My dad was...This is terrible. I should know this, but I don't. In 1952, maybe, in the early 1950s, instead of getting drafted, he joined the Air Force and was stationed out here at Nellis. When he went to law school and met who ended up being his best friend who was from here or had been here—George Cromer was his

name—he talked my dad into coming to Vegas to practice law. He had already been here, so he knew he liked it. That's how they came to Vegas. My mom and dad moved here in '59 or '60, and I was born in 1962.

**You have memories of around '65-66?**

Probably. I can look back at pictures. I don't know that I have the memory itself, per se, but I do have the pictures.

**Where did you go to school?**

I went to Twin Lakes Elementary, Gibson Junior High and Western High School.

**So public school.**

Public schools all the time, yes. We lived over off—actually my little sister, Gina, still lives in that house—but we lived over across from the Muni Golf Course off Vegas Drive between Decatur and Rancho, right over by Siegfried and Roy's old house in Stonehaven.

**Oh, that's amazing. Tell me about your love for country music.**

I wasn't really a big fan. I'm just a fan of music in general and having fun. My girlfriend that I went to the event with asked me if I wanted to go. I had been to several country concerts with her and several other friends over the last couple of years, but before that I really wasn't...I didn't dislike it, but I just wasn't that big of a fan. But she asked me to go. She usually goes with another group of friends and they were going to go do the VIP thing and she didn't want to spend that much money, so she asked if I would go and just pay the regular price. And I said, "Yeah, why not? What the heck? It sounds like a fun time." She always talked about how much fun she had.

I had gone to the ACMs, which was not the same thing, but it was something similar where they had all the bands in one place, and so that was fun. I went there one day. That one

you could buy the—I think it's the ACM or CMAs. I can't remember now. I think it's the ACMs. Anyway, I had gone a couple of years ago to one of the days of that and it was a lot of fun and I'm like, *okay, I kind of get the idea of what it's like*, so, "Yes, I'll go." I bought the tickets and we went.

**All three days?**

For all three, yes. For Route 91, you had to buy all three days. That was my hesitation. It was like, *I don't know if I can handle all three days, first of all*. That's a lot of money to commit to just a concert. But I decided, yes, that would be a lot of fun. I did have enough time to be able to pay for it over time and all that. So it worked out. It was good.

**Tell me about Friday night. Did you stay at home or did you—**

We ended up staying at the Trump. My girlfriend has a friend who had a time-share there, and so we stayed there. I had literally just got back on Thursday night from being in Texas for ten days. I had taken two U-Hauls and a trailer full of supplies and donations to Texas.

**This was to Houston?**

To Houston. We left the nineteenth of September and I got back the twenty-eighth, so I was gone for ten days; something like that.

**Tell me what that was like.**

I needed to do something. That was one of the things I knew I could do. I have lots of friends and I knew that they would step up to the plate and bring donations. My mom and I and my sisters had done this before after Katrina. My dad was the attorney for Ralph Engelstad for the Imperial Palace. My dad especially was heavily involved in helping rehabilitate and bring back the Gulf Coast area back to life. He was down there every week for a couple of years after Katrina. He was there the day after Katrina because he was one of the trustees that was in charge of the

Imperial Palace and ran the Imperial Palace down there in Biloxi, Mississippi. Because we had done it before—for that time we filled up an entire semi, front to back, top to bottom.

**How do you decide what to put in there?**

Because my dad was down there and knowing what everybody wanted—they needed everything. They needed diapers, formula, clothes, shoes, so that's what we got, together with the Assistance League. They were especially involved. My mom was a member of the Assistance League and they were very helpful for the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

I actually contacted them again. Although they were really busy around that time of year, they allowed me to set up my truck, set it up in the parking lot to accept the donations. I just put it out on Facebook, "Everybody come give whatever you can." I wasn't getting a whole lot of feedback at first, so I wasn't sure what kind of truck I was going to need. I had originally reserved two twenty-six-foot trucks thinking, *I can fill those; I filled a full semi*. Then nobody was really responding. I had some response, which was awesome. So I downgraded to a fifteen-footer, I think. Then I ended up needing two of those and a trailer. I definitely could have filled even more, but I just hadn't gotten the feedback that I thought that I would get. Then I was afraid I was going to get a twenty-six-footer and barely fill it. So next time I'll know. Hopefully there won't be a next time.

**You drove it?**

I drove it along with a friend of mine. She was my passenger. Then my brother-in-law drove the other one. My sister and him, they've been together for fifteen years, but they aren't married.

**That's close enough.**

It's close enough. I call him my brother-in-law. So he drove the other one. He's from Alabama, so it was an area that he...They got hit down there as well or were affected by it. So he drove the

other one; that was something he really wanted to do. That was good. If we were just going to have the one big truck, it was just going to be my brother-in-law and I. But then another friend of mine named Alicia went with me.

By the time we got down there, Houston had pretty much been taken care of. We tried really hard to give some of the stuff that we had away and they said, "We are just inundated with so many donations, we just can't take any more," which we thought because we were coming a couple of weeks after the fact that that would be perfect timing and their supplies would have been depleted, but they really just didn't need anything else.

But also with Houston, they received the flooding, but not the devastation of the winds and everything. As bad and horrible as it was, they still had access to stores and stuff like that. They weren't as bad off. A lot of the people were just because of what they lost. But what they needed more than anything was cleaning supplies. One of our trucks was completely filled with nothing but cleaning supplies.

That actually had a lot to do with my daughter's ex-coach, sports coach. She ran track and field and cross country in high school. I saw what he was doing immediately after the Hurricane Harvey. I had already planned on it, but then I saw what he was doing. So I was asking him for help on what it is that they need since he was already down there. Through him I met another lady who was from Aransas Pass on the Gulf Coast, Aransas Pass, Texas. We took another full truck full of everything down there. I went back and forth from Katy, Texas, which is where one of my best friends lives—and we stayed with her and that's where we were trying to find somebody to help in the Houston area and it just wasn't happening. Now, we did take down fifty-eight—and the number just gives me the goosebumps—fifty-eight—because it was such a huge number to me—we had fifty-eight preschool chairs that another friend of mine had gotten



for me and put in there and then took those down to—that was one of the only places that was in the Katy area that we were able to help. One of the preschools there got completely wiped out, so we took down those chairs to them and some baby wipes and stuff like that.

I knew there was something I wanted to do and I knew I could do that. It ended up being a lot bigger of a donation than I thought initially, so that was awesome. I was down there. I hadn't slept a lot. Really busy, busy work. You don't sleep as well when you sleep in strange places and stuff like that. We're down there for four or five days longer than we thought.

**At one point you were at a girlfriend's house, but other times where were you sleeping?**

Two or three of the nights we were at my girlfriend's house. Then when we went down to Aransas Pass, we stayed with a couple who had put up my daughter's coach; Rick is his name. She said, "Of course, you can stay with us." Then the last night we were there we stayed with my girlfriend's friend from her childhood. Everybody was super gracious, really nice, super appreciative. It was a very emotional trip. It was physically exhausting, emotionally exhausting, but in a really good way. I mean, horrible to see that devastation. It wasn't worse than what I saw in Biloxi, Mississippi, but it had been awhile, so it was just as bad. But still, you just hate seeing something like that.

I got back Thursday night from that trip, caught a couple of hours of sleep and got up and headed to the Trump to check in and go to the concert that Friday night. We weren't there for very long the first night. My friend wanted to meet up with her other friends and nothing was connecting. I had a little bit of a meltdown that first night when I got there because when I got there, I was tired and I hadn't talked to my daughter who was away in school. I don't even know if I talked to her at all while I was in Texas. I got there and I went to try to Snapchat with my daughter or something and the phone wouldn't work. I was like, *what? Why won't my phone*

*work?* I started having a little bit of a meltdown. Emotions, blah, blah, blah.

**You were tired.**

I was tired. Then I started freaking out a little bit about the fact that I can't get ahold of her and that made me really uncomfortable, uneasy. I had a little bit of a meltdown. But we had some cocktails and we had fun. I was hoping to stay that night to see Eric Church, but we got there at four or five o'clock and he wasn't coming on until ten.

**That's a long time.**

It was a long time, so we just ended up leaving.

**Describe the venue somewhat by telling me where you were standing that first night.**

The first night we were standing at the right side of the stage as far up as we could get. Now, we weren't close to the stage, not by any stretch of the imagination. I'm not a big crowd person because I'm so short. I'm only five foot. I'm going to constantly get elbowed in the face or something. Then I'm down here and everybody else is taller and I'm feeling smothered and claustrophobic. We were up in the crowd, but not up super close to the stage, but we were on the grassy area that was right in front of the stage. But we were on the right side and that's where the VIP is. My friend Laura was going to look for her friend, but it was so crowded we really couldn't get up there. So we stayed there for a while and then we decided to leave.

I was feeling no pain. That was the other thing; I didn't really eat a whole lot the entire time I was there. Of course, come in and have a couple of cocktails with not a whole lot of sleep and not a lot of food in your system...I think it was Friday night that we went and ate. We went over to the Fashion Show Mall and ate at Maggiano's. Then we went back to the hotel. I immediately passed out.

**Were you glad you had made the decision to stay at a hotel?**

Yes. It was a little bit easier. Initially the plan was, to save money we were going to stay at my girlfriend's house. She lives on the southwest side of town and we were just going to Uber back and forth. The opportunity came up for her to get this hotel. At first I was like, "Well, I thought we were going to try to save money." But then she explained several things. This was equipped with a full kitchen.

**Because it's a time-share.**

And it's a time-share. I'm like, "Okay, yes, now I get it. That sounds perfect." No matter what, we're Uber backing and forth, so it was a little bit closer from the Trump than from her house. We like to do those little staycations every once in a while.

**I think that's the great thing about this city.**

Yes, it is, except they're getting too expensive to do that anywhere now.

**Because they don't give us the local's discount.**

They don't give us a local's discount anymore, that's right.

**Describe the Trump to me.**

The Trump is a really nice, quiet hotel.

**Because there's no gaming.**

It's no gaming. There's not a lot of people walking around. It was busy, but not like having to walk through a casino or anything like that. They did have what I think was a restaurant/bar when you walk in the front doors off to the right. We were focused on getting up to the room and getting back out the door to the venue, and so we never really looked around, although Saturday we got up and ordered breakfast. The Trump is very nice, very nice, high end, very clean, lots of marble. I don't even know that I ever saw carpets anywhere because usually there's the notorious casino carpeting throughout the casinos. You look down and you're dizzy. I don't recall seeing

any of that. But very clean. The room was beautiful, very spacious. Now, I don't know if there's a difference between the time-share units or the hotel rooms. I don't think so. I don't know if you'd call it a boutique hotel, but they're nice size rooms. The bathrooms are big and beautiful, very roomy. They had a separate tub and shower, very nice, very, very nice. I think we were on the thirty-fourth floor, so we had a nice view.

Saturday we woke up, ordered some breakfast, had a Bloody Mary, went down to the pool. That was interesting. We were down there and I was like, *why is nobody in the water?* It's at the end of September.

**Yes. We had nice weather.**

Oh, it was beautiful weather. It was nice and warm. I looked around and I'm like, *why is nobody in the water?* It's hot already, so I go to get into the pool and take a dip. Somebody comes running over. "You have to get out of the water; you have to get out of the water." I'm like, "What?" "They're shocking the water." So as soon as I get out and I go out and lay in the sun, I can feel the massive amounts of chlorine on my skin. Then I went over and rinsed off at the shower they had over there.

**They said that there was what in the water?**

They were shocking the water, which means that they were blasting it with as much chlorine as they could. At that point I'm like, *I don't even want to know why; I don't even want to know.* We stayed down there for a while, but we couldn't get in the water and they didn't know how long we couldn't get in the water. I'm like, *okay, I can't sit down here. I'm from Vegas, but I can't seat in the heat without water, sorry.* So we went back upstairs and we just decided, *okay, we're going to go earlier today to the venue.* I think we got there at two.

**What time did it actually open?**

Two. The gates opened at two. We decided since we couldn't do anything else, we would go over there, so we got there at two. I think it was that morning that I discovered the House of Blues venue at the festival. We decided we were going to check that out because it had an upstairs VIP level that you could purchase tickets to get up to. You paid a hundred dollars and you could go up top on the venue.

**Where in the venue is this?**

If you're looking at the—

**You're the first one who's mentioned this.**

Really? If you're looking at the stage, it's just to the left. I don't know if anybody's talked about where the medical tent was. There was the Coca-Cola VIP, which was directly to the right of the stage, and then there was a gate, and then the House of Blues venue.

There is a picture in here, I'm sure. This is from the shooting, Metro. I know there's a picture of the venue from here. I just don't know exactly where it is. Oh, here it is.

Here is the main stage. Here is those Coca-Cola suites, the VIP seats. Right here, this semicircle right here, this is the House of Blues. Underneath it's all shaded. They don't have air-conditioning, but they have fans blowing in there, which was much better than standing out in the heat and getting no air because there was no wind at all at this venue this weekend. The whole top of it was a VIP area. They had tables up along the rails and then they had beanbags and they had a swing. What do you call them? A hammock. Then they had bleachers as well. Right here, on this side is a bar and then these were all bleachers. They only went up about five. They weren't very tall. They didn't go real high. Here was one gate. From my understanding, this is about where the medical tent was, somewhere in there, because there was this gate and this gate that we could have gone out, but we didn't.

**Were those gates open?**

These gates were VIP gates.

**Meaning?**

Meaning you had to have a VIP pass to come in and out of them; we did not. We had to enter off Reno and Las Vegas Boulevard. There were two gates; there was a gate at Mandalay Bay Road and Las Vegas Boulevard and Reno and Las Vegas Boulevard; those are the only two full access gates that you could go into. There was one or two gates over here. I think there's only the one. But these gates were all VIP, so you couldn't enter unless you had a VIP pass. I'm not positive, but I think there was another one right in here somewhere that you had to have a VIP pass for as well.

**And there's a person standing there?**

Yes, yes. There was police and guys in their—women, too—in their security. They were private security. I honestly don't remember if they had guns or not.

I had found out that that House of Blues was there. We went in there. We were like, *at the very least we can go in there and sit down and have a drink and be out of the sun if we wanted to be*. We went in there and checked it out and then we went over and asked. Before spending the hundred dollars just for the day, we wanted to go up and see what it looked like to see if it was worth it. They would only let one of us go. I told my friend Laura, "You go ahead and go." She went up and she came back down and she said, "Oh, yes, we've got to go up there. It's awesome. It's a great view of the stage. You're up above everybody else." So we did that; we bought the ticket and we went upstairs.

There was like one open table that had a great view of the stage, so we grabbed that table and sat there for a while. Then I'm like, "Well, I want to go walk around." I had never been to

one of these before. I wanted to go shopping. I had to get something that had Route 91 on it. Anyway, we started chatting with these girls that were at the table next to us. They said they'd hold the table for us as long as they could. We exchanged phone numbers. Pretty soon they said, "Are you coming up any time soon? It's getting hard to hold this table. People are trying to take it."

So we went up there. I think it was already dark by then. It was either dark or just dusk. We went back up and we were up there for the... We actually ended up leaving early that night, too. We didn't stay until the very end, but we had been there since two. I think that we left around eight. That was still a long time to be there. We had gone down and gotten some food and stuff like that. When we went back up, we did have food, so it was still light when we went back upstairs. We left again and went back to the Trump. We Ubered; Lyft; I can't remember which one we did.

**And they were readily available?**

They sure were, then. We just called when we were leaving the Trump and we'd come down and they're pretty much right there. Friday night I called—I don't want to get into too much on this—Friday night I had called and the only thing that I didn't understand—and I understand why they don't want to have a lot of traffic, but there should have been a closer pick-up/drop-off location because then we had to walk all the way across the boulevard, all the way up into the valet area of the Luxor to be able to get Lyft or Uber, drop off and pick up.

**Oh, really?**

Yes. It was crazy. We got the Uber or Lyft, whichever one we used, to drop us off really close to the venue. Friday, he dropped us off on Reno. We just got out in the middle of the road basically. Because he's like, "I could get in trouble for this, but whatever. It's just stupid that I have to drive

you guys. I'm right here. I have to take you guys all the way up there. It's just kind of silly."

My girlfriend and I ended up getting in a little tiff Friday night and that's one of the reasons we left early. I contacted the Uber and then had to cancel it. Then we walked over to the MGM and we got an Uber from there.

**You could get it from MGM or Luxor.**

Yes, yes. I forgot about that. Friday night we walked to the MGM and then got an Uber from there and took that to the Fashion Show and that's where we ate dinner.

In any event, Saturday night we ended up leaving a little early again. Then Sunday we didn't get there until...I think I slept in for the first time on Sunday. We just kind of slept in, took our time getting ready. So Sunday I think we got there about four and we did the same thing; we went to the House of Blues.

Let me backtrack a little bit. Saturday, at House of Blues, we grabbed a table and a bartender came over. We weren't sure whether she was a bartender or a waitress. I thought she was a waitress, honestly. Anyway, her name was Heather. She was just super bubbly, just a great personality, one of those types of people. We were taking pictures with her and posting them on Facebook. "Found a new friend; this is awesome." She is a great person. We met up with her.

Sunday we went back to the House of Blues. Because we were there later, it was a little bit more crowded than when we had gotten there on Saturday, but we did find a table. Grabbed Heather and she came over and she already knew what we wanted. She remembered our drink order and stuff like that. Then we again decided to go upstairs. We're like, "It's the last night. We might as well." We did get there a little bit later, and so there were no tables to be had up top this time at all. We ended up sitting in the bleachers.

**But they charge you a hundred dollars still?**



Yes, yes, yes, because you're up higher, you've got your private bar, you don't have to go downstairs and all of that. We sat up there. I had a friend. We both had seen several people that we knew on Saturday throughout the day and stuff like that. I actually had a friend—two of them—that came from Iowa and Kansas City. I had met them at that ACMs that I was talking about.

**[Pause in recording]**

**Your girlfriends from Iowa and Kansas City.**

They had texted me that they were down below the House of Blues. Laura and I were upstairs sitting. There were no tables available and no other seats, really. The only thing that we had available to us were the bleacher seats, so we sat in the very front row of the bleacher seats. We didn't want to lose those seats. I said I would go down and see my friends and come back up and then she wanted to go see her friends and that was fine, so that's what we did. I think that I had gone down before Jason Aldean even started to see my friends. My friend Laura—by the time I got up there, Jason Aldean had already started a couple of songs—my recollection is she went and saw her friends between—no, sorry.

**So Jake Owen.**

Yes. Jason Aldean had not started already. She went down and saw her friends while Jake Owen, whoever was playing between Big and Rich and Jason Aldean. I think it's Jake Owen, but I'm not positive. While Laura was down seeing her friends, I was sitting up there just looking around, people watching, enjoying the music. I remember having a thought looking at the Mandalay Bay looming over there and then all the people that I could see from my seat standing in front of the stage, and my thought was, *wow, somebody could have a heyday or a field day, whatever, right now*. It wasn't a good thought, but it wasn't something that I thought, *oh my gosh, I've got to get*

*out of here; we're in danger; something horrible is going to happen.* Nothing like that. But I think that it might have been a thought that helped me to make the decision to leave early because I was hell bent on staying until the end this night. We had left early Friday night and Saturday night and I was like, *I paid a lot of money. This is the big headliner, final night. I want to stay until the end.*

When my friend Laura came back, Jason Aldean started playing and he played a couple of songs. I don't know whether it was at the very beginning of "Any Old Barstool" or right at the end of the song before that, but she wanted to go, and I'm like, "Okay." I don't know if it was the thought that I had or just being exhausted, whatever, but I gave up my hell bent position and I said, "Okay, we can go."

We walked down the stairs and then we walked through the House of Blues. The stairs were on the backside, so on Giles Street. We walked down those stairs and we walked through the House of Blues to go out the front doors of the House of Blues tent. We looked for Heather, the bartender. We couldn't find her, so we just kept going out. We got just outside the doors of the House of Blues venue and we started to go take a right to go towards the north end of the venue, which is the exit that we went in and out of every day. I don't know which gate it was, but it was the gate that you entered on Las Vegas Boulevard, but it was the north end. We got out there. We stopped and turned around to look towards the stage because it was "Any Old Barstool." It was actually one that I recognized and Laura knew. We stood there for a minute and that's when we heard the first couple of pops.

I looked at Laura and I said, "Was that fireworks?" As soon as I said it, I knew it wasn't. And she said, "No, that was gunfire. We've got to get out of here." We started walking fast towards the only exit we knew of, although we had looked at the exit for two days that we could

have gone out, but there was no—especially at that moment it was flight. We weren't really even thinking.

In any event, we started heading towards the back, and then the first rapid fire succession started. We're running and I said, "That sounds like a machine gun and it sounds like it's coming from the top of the Mandalay Bay." I thought it was coming either from the top of Mandalay Bay, the roof, or like the Foundation Room balcony. Laura said, "That's an automatic rifle."

We were running. Then there was the break in the firing and we kind of slowed down, confused probably. I can't even tell you what it is that we were thinking. I do know that we stopped. How I know that is I remember shortly after the second barrage of bullets started, I remember looking and people were screaming and running right at us. That's when we realized.

#### **Why were they running away from the exit?**

They were running away from the front of the stage. They were running towards the north end to get out. People were screaming. There's a lot that I don't remember, but I remember that very clearly. Then I remember turning around and Laura is like, "We have to run; we have to run." So we started running again.

Well, during the next break in the bullets, we took cover between a food trailer and this serving table that they had set up, which was a long metal table. We went behind that when the bullets started again, when the third barrage started, because they sounded like they were coming closer; the bullets sounded like they were coming closer. We took cover and we could hear them hitting the trailers, the ground, whizzing by. We took cover. Then in the next break again, I had—well, so back up a little bit.

My recollection is a little bit different from my friend Laura's on how we got behind this table. But my recollection is that we were running and there was a girl that was crouched down

in front of this table, but just kind of out where everybody's running and everything. She was crouched down. She was frozen in fear, screaming. I grabbed her and said, "You've got to get out. You've got to hide. Come on. We've got to take cover. We've got to take cover. You can't be out here in the middle." So I grabbed her and I took her with me behind this table. Laura was already behind there. Say, this is the length of the table. This is the north end. We're running this way. We take cover back here. Laura is right here. I end up a little bit behind with this girl. Then I look in—I'll never forget this—I remember looking in and the kid that had served us—we ended up at the same food place we had gotten food the day before or even that day. Now I don't remember. But he was tucked up underneath the table, just frozen fear, the look of death in his eyes. He was like, "I'm afraid I'm going to die; I'm afraid I'm going to die." I'll never forget that. I don't know what happened to him. I think that he was probably okay. He was tucked up in there pretty good.

There was the next break in the bullets and Laura said, "We have to go." she grabbed my hand. I grabbed the girl's hand and I said, "We have to run now." I was repeating what Laura was saying, "We have to run now." I grabbed her. I don't remember after that. I don't know if she took any steps with us, if she never grabbed my hand, or if she let go at some point. I'm pretty sure that I grabbed her and started to pull her up, but then I don't remember. I remember running, but it's almost like it was not real. Everything was just a blur.

Then the next thing I remember is running towards the north and I remember seeing that exit that we went out every day, which was that gate. I said, "Let's go this way." Nobody was going that way. I wanted to go that way. Laura is like, "No, everybody else is going this way. Let's go this way." We went out the very north gate that runs along Reno. Now, whether we went through a gate that already existed or we went over a gate that somebody made, I don't know.

The last thing I remember is thinking I wanted to go that way and Laura said, "No, we have to go this way," and making that decision to go that way, and then I have no recollection until I got to the door of the Tropicana, the back of the Tropicana.

I can remember running through a parking lot because I can remember the asphalt. I can remember jumping over the parking bumpers, the white parking bumpers. I remember thinking, *I'm going to die; I'm not going to make it.* I couldn't breathe. My chest was on fire. My mouth was as dry as it could possibly be. I couldn't catch my breath. It's like, now I know what people who have asthma feel like, I think, because my chest was on fire. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't catch my breath. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't stop, though, but I did. I remember stopping a couple of times and my friend Laura—for the most part, we were holding hands. She was practically dragging me. She's in way better shape than I am. We did get separated a couple of times because of the crowd, but we always had sight of each other. But I do remember there was at one point—and I'm pretty sure it was right before we entered into the Tropicana—I couldn't see her anymore, so I started screaming her name. She was pretty far ahead of me, so she stopped until we could see each other and she waited for me. Then I caught up and then we continued to run.

Once we got into—the only thing that I can remember is some guy holding the door open and we ran into a door at the Tropicana. I didn't even know we were at the Tropicana. I had no idea where I was. But some guy was holding open a door and people were running into a hallway. I just remember seeing doors, like hotel room doors, and then I remember spilling out into the casino area and that's when people started screaming, "Shooter, shooter, there's a shooter," again. People started panicking and screaming again. And then I have no recollection running from that point until we ended up diving behind a planter somewhere. I had no idea

where. Somebody told us we were at the Tropicana. I found out a couple of weeks later because I went and tried to retrace my steps. I still can't figure out how I ran through an entire casino and have no recollection of it. But I never would have guessed. Had I not gone there myself, I would have argued with you if you told me that that's where I ended up. Except that I went and I asked, I said, "There was glass doors." I thought Hooters. I thought when I finally got to where I could look out these doors, there was a walkway and I thought I saw Hooters right to the right, but it was the walkway that went over to the MGM.

I don't remember going up these stairs or escalators. One level you went from the casino floor up the flight of stairs or the escalators to take the walkway over to the MGM. I remember thinking, *there's no way in hell I'm going back outside. I'm not going to be a sitting duck again.* I wasn't sure where we were. I'm like, "No way. For sure he can reach us if he was up on top of the Mandalay Bay. If we go back outside, he can see us."

There was a big huge planter that we dove behind that Laura said, "Let's go behind there." Luckily nobody else was behind there. It was actually just big enough for the two of us to hide behind. We were there for a couple of hours at least, sitting behind that.

**Did you use your cell phones at that point?**

Both of our phones started blowing up. "Are you okay?" At this point I was just trying to breathe and figure out what the hell was going on. My phone started blowing up. Because of all the people asking questions, I finally had the presence of mind, *I guess I probably better let somebody in my family know.* I texted my daughter and I said, "There's a live shooter, but I'm okay for now. We're hiding in a building." She didn't get that text. She never responded. She got it, but she was sleeping. This was ten something at night. Then I texted both my sisters and I told them, "There is a live shooter. I'm hiding in a building. I'm okay for now." I can't remember

exactly what I said now. I had so many people calling me and texting me.

We're hiding and I really don't want to be on the phone with anybody because people are running by. I don't know who they are. There were so many people that had run through while we were back there. There were several groups that had the same idea we did; didn't want to go outside and tried to come back behind where we were and we were already there. So they stayed there for a couple of minutes and then realized they're out in the open, so if somebody comes running through shooting, they're going to get shot because they're pinned up against the wall right there. We had lots of people come through. Then you'd hear the screams of, "Another shooter." People on their phones and you could hear people saying—some of the things we heard were, "There's a bomb at the Luxor; there's a package at the Luxor; there's a shooter at the New York New York." You could hear these things as these people were having conversations on their phones as they're running by, and we don't know anything.

My friend is on the phone with her son and he's contacting her coworkers who work in law enforcement, so he's getting information, which is good. Then we also have another friend who's updating us through text messages of what they're hearing on the news or scanners or whatever they're all listening to. But I'm not hearing back from my daughter or my sisters, so I'm leaving that alone. Because we had been at the venue all day, both of our phones died, which was really a huge bummer later. They were blowing up. They wouldn't have died through normal usage, but because I was getting text message after text message, notification from Facebook, Messenger, everybody is blowing up my phone. One of my friends finally put out on Facebook—because everybody knows I was there because I had posted it on Facebook. Everybody was worried. One of my friends did post on Facebook that they talked to me and I'm okay; I'm hiding; that we're okay for now. So that was good.

The next thing that I remember happening, this one girl came and she wanted to hide with us. She got completely separated from her group. I kept trying to scoot in so she could get in a little bit more, but she was still pretty out in the wide open. These two guys, big guys, cowboy hats came walking through and they saw her. Then he came closer and realized there was Laura and I back behind the planter. He told us that Tropicana was safe; that it's been cleared, but we would be safer if we went downstairs where the police was and where SWAT was and where they had the group of people gathering. I'm looking at him going, "No offense, dude, but I don't know you from Adam. You don't have a badge. I don't know who you are. I'm feeling like I'm pretty safe right here." Laura and I were on the same boat, "We're staying here." But the other girl was out in the open, so she's like, "Well, I'm going to go because I'm out in the open, so if he comes through those doors, I'm dead." I said, "Okay, I totally understand. I wish that I could make room back here for you, but I just can't. If you don't feel safe down there, come back up and we'll squish in as much as we can." She never came back, so I'm say assuming that she was okay.

I can't remember exactly when this started, but like we hadn't been scared enough, they started setting off the alarms in the Tropicana. Every time it went off, I thought I was going to die because my heart stopped. They would just set off the alarms, without any announcement at first.

**So no voice, just the alarm.**

Just the alarm, the siren. The sirens were so loud. I think we were right under the speaker, too. Then they finally, after a couple of times of doing that to us, they did come on and say, "The Tropicana has been cleared. It's safe. But no one can leave." They didn't say they were on lockdown, but they said, "No one can leave." Same thing, I suppose, but they didn't use the word



*lockdown*. The announcement came after those guys showed up, so that announcement came after that.

At that point there hadn't been a lot of traffic going through. Some people were coming in, but nobody was going out. I crawled out to look out this door to see what was going on and the only people I saw down there were those two guys. I crawled right back underneath behind the thing. I'm like, "I'm staying here. Those two guys are down there, but I don't know who they are, so let's just stay right where we are." Then they did it again.

I can't remember. I honestly have no concept of how much time had gone by. It seemed like hours, but it probably was fifteen minutes. They made another announcement saying, "The Tropicana is cleared; it's safe. We're on lockdown. But anybody in the building, please go to the convention area. We're asking everybody to get to the convention area. We have to do an accounting. We have to account for everybody. So everybody please come..." They made that announcement a couple of times. Then I crawl back out and I peeked out the door and then I saw police officers down there in addition to those two guys with the cowboy hats.

Then I crawled back and I said to Laura, "Well, there are police down there, so I feel a little bit better about getting up and leaving." We did stay there for a little bit longer. Then they made an announcement again. I'm like, "Okay, okay, all right, all right." Then we decided to go down. We went down the stairs or escalators, whichever one.

Actually, backtrack just a second. As we came out from behind the planter, this guy had come in the door. He was asking us what happened, what was going on. He said, "I'm a reporter. What is it? What did you guys hear?" We said, "We heard..." He goes, "What kind of guns do you think it was?" I said, "It was a machine gun. It sounded like it was coming from the top of the Mandalay Bay." He said, "Well, how long do you think that it lasted?" Both of us said, "It

lasted probably ten minutes." To find out we were pretty accurate on that was amazing that we actually had that right.

Then we went down and found our way to where there was groups of people. I don't know if they were gambling or not, but there were literally people sitting at slot machines. I'm like, *are you kidding me? Are you kidding me right now?* There were dealers standing at tables, but nobody was at the tables. But then I would see people at the slot machines. I'm like, *what? Really? What is wrong with you people?* That was flabbergasting to me. So they were gathering people. Again, I may have presumed something I shouldn't have presumed because they might have been just sitting there. I'm pretty sure some of them were actually gambling.

But in any event, they were pushing everybody to go to the convention center. As we approached the spiral—not the spiral, but there was like a rotunda area that had two curved escalators to go towards the convention area. As we got to that rotunda area, a group of police officers, which included SWAT, security and Metro, ran through and were screaming, "Stop, stop." Laura and I looked at each other like, *hell no*. We took off running and went into the bathroom and hid there for probably ten or fifteen minutes. There were people in the restroom when we first got in there and then there was nobody in there. We're like, "Okay, well, it's pretty quiet out there, so maybe we should go try again. We have to go where they're asking us to go." So we did that.

There was just hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people—it was like cattle, whatever that terminology is—going towards the doors or going towards that convention area. As you're walking down the hallway, which is pretty long from what I can remember going towards the...There are people that have got their phones plugged in. There's people covered in blankets that are on the floor sleeping and people just looking like death warmed over. It's a

horrible terminology to call it, but you can tell that they just endured something just unspeakable. Then I look at some of them like, *how the hell are they sleeping?* But they're probably people that had been drinking all day and were just beyond exhausted. I couldn't have slept to save my life. That's horrible terminology, too.

Anyway, I just remember we were walking and some people were really angry. "Why the hell is it taking so long? This is bullshit." People were really...There were a couple of girls back there that was just angry as all get out. They could not understand why they were being subjected to this. *Why do they have to go? Why can't they just leave? Why do they have to go into the convention area? Why do we have to wait all this time?* Well, the wait was because they were patting everybody down. I'm like, *okay, I got no problem with waiting as long as I got to wait. If you're patting everybody down, I totally understand.* There is still reports of gunmen everywhere. Some people were very angry about it. I remember this one guy just screaming—and I'm going to be cussing here—and he said, "What the fuck is wrong with you, fucking idiots? They're just doing their job. Let them do their job and get over it." People were angry and they're combative with the police officers that were patting everybody down. I was like, *how can anybody that just went through that be upset that they're patting down for weapons? How can you possibly be upset?* But there were a bunch of hotel guests who were not at the concert. They took everyone out of all the rooms, out of all the restaurants. They cleared the entire hotel and casino area and made everybody go into the convention area. They had to clear the entire hotel and everything. These were the people that were aggravated. But still, how can you be aggravated? There was not a lot of information at this point, but you do know that there's been a live shooting and people are dead. You don't know how many, but there are people dead and there are people injured. There are people with blood in the area we're in. There's people on crutches already with

their feet wrapped with arms in slings, with bandages across their heads, with blood right here. How can anybody wonder whether this was something that they should...? It just blew my mind that people were actually angry.

**Where did those people get that treatment?**

I would imagine that these were people that were running and got trampled or tripped and fell. I don't think that there were any of them that had gunshot wounds or anything like that. I did not know this at this time, but my understanding was that there was a triage center right there at Tropicana and the boulevard. They were treating people right out in front of the Tropicana Hotel and then probably sending them inside if they didn't need to be transported, but I didn't know that. I just figured they were people who had been injured. I thought there were medics right there inside the Tropicana that were helping people who had received injuries, coming over.

I have to back up because this just reminded me. When we had taken cover behind that table and I was with that girl, people had broken through and broke down the fence that was between these food trailers and started trampling me because I was at the end of the table and I was like this and I was squatted down like this; I wasn't sitting, but I squatted and my feet were out like this and people had started trampling over my legs and stuff like that. So I was screaming at the people, "Watch where you're stepping; you're stepping on me." I think that they were probably stepping on that other girl, too. That's when the break in the bullets, the next one came, and Laura said, "We have to run." I was like, *yeah, because I've got to take my chances running or I'm going to get trampled to death*, and that's always been a fear of mine because I am short. I'm like, *oh my gosh*. I would be the one that would go down because I'm shorter than everybody else and I would just go down.

**How were you dressed, you and Laura?**

I think I had on a black top and white skorts and I had my cowboy boots on.

### **Heels on the cowboy boots?**

Heels on the cowboy boots. I do have really high-heeled cowboy boots, but I knew that those wouldn't be comfortable. But these were my real cowboy boots. I think I had bought these at Christmas Country or whatever, at one of the NFR shows. They were sparkly and I was super excited. I had worn them a couple of times, but not for months. I had worn them that day.

Because we weren't walking around a lot and stuff like that they were fine.

I'm glad you asked that because then once I stopped running and was behind that planter, I realized my heels were killing me. I was like, *oh my gosh, my heels hurt so bad, but I can't take my boots off because if I have to run I don't want to have those off*. I was just in so much pain. When I was running and my heart was going a thousand miles an hour, I wasn't really paying attention to that. They were killing me.

We finally get through the crowd that's unruly and mad about certain things. Once we got past the officers that were patting us down, it was a completely different vibe. It was really kind of weird. Even after that we went through the hallway and maybe that's when you started seeing more people that had injuries and stuff like that than we saw up to the point of being patted down. I thought for sure they were going to—this is funny. Because I have huge calves, these boots didn't come all the way up, so they bent a little bit. So I stuffed rolled up socks down on the inside of my boots. I'm like, *oh, they're going to think that I've got something in my boots, oh my gosh*. But they didn't. They patted everybody's boots and everything. I guess they thought I just had fat ankles, I don't know. But it was soft. It wasn't anything hard.

Then we finally got into the room where there's thousands of people. There were several rooms, I guess. We ended up in this one room. Laura is like, "We have to find a place next to a

door." We have to be close to an exit because we still had no idea what was going on. There were still reports of other shooters and stuff like that. I think that at this point we knew that the shooter was down; we knew that the shooter was dead by this time, yes. But there was still the possibility of other shooters, I think. By this time we weren't getting a whole lot more information. Our phones were still alive, but barely. Hers was farther gone than mine was because she was actually on the phone with her son the entire time we were behind the planter. He was giving us information and stuff like that. But that completely wore her battery out.

So anyway, we finally find a spot. I have Type II Diabetes and at this point I need water desperately. We got some water. I've never been in this situation before, thankfully, but I've never been a situation where I've actually had too high blood sugar or too low blood sugar, so I've never had to do something about it. I didn't know whether my blood sugar was high or whether it was low. I just knew that I did not feel right. Obviously nobody did. So I tried to find a medic or somebody had a blood sugar meter or something. I didn't know what to do. There was a couple that we were sitting next to and she said that she had food; that she had snacks. She offered it up and I said, "You know what? I'm not sure what I need, so let me go see if there's a medic or something."

We came back. They saved our area for us. She offered me a couple of different things and I took some Nutter Butter. They had both peanut butter and a cracker. I'm like, *okay, well, it's got a little bit of sugar if it's low. It's got peanut butter if I need to bring it down.* So I just had some of those and that saved me honestly. I felt like I was going to pass out. Again, I didn't have any idea whether it was because it was high or low and I don't really know. I guess now I know that stress causes your blood sugar to go high, but I didn't know that because I have never really had to deal with that before.

In any event, we sat there and I finally said, "Okay, I think we're at a place where we can sit down." So I took my boots off. I started to remove my left boot and I was like, "Oh, it's really wet down there." I took the boot off and it was a bloody sock. The first thing I did was look at my boots to make sure I hadn't been shot. They hurt a lot. I looked at my boot and the sock was bloody, so I took the sock off. Well, I huge chunk of my heel fell off onto the floor. It was so gross. Sorry. I was like, "Oh, that's so disgusting, oh my God." So I put the sock back on.

**With the heel, with your—**

No, the piece, I wasn't picking that up off the floor. I just kind of shoved it under my—they had given us blankets and sheets and stuff like that. I just put the sock back on real fast. Then I took the right boot off and there was a little bit of blood. I took that sock off and it was bloody, but I didn't lose a chunk of the heel, so that one wasn't as bad. But my heels were just absolutely killing me. There was a huge chunk missing from my left heel.

When we finally got released, I was, "Where do we go? What do we do?" The officers really had no information. They didn't know what to tell us. They didn't know where we could go to get a ride, to where we could get picked up. He said, "We don't know. The only thing we know now is you can go north down the boulevard or you can go east on Tropicana towards Hooters. That's the only thing we can tell you."

Because we were staying at the Trump, which is...But it's better than going east. We wanted to go north, so we decided to go to the boulevard. My feet were just absolutely killing me. I just wanted to stop and cry and just sit down on a curb. I just didn't know if I was going to be able to do it. There's no way I can walk to the Trump, absolutely no way.

**Any traffic on the Strip at that time?**

No. There was a straggling taxi here and there, but, no, it was shut down. This is almost four in

the morning.

**Oh, they kept you there that long.**

Yes. Yes. There were some people apparently that were down in the basement that didn't get released until like six a.m. or ten a.m. or something like that.

**And there were no cabs that you could stop?**

No. I tried to stop one, but he didn't stop, so we walked. We're walking down the boulevard and we're going north. I don't know exactly where. There was a police officer. It was like a zombie land. The only people that were out on the street were people who had gone through this like we did. They were walking with no shoes on, too. They were walking with blankets or sheets wrapped around them. We had left the sheets back where we were. We probably should have taken two of them just because it was a little chilly. I was carrying my boots. I had a little drawstring backpack on which had my wallet, my phone, my hat that didn't survive; it got squished and that's probably because I was sitting up against the wall for hours.

I remember walking past—and I don't know where it was. I think it might have been M&M World, right around there that the police officers were on lots of corners and stuff like that and just people sitting on curbs, which is what I wanted to do, but my friend Laura kept wanting to go. She wanted to get home. I got that. I understood it. But I was in so much pain. I kept saying, "I don't know if I can do this. My heels are killing me." *Blah, blah, blah.*

Then as we walk by, she was walking ahead of me and I was walking behind, and I remember hearing, "Worst mass shooting in U.S. history." I just stopped dead—sorry, I keep doing that—stopped right in my tracks and I looked at the TV. I'm like, "What? What?" At that point they didn't have a number, but the last we had heard was a couple of people had been killed. I think the very last thing is they were estimating twenty people had been killed and



hundreds injured. Then I'm like, "What do you mean worst mass shooting in U.S. history?" I don't even know if there was a number at that point. I just remember I screamed at Laura, "Oh my God, did you hear that?" She wanted nothing to do with me. She was on a mission.

We finally realized—I told her, I said, "I think we should be able to get a cab at Planet Hollywood because they have the underground and they can come from the back. That's the first place I can think of that we can get." We went to Planet Hollywood. She asked a guy, I guess he was a security guy at a podium, where we can get a car or whatever. All he says is, "You can go down to valet." So we found valet. I stayed at Planet Hollywood a couple of times, but I wasn't in my right frame of mind, so I couldn't remember exactly where to go. Anyway, we ended up finding it. We went to the valet stand and said, "We just survived the shooting. We were at Route 91. And we need to get to the Trump. Our phones are dead. We can't call Uber. We can't call Lyft. Can you help us to call the Trump to see if they'll come get us, a shuttle or something?" "No. You can't use our phone. You can go back inside and ask the front desk." We're like, "What? What?"

### **Did they understand?**

I don't know. I mean, we told them. I'm pretty sure that the whole world knew at four o'clock in the morning. But they told us flat out, no, we'd have to go back inside and use the front desk.

Then we decided, well, let's go over to the taxi stand. There's several people already in line. People are checking out. I don't know if these people had been there or not. They all looked refreshed. Maybe they had showered and got out of there or were getting out of there just because they heard what happened, but clearly they were most of them going to the airport. The taxi stand guy tells us that we're better off calling Uber or Lyft or taking a limo because cabs are scarce, few and far between, and it's going to be at least thirty minutes before we're able to get a

ride anywhere. We're like, "We just need to get to the Trump. Can you help us out?" "Nothing we can do." So we have to stand in line.

Then, all of a sudden, platinum card members start showing up. Well, they get to go first. They get to cut into the line. There's like three or four people all the sudden. I'm like, "We're never going to get a cab. I'm going to go in and see if I can call the Trump." I storm away. Granted, I stormed away. I go inside. There's several people in line at the front desk and there's one person working. I'm like, *I'm never going to get to a phone.*

Now, I've left my friend in line for the taxi. I look over and the store is open, so I go in there. The guy is on the phone. The girl is the biggest ding bat I've ever had to encounter in my life. She probably wasn't on anything, but she's going, *blah, blah, blah.* So I tried to explain the situation and she's literally laughing. I'm like, *she's not even listening to what I'm saying because she's obviously not getting it. She's not laughing at me, she's just laughing because she's in a good mood. I don't know.*

**Or she's hysterical.**

No. She's just, *blah.* This guy walks up to me and he goes, "Were you there?" Because I said, "I've tried to explain to this girl there's been a shooting. Our phones are dead. We just want to get out of here. We just want to get a ride to our hotel." So this guy walks up and goes, "Were you there, too?" I said, "Yes." He goes, "High five to being alive." So we start talking.

This girl finally gets it and then she felt bad. She goes, "Oh, I'm sorry." The guy behind the counter is on the phone still and I hear him say, "I'm so sorry to hear that. I'm so glad you're okay." I'm pretty sure he's talking about the shooting, and so I know he knows what's happening. He finally gets off the phone. I'm talking to this other guy who is telling me his story while I'm waiting to see if I can use their phone. I can't use their house phone, but I can use his cell phone.

I'm like, *seriously? Okay.*

He lets me use his cell phone. I have to look up the number to the Trump. I call the Trump. Somebody answers at the Trump. I explain what has happened, if there's any way for us to be able to get a ride. Do they have to shuttle that can come get us? Blah, blah, blah. I'm using somebody else's phone. "I have to transfer you to valet," they said. Well, nobody at valet ever picked up.

I'm in tears at this point. I can't believe that I can't even get out of here; that nobody will help. I hand the guy back his phone and I thank him very much for letting me use the phone, but they won't answer, blah, blah, blah.

I go back out and I'm looking for my friend in line and I don't see her. Now, we've told the guy that's at the valet that we were in the shooting. I'm standing there with bloody white socks and my boots and it's clear that we've been through hell. He says, "Are you okay, ma'am?" I'm like, "No, I'm not. I can't find my friend." He goes, "Describe her to me." This other guy walks up that's working there, too, and he says, "Was she a brunette?" I said, "Yes." He goes, "She just got in a taxi to go to the Trump." I'm just standing there going, "What? What?"

Then I have to stand in line by myself for a taxi. Now the line is longer than it was before and there's more people for the platinum card members, too. I don't even know how long I waited in line, but I finally get up to the front of the thing. He goes, "Are you okay, ma'am?" And I'm like, "No, I'm not okay. I just survived the worst mass shooting in U.S. history, my friend left me, and I can't get anybody to help me. All I need is a freaking ride to the Trump. That's all I needed." He pulled an Uber driver that had dropped somebody off. I said, "I just need to get to the Trump." "Nope, sorry, ma'am, I'm just going to the airport." I'm like, "Really? You can't take me to the Trump and come back? You can't take me to the Trump and then take them to the

airport? Take them to the airport and then take me to the Trump? You won't even do that?" "No." I was like, "Wow." I lost it when he said are you okay and I just went off on him. He's like, "Uh, okay." Then the taxicab pulls up and he opens the door and goes, "I'm sorry, ma'am, I hope you have a better day." I just about lost it. Well, I had already lost it. But I just could not believe it.

It really irritated me afterwards when I kept hearing about how great Uber and Lyft were and all these drivers and how they were so responsive and everything. I'm like, *where were all those people when I needed them?* They were more worried about getting people to the airport, which, by the way, wasn't going to help them because the airport was closed. They should know that. It was just insult to injury, just rubbing the salt into the wounds.

When I got to the Trump, my friend was out at the valet with her bag.

**Tell me what you learned about yourself.**

I don't know what I learned about myself. That's a good question. I don't know. I know that a lot of people talked about survivor's guilt and I can't say that I ever had that because the only thing I could do was get myself out of there. Laura really was a catalyst to that; she helped me get out of there. I don't remember running, so I can't tell you which route I took, but I do remember several times saying, "I can't do this; I can't go anymore; go without me." I knew I was going to die. I couldn't run anymore. I was out of shape. I had never been a runner, anyway. I've never been an aerobic-type person. But I've heard so many stories from people who even were in shape or weren't out of shape that had the same problems. They couldn't breathe. Their chest was on fire. Their mouth was super dry. You're out there and you're in the sun and you've been drinking. I had stopped drinking that day. Had this happened Friday or Saturday night, I'm not quite sure what would have happened because I had been drinking a lot more those two days. Again, there is something else.

I guess the one thing is that something knew. So my mom, my guardian angel, Laura and her guardian angel father, I don't know what helped us get out, but something helped us get out. Something made us leave. The other thing I know is that I probably would have had a lot more injuries had we been up top at the House of Blues because they literally had to belly crawl down the stairs. They had to have everybody belly crawl down the stairs. There were people that were shot that were right outside the House of Blues. I don't know which avenue we would have taken. The House of Blues unfortunately became a triage, or right behind it at least.

I went to a counselor. I only did two sessions. He said I'm good, but I don't think I am. I've got to contact somebody else. The one thing that I wanted to do was understand—I don't like the fact that I can't remember so much of it. But the counselor said, "Well, are you sure you want to remember? Your mind is probably protecting you from remembering things you saw you shouldn't have seen." I have had one memory. I've had lots of nightmares, all different scenarios with the same underlying theme. They're always different, but the underlying theme is you're trapped and you can't get away and there's a shooter. I have one memory recall. I said earlier where I started running again and I had that girl's hand. I think it was right after that I remember turning around and this is when people were running. It's full of people running now. I saw one guy get shot and another girl who was coming at me who was covered in blood. He's saying, "You saw a lot more of that and your mind is trying to protect you from that." I'm like, "Okay, I get it," but it still bothers me that I can't remember, but I understand the concept behind it.

I guess what I learned about myself is that I can actually, if I have to, run. I didn't feel bad that I didn't stay to help anybody because there's nothing that I could have done. I did help that one girl because I saw her. She was right out in the middle and she was either going to get run over, trampled to death, or she was going to get shot because of where she was. I feel good that I

did that and I know I got her out of harm's way initially. I don't know whether she stayed out of harm's way. I did try to find her. I couldn't tell you what she looked like. I have no idea. I have no recollection. That, I can't remember. I just remember seeing a girl. I don't know if she was younger, older. She wasn't old, like me; I'm fifty-five.

**Be careful with that stuff.**

Well, I know. But she wasn't as old as I am because I know that—the oldest she probably was, was in her thirties, maybe even younger.

I guess the other thing that I realized about myself was that I went through a lot that weekend. I came into it exhausted and emotional. The first couple of days I was just numb. My daughter came home from school for that entire week, which was very nice, which was awesome. But I was just numb. When I got home I watched the whole—backtrack a little bit.

On my way up, I stopped at the bell desk and I told the bellman, "I am checking out. Somebody can come up in about fifteen minutes. I'll be ready to go." All I was going to do was get up there, shove everything in bags and get the heck out of there. I waited for fifteen, twenty minutes and they never showed up. So I called down there and they're like, "Oh, okay, yes, we'll be up in a little bit." He goes, "Is this the lady that asked us to be up there?" I'm like, "Yes, this is the lady that asked you if you could come up fifteen minutes ago." It was just one thing after another. As soon as I got in the room, I called down for valet, gave them my ticket number, and said, "I want my car brought up." Of course, they didn't bring it up. By the time I got down there, they still hadn't brought it up. I waited for twenty more minutes.

**Were they really busy?**

No. There was nobody there. There was a couple of people, but, no, they weren't busy at all. I don't know what the deal was. Anyway, so they finally brought the car around. Then I had to

wait for another ten or fifteen minutes for the valet guy to bring my baggage. I told him, "Go straight to valet; my car is being brought around." He didn't. Then I see him. I can see him. Waiting at my car I could see him and then I see him go, "Oh," like, *oh God, I forgot*. He runs and finally comes out with my luggage. I'm like, *oh my gosh, this can't be happening. Really?*

Then I got in the car and finally made it home. I probably shouldn't have even been driving just from the sheer emotions of it all and everything.

### **Now it's Monday morning at about...**

It's Monday morning about six. I got home and I plugged my phone in. Of course, it immediately starts blowing up once it got enough of a charge. Then my sister called me. People were contacting her to find out if I was okay. She got woken up and then she looks at my texts and the only text I sent was, "There's a live shooter; we're hiding, but we're okay for now." So she has no idea. She's calling my phone. It's going straight to voice mail. Now she's starting to panic a little bit.

Anyway, she calls and gets through. I can't remember if I called her or she called me. I think she called because it literally came through right as my phone got just enough juice. But then my dad was calling in and my dad never calls me. He's calling at 6:15 in the morning. I'm like, "It's Dad calling. I've got to call you back."

I answer the phone and I'm like, "Hello." He goes, "Hello there. Good morning." I said, "Good morning." He goes, "How you doing?" And I immediately start crying. Then I realize—because I will never forget the time that we were laughing, but my mom thought we were crying and she was so angry because she panicked. So I'm like, *okay, I can never do that to her again. I have to make sure that I don't do that*. So I gathered myself again. I'm like, "Yes, I'm okay." He goes, "Well, were you there?" I said, "Yes, I was right in the middle of it." Then he got really

quiet. He woke up and he heard the news and he didn't even realize that it was in Las Vegas at first. Then as he's listening to the news more and more, he's understanding it's in Vegas. Then he's like, *well, that might be something Ashley would go to. Maybe I should call and see if she's okay.* He goes, "Honestly I never in a million years thought you were going to say that you were there. I just thought maybe you were there, but I didn't think you were really going to say you were there." Then it was like dead license—I keep doing that—silence. Then I gathered myself enough. I said, "Yes, I was right in the middle of it, but I'm okay. I'm home now. I'm pretty messed up emotionally, but physically except for my heels I'm okay."

Then my daughter called and she ended up coming. She had talked to my sister and my dad and she said, "Should I come home?" They're both like, "Absolutely." My dad was like, "Figure out whatever the flight is and I'll pay for it." She's like, "I can't fly out of here. It's faster for me to drive." She's in San Luis Obispo. The flights are ridiculously expensive. If you go to Santa Maria, they're cheap, but it's Allegiant and they only fly on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. It's Monday.

**I don't even know why they're in business.**

Right. She rented a car and she drove. She's got a vehicle there. She said, "I'll just rent a small car and I'll just drive there," and that's what she did. Then she flew home. She was asking my sister, "Should I let her know I'm coming home?" Stacy is like, "Oh God, yes. The last thing you want to do is come through the door and give her a heart attack." Because that would have happened. She called me when she was about halfway here. I had literally just found out that she was coming here through her roommate's mother who texted me and let it slip. She goes, "Well, at least you'll have Leah at home." She goes, "I just heard. I'm so sorry. But at least you'll have Leah home." I'm looking at the text message going, *what?* Literally, I'm still looking at the text



message and my daughter is calling. She's like, "Well, I don't know if you know, but I'm coming home." I'm like, "Yes, I just found out from Alia." She's like, "What?" I'm like, "But that's okay." I'm like, "I can't promise what kind of shape I'm going to be in when you walk in the door, but I'm so glad you're coming home."

**But isn't it good that we can sit here and talk about this now and kind of laugh at some of the things?**

Oh, yes, definitely, definitely.

**What did you learn about this city? When the outpouring of love the next day—**

Oh, it was awesome. That was an awesome response. Besides my own experience of not being happy with Uber, Lyft and people at the Planet Hollywood, which I will never go to again—well, it wasn't even so much Uber or Lyft, it was just that one guy. I get it; it's business for him. But why do you have to get these people to the airport? They can't go anywhere. Just to be told no. So I wasn't happy with that. But what I wasn't happy with is the people that were at Planet Hollywood that nobody would help at all. You had to know. There's no way you couldn't.

**They need training.**

They need training. There's no way you couldn't know what was going on. The world knew by then. I know from afterwards I heard that there were some hotels that were not allowing people to listen to the radios or televisions or anything because they didn't want patrons to know what was going on and they didn't want to scare people and stuff like that. Even employees didn't know. Well, that couldn't have lasted very long because, again, like I said, everybody knew. That was very disheartening.

But for the rest of the way the city came out...Vegas is still the small town I was born and raised in, especially when it comes down to stuff like that. Yes, that was amazing. I'm not so

happy with the way some of the things have been handled since then, but the outpouring of the citizens and the people that showed up for the blood donations and bringing food and that was beyond amazing. Yes, that was beyond amazing. The group, the new family that we all have is amazing.

**Tell me about it. How did it start?**

Once my daughter got home, she wouldn't let me watch the news or anything, which was probably a good thing. When I got home I turned the TV on immediately because obviously I want to know. I don't have any information. I know something happened. I know there was a shooting and I know it was the worst mass shooting in U.S. history, but beyond that I don't have any information anymore. My phone, the battery is dead. So anyway, I turn the TV on and I'm watching it. I'm crying and watching it. I'm not comprehending it really, but it's on. I'm on the phone for the next several hours with family and friends. It's on in the background, but I'm not really listening. It's not absorbing. But then my daughter wouldn't let me watch it for the entire time she was home.

My friend Laura contacted me, and I can't remember how long it was, if it was a couple of days later. She told me that she saw Heather, our bartender, on CNN. She was the lady who had sat with [Jordan] McIlidoo and held his hand. He passed away as soon as they brought him to her, but she held his hand and talked to his mother and girlfriend and sat with him for four hours or however long it was because she promised his mom that she wouldn't let him be alone. That was her. She had seen her on CNN.

I looked up the thing and saw her name. I looked her up on Facebook. I immediately contacted her and told her who I was. She immediately was like, "Oh, yes, vodka and a splash of 7-Up." I'm like, "Oh my gosh, yes." Because we took pictures and I sent her the picture so that

she would know who we were. I don't know exactly how the group started, but the group started. I think that becoming a friend with her, because she had the whole bar family that were becoming group members and some of them had started some of the group pages, it just kind of grew from there. They set up a meet-up on my side of town. I'm in Summerlin. It was at the Great American Pub on Grand Canyon and Flamingo, and so I went to that. I think that it was the Friday night after the venue.

**That was quick.**

That was quick and they had already had one other one. No, maybe it was two weeks, almost two weeks later.

**But still.**

Still that was fast. Several people were there. I've become pretty good friends with some of them. One survivor, we go to dinner every week. Unfortunately, she's moving out of town now.

**If she wants to talk before she leaves...**

Laura does.

**Wonderful.**

Susan has actually—I don't know if she would want to—she's been through a lot in her life, a lot of tragedy. She lost her daughter when the daughter was very young. I don't know if she would want to. I can certainly give her your name and number and let her know.

**I would like to know if Heather would like to talk.**

Oh, Heather, sure.

**Those two I would like. I appreciate this so much.**

Absolutely. I was a little long winded, but there's so much to tell.

**No, no. You gave me information that we had not gotten from anyone. It was wonderful. I**

**didn't know about the lockdown at Tropicana. I know people who ran through the Tropicana and ran out and went to Hooters. I did not know about the House of Blues tent and how that was set up.**

That's where Heather worked.

**That was wonderful. Thank you so much.**

You're so welcome.

**[End of recorded interview]**