

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BECKER

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MAY 15, 2018

REMEMBERING 1 OCTOBER

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV LIBRARIES

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVE

CLAYTEE: It is May 15th, 2018. Barbara Tabach and Claytee White. We're in the Oral History Research Center with Mr. Becker.

Could you please pronounce and spell your full name for me?

David Becker; D-A-V-I-D, B-E-C-K-E-R.

Thank you so much. I just want to ask you about your early years. Where did you grow up?

Los Angeles.

What was that like; your family formation, and what you did as a young boy?

I was middle of three children, younger brother, older sister. We grew up in what they call the San Fernando Valley in the early sixties, seventies. I guess it was a normal childhood for a kid outside of L.A.; I ran around outside, played sports. I was a terrible athlete. My batting average in Little League was point zero, zero, zero, zero maybe, maybe a one.

Even I don't know that much about baseball, but I know that's bad.

I wasn't good in athletics and I never really excelled. To this day I try and I put in the effort, but I don't think I'm very good.

What do your parents do for a living?

My mom was mostly stay-at-home, sort of an entrepreneurial investor. She dabbled in real estate. This is before I was born, but she was a dental hygienist. But then in later years, she got into more of the business aspects of investing, lending money, arranging for investments. That was the reason why I ended up here in Las Vegas. One of her investments was going south and she ended up foreclosing on the business and she didn't have anyone to run it. So when she took it over, she asked her sons, myself and my brother, to help her run it, and that was in 1995 when I eventually came out here.

What kind of business?

It was a little casino, hotel, convenience store in the town of Indian Springs just outside of Las Vegas. I was told when I came out here, "We'll sell the business in a couple of years and you can go back to your photography." It took fourteen years to sell. In 2008, I finally picked up my cameras again full time and started working.

How did you get into photography?

It was something I've always done growing up. I guess in junior high school I enjoyed it. I never really excelled in my academics, as well as athletics, and so I chose photography for some reason, and because it didn't require much reading or comprehensive learning, I sort of pursued it and for some reason I stuck with it, because people said I was good, and I just continued on through my schooling years. High school, I was on the yearbook and the newspaper. Then college, I majored in journalism and photography, photo journalism, so to say. Then from there I just got a job and kept working.

BARBARA: *Where did you go to college?*

I started right after high school. I went to a community college outside of L.A. called Moorpark College. It was relatively local to where I was living at the time. They ended up having an excellent photography department where I excelled with some other students. Then after I graduated there with an AA, I transferred over to Cal State Long Beach where I majored in journalism with an emphasis in newspapers and photo journalism.

Tell me about the night of October One. Tell me about the festival, how you got there.

Last festival in 2017 was I want to say my fourth or fifth year covering the festival. I do a lot of work for Getty Images, which is a worldwide distributor of images whether it's news, sports or entertainment. I've worked with Getty since 2009, I believe, is when I started working for them.

Over the years I've done annual events that keep coming back here. I think it was 2014, was the first event that I photographed the music festival, the Route 91, and I continued annually. They called me up and they said, "Do you want to cover it again?" I said, "Sure."

It's a three-day event. It's long days. They're fun. Two thousand seventeen up until about ten o'clock at night was the same as it's always been. I photographed dozens of performers over three days, a lot of entertainment, a lot of food, a lot of drinking, a lot of guests, the audience—I don't know what you call them—the crowd.

I was in my work area after the final performance when I heard pops. There were a couple other people in the tent where I was working and we all looked at each other. I look up at sort of a security guy there, one of those guys in the yellow jackets, and I said, "What was that?" And he said, "It was fireworks." And I said, "Okay." So I went back to work. I didn't see any fireworks. Or firecrackers or something like that is what he said. I don't really recall.

I went back to work and a few moments later the pops were again. Again, we all looked at each other. I go to the security and he says, "Oh, it's the speakers that are popping. They're malfunctioning." Whatever they were. So I said, "Okay, it sounds logical." I went back to work editing the last performer who was Jason Aldean.

Maybe a few moments later, people started streaming by the little entryway to the tent; the fans, the crowd was streaming through. It wasn't a mad rush, but a couple of people. Then I take a peek outside and I can see that the crowd is exiting in mass albeit they haven't really gotten to my little area where I was, but they were moving consistently.

I believe I called my friend or colleague at the time, to see if he heard anything, what's going on, because whatever it is people are crowding and it's going to be news; someone is going to be interested in it. It never occurred to me that there was any gunfire or anything like that. It

didn't even cross my mind.

Where was your tent located?

I guess it was in the southeast corner of the concert grounds, backstage, but not completely backstage, off to the stage. I guess if you were on stage looking out, it would be to the right. But it wasn't in a public area.

You are sheltered by the stage itself?

The stage is probably, I don't know, thirty or forty yards away. There are several other tents and low buildings or trailers that are between us and the stage. It's difficult to describe, but there are multiple layers of security fencing just in general. We are past the first layer of security where it would separate the crowd from the backstage area, and then there, there was another one for the further backstage area where the crew and the performers would come and go.

The tent that you were in, was that for media?

Yes, it was essentially a media tent. They had a bunch of radio broadcasters there doing interviews with a lot of the artists, as well as a work area for other journalists and photographers, and there were probably a dozen of us through the weekend at different time periods where we would all go out, photograph the artists, and then all return to the tent to edit our images, pretty standard for any artist. You're only allowed as a photographer to photograph maybe two or three songs for the artists. That's a general rule when it comes to photographing musicians and concerts. They don't want you there for generally maximum three songs.

I didn't realize that.

Me either.

Then there are some restrictions where it's only two songs or one song or the first ninety seconds.

Why?

Different reasons. They don't want it to be a distraction. Some artists, they perform and they perspire and they don't look as good, so they don't want to have photographs of them, especially the female artists. They come out with a lot of makeup and they start dancing around and singing and it's hot, so things happen and you don't look as good.

It never occurred to me. Go ahead with the story.

As the audience starts passing through and I make a phone call to my colleague to find out if he had heard anything, he hadn't heard, but he would look into it. It turns out he had just got home from photographing one of the Knights hockey games that was the same night. I grabbed my cameras and went—it's kind of difficult because the way, again, all the fencing was and stuff; it was difficult because by then much of the crowd is filtering through this narrow area where I can exit to the audience area, so it would be difficult for me to get through there because I would be like a salmon going upstream. It would be literally impossible without being knocked down or blocking the way.

I sort of made my way around through the fencing and I found a table to step up on and I can see over the fencing. It was about a six-foot high fence with a fabric shield, so you couldn't really see through it. I looked down once I got on the table and I can see the people are panicking and running in all directions. I focused mostly on the people coming right at me. That's when I started to photograph the people.

It was a few minutes later when the crowd eventually thinned out where I was able to get down off the table and make my way into the concert grounds. I didn't go very far. Again, in the back of my mind I'm thinking, *it's only the speakers that are popping. Why are all these people running?* Honestly I am thinking to myself, *they're just running out of the abundance of caution or they're panicking because they think the worse.* I didn't see at that moment anything that

would tell me that there was an actual shooter other than the repeated sounds of the popping, which I heard, as everybody else has heard, over and over again for the ten minutes.

I photographed the different scenarios where I saw. It was dark. A lot of the lights had gone out, so there was one light here and lights in the background. I did what I could to make solid images knowing that whatever it is, it's going to be important. I can't say for sure that I knew what was going on. Again, I kept telling myself it was only the speakers that were popping. Over the course of the months since the event, I've thought about it over and over again and I've heard those popping sounds over and over again that maybe I didn't want to believe anything was bad.

I saw people lying on the ground; I photographed them. I thought perhaps they're just sort of playing possum; they were just laying still for fear; they couldn't move; they didn't want to move. People were running by me. One woman tripped next to me as she was trying to jump over some fencing. She didn't have any shoes on. Other people were streaming by me in front of the vending booths. People crying.

When I was in the tent, people did find their way into the media tent where I was and they were hiding in the dark, because by then I guess they turned off the power, the lights, and the tent was literally in pitch black; you couldn't see anything. But you could hear the people hiding, whimpering; they were crying; they were on the phone. You could see the little glows of the cell phones where people were trying to contact their friends and family, find out where their associates were.

The media tent itself by then had already cleared out. There were some other photographers there who cleared out pretty quickly when the popping sound and the crowds were running through. One of them, she said her sister was in the crowd and she was going to meet up with her. Another photographer I heard left. When he got out to the parking area, he ended up

taking some of the wounded to the hospital, himself. Another photographer who was there went with some friends before all the shooting and was watching the show, VIP area, and he ended up apparently taking on fire. One of the persons that were with him, I believe, or in that group of people, she was hit with a bullet in the shoulder, from what I understand, but she's since recovered and back at work.

At some point did you discover what it was, what was happening?

As I've told many people, it was dark; literally it was dark and it was difficult to see. When I finally made contact again with my colleague who instrumented getting what they call a template—when you work with Getty Images, you can't just send them pictures—I mean, you could just send them pictures, but there has to be what they call metadata along with the image; a template is used. In order to send the images, you needed a template. There's generally an editor in New York or Los Angeles or wherever the editors are that will create the template, send it to you, and then you use the template when you download your images. By then a template was created with my colleague's assistance and I started downloading my images. When I was reviewing the pictures and I saw them literally is when I realized what was happening. My hands, the adrenaline...Prior to that I can say, and it's difficult to say and it's hurtful to say, but for all intents and purposes, I was just photographing what I saw. I really had no physical reactions. I had no emotional reactions as to what was going on. You can say I was calm as a cucumber in a sense because honestly I didn't really know what was going on.

How much of that was journalistic instinct just to keep working?

I don't know. It was journalistic instinct for me to grab my cameras and photograph. Whatever it was going on, something was going on. Whether it was something as tragic as it happened or it was just a panic because the speakers were blasting, when the crowd are exiting in such mass

amounts, someone is going to get hurt, someone is going to get trampled. Someone can get physically hurt or even possibly die because of a mass panic, and that's what was growing through mind as to what was going on and that's why the journalism in me kicked in and said, "This is going to be news whatever it is." It could last a day, the news; nobody was physically hurt. But during a concert, people are exiting the arena in crazy hysteria.

When you saw the photographs is when you realized what had happened.

That's when I started to have actual physical effects. My arms and my hands were shaking. I could actually literally feel my heart beating inside of me. It was difficult to use the computer because I could not type. I use a laptop computer and you're using a little track pad there. Literally I had to take one hand over the other just to control my hands from shaking when I realized what I had just witnessed, for the next few minutes.

By then the shooting had stopped, but people didn't know what other possibilities there could be. Rumors were ranted. I was on the phone multiple times with my colleague. He was listening to the police scanner and they were saying there were shootings elsewhere; there could be possible multiple shooters, so nobody knew. People were still streaming out. The grounds were pretty much empty other than the people who were either mortally wounded or still trying to clear the area. People were running. Security was running through back and forth through the tent making sure everything was cleared out. Again, it's pitch black and the only thing that is illuminating is my screen on my laptop where I'm frantically trying to get these pictures out because I know whatever the hell is going on, someone is going to have to see these pictures. That was the only thing going through my mind was to get the photos out.

When you got those photos out, you accomplished that task, did you start documenting additional photos?

I started to get them out. However, as security ran through, multiple times through the tent, finally, I think it was the third time where they told me I have to leave. I said, "I'm still working here." I told the other people who I was and they said, "Fine, just stay put." Finally somebody else came through and insisted that I exit the area. I said, "No." He said, "You must leave now." I said, "Let me gather my gear." He said, "No, you must leave now." I said, "I'm not leaving here without my gear." I'm not telling this, but I'm telling you I'm an independent photographer and this gear is my business and I know if I leave and leave this gear, whether or not I ever get it back is to be determined. He helped me and somebody else helped me gather up all my...I shoved my computer back and my laptop. I grabbed my camera gear. I did leave an extension cord and a ladder that I used for the pictures because sometimes you have to get up higher to see over the crowd, so I left that and I grabbed everything. To answer your question, I hadn't finished sending all the pictures in.

How did you leave the premises?

They helped me exit the perimeter. They just basically took me to the street.

To Las Vegas Boulevard?

No, no.

Or to Koval?

No, it wasn't Koval. I think it was Reno. We were on the east side of the property, of the concert venue, which is that little street. I was walking towards my vehicle, which was parked in the dirt lot across the street, if you're familiar. But as I was clutching all my camera gear because I didn't have time to secure it the way I would normally do it, there were police officers running. There were some taking cover behind the vehicle; there were a lot of wounded being tended to as I was walking to my car, and I stopped and photographed them as I was trying to get back to my car to

finish doing what I was doing, but I continued working. Then after a few minutes of that I did go back to my car to unload my gear and transmit more pictures from the back of my car.

People came over and said, "Turn your lights off." The little dome light in the car was on. The computer was still illuminating my face. Again, people didn't know to the extent of what all was going on. They still weren't sure. There could have been multiple shooters. Although the shooting had subsided, but you don't know.

Were yours some of the first photographs to get out, released to the public?

As far as I know mine were the only professional-made photographs that were distributed from the concert grounds, albeit other photographers were showing up and my phone literally was ringing off the hook from people not knowing where I was. Agencies from either New York or Canada or the UK, they were calling me up, "Hey, there's this going on. Can you get down there and make pictures for us?" *I'm here already, my pictures are out* type of thing. They didn't know that. They hadn't seen them. But literally by eleven o'clock my phone was ringing because news agencies were calling me direct to get comments from me as to what I witnessed and what I saw and if I can explain the situation of what was going on. Literally I said I was kind of busy and I said I'll have to talk to them later.

Getty owns all of your images?

I own my images.

Some of those people calling from Europe, I guess you then could handle that?

The way the agreement is with Getty and I is they have the exclusive rights to distribute the images albeit I still own my images, but they distribute them. When people call me up and ask me, and literally I had dozens and dozens of people call me throughout the night and the next day, if not hundreds of people calling me, wanting images, wanting comments, whatever it was.

How long did you stay in the area?

I was in and around my car until one o'clock the next day, the next afternoon.

The next afternoon?

Yes. I stayed with my vehicle and in and around the concert venue until about one o'clock the next day.

What did you see after that? We know that the coroner arrived around one o'clock in the morning. What other kinds of things did you witness in that area?

Pretty much after I was done filing my initial pictures, I would go out and venture out in the area where I can see police activity. Most of the victims and/or wounded were already taken away. The streets were relatively empty other than some police, looky-loos, other people who were stuck in the parking lot where I was.

Had I left—and at the time that night they didn't want me to drive away, so I could walk away, but I couldn't drive away—had I left I would never get back in, number one, in case something was going on. I was telling the editors at Getty who wanted me to venture out further, I said, "I really don't want to go because if I leave I'll never get back in here in case something goes down here at the venue." So I stayed close to the venue where I could photograph and I photographed the white vans coming and going from the concert, the coroner. Whether there was other police activity in and around, people coming and going, I happen to have been parked quite almost dead on from the entrance where people were coming and going in and out of the concert venue, so I had a good view there. Signage, lights, helicopters overhead, police vehicles; that sort of stuff is what I photographed. There wasn't a lot to photograph over the overnight, but, again, it wasn't until morning when the white vans started showing up and that's what I really wanted to be there for, is to ensure that there's some sort of documentation of that because if I had left,

you'd never get back in because it was a cordoned off area.

It was probably, like I said, around one o'clock when I decided to leave. I left and then I ended up parking close to the Tropicana Hotel where I got out and photographed some other police activity, police line, empty streets. I tried to get a advantage point of looking down on the concert grounds, which I couldn't find one until the next day. After that—I was tired obviously—I was hungry and I headed home where I met up with my wife and tried to take a nap at the house and couldn't. The phone keeps ringing. People are still calling. I just sat with my dogs for a while. Maybe it was eight, nine, ten o'clock that night is when I finally got some sleep.

You were in touch with your wife while you were out there?

Probably not as much as she would have liked and she was wanting me to come home essentially from the get-go. I tried to stay in contact. I texted her. I phoned her. I let her know. I had other people calling me. Literally my phone was ringing off the hook all night long from people checking in on me or news agencies trying to get comments from me, the editors trying to get more information, other photographers.

This is an amazing story because it sounds as if you were pretty well protected so that you could get these images that allowed us to see what was going on. You're probably the only one, so that's amazing.

I don't know in terms of protected, how protected I was. While I was out there on the concert grounds, what I now know were bullets flying, I was out in the open and I could have very easily been hit during those ten minutes.

Are you glad that you did not know what it was?

It's tough to know one way or the other. I am thankful that obviously I wasn't hurt and I made it home in one piece. I am terribly upset and sorry that so many people were hurt and killed. I have

said this before: I wish it never happened; it happened and I happen to have been there. People can say that you were at the right time at the right place; I say I was at the right time at the wrong place or the wrong time at the right place. It happened. I was there. I did my job. I'm thankful that I wasn't hurt and I made it home to my family and wife and I was able to share with literally the world a view from the inside.

What did you learn about yourself that night?

Oh, boy, good question. I don't know. I've never really thought about that. I've never been asked that specific of a question. I can say that I take my job seriously. Many people come up to me—I've always—and anybody will say that I am a humble and modest fellow. I don't search the limelight. I'm not after it. I like to be behind the camera and I'm most happy there. Obviously the last six months have been quite a whirlwind from the awards that I've been given for my work.

Tell us about some of those.

There was one in general, which is the World Press photo, which is a worldwide competition for photographs, journalism, that in my mind is—it's worldwide. The Pulitzers are very prestigious, but they have a much more domestic take on. In my mind those two are probably the most prestigious awards that one could be bestowed on. The World Press, I was honored by First Place News Picture Story, which you're up against some of the world's greatest—well, not some of them—you are up against the world's greatest photographers who are worldwide and specialize in news photography.

I am a guy here in Las Vegas who enjoys doing what he does, would never give it up for anything. As I say, I don't go to work; it's not work for me; it's a pleasure; it's a privilege for me. I shoot a variety of things, but never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I would be photographing something that would be earning such prestige, accolades. The organization is in

the Netherlands, in Amsterdam. In April I was honored. They flew myself out there to participate in the awards ceremony where I was given first place. You're there for the week. You meet and you dine and you network with other photographers around the globe, editors. It is an enjoyable time that I will never forget. I'm honored to have been chosen to participate. It's not something again that I would ever think to or to reach out or to ever expect, but I'm grateful that I was honored and nominated, so to speak.

There were a couple of other awards domestically, The Best of Photo Journalism, which is sponsored by the National Press Photographers Association. That's an annual event that you're competing against, again, photographers from all over. The photographers are mostly domestic, but it's worldwide events whether it's the plight of the Rohingya people in Bangladesh, exodus, or the war-torn areas of Syria, last year it was Batzra, the fighting and the liberating of the city from the ISIS people. These are noteworthy events and I was part of that group.

Have you ever been in any other photographic assignment or place of any comparable nature to Route 91?

I've worked in riot situations in Florida. I was in Israel during the first Gulf War for my newspaper. I wasn't on the front lines. There wasn't any battling that I saw. We were relatively protected. What's going on in Gaza right now, there are wonderful photographs coming out. But those situations, one would say, is a little different, not to say that it's not any more or less dangerous. But the fact is, is your anticipating; you're going into these things; you're prepared for them; you're mentally preparing for it; you are wearing whatever protection that you can wear whether it's helmets or bulletproof vests, the equipment necessary when you do go into battle, so to speak, albeit obviously we're not battling and we're not shooting, but we're in a violent area, which you can become seriously hurt. I was dressed pretty much how I was, as I am now, there. I

didn't have a ballistic helmet on or Kevlar vest going there. It wasn't as though I had a sidearm to protect myself. I had two cameras and my instincts to work with.

This was a country music festival.

Exactly. I wasn't expecting, right, gunfire, what I now know as gunfire. At the time, quite honestly, I did not know.

What was the next photo shoot that you went to after that experience?

Tuesday I took the day off. I was willing to go back out and the editor said, "Just take a day off." I stayed at home and stayed with my wife pretty much the entire day. Wednesday I went back down to the Strip to photograph some memorials. I found that vantage point that I wanted to get on the nineteenth floor of the Tropicana Hotel where I found some guests who I just happened to bump into and we were talking and they were kind enough to let me in their room and I photographed out their window. They had a view of the concert grounds, all in disarray. That day the president came to town, so I looked for a vantage point to photograph him flying by, and unfortunately the timing didn't work out and I missed it. I photographed a couple of the memorial sites on the Strip. I didn't work too hard. Again, I was on phone most of the time and I was talking to people. I made a few pictures and went home. That was Wednesday.

Thursday, I got on an airplane and I flew to Dallas with the Vegas Golden Knights hockey team and I worked for them for two days in Dallas and then in Arizona, so that took me out of town and a whole new genre of work. I came home Saturday night and I don't remember what I did on Sunday or the following week.

Ordinarily, prior to the concert, you are just here filming various shows?

I photograph everything, pretty much everything—well, not everything. I generally photograph events, sporting events, entertainment. Last night I was at the Wynn photographing a woman's

leadership forum. The other day I photographed this wine sommelier down in Boulder City for the Review-Journal. I photographed the softball game, high school, last week. I photograph the conventions when they come to town.

Do you just give yourself assignments? Do you get to pick and choose what you want to do?

No, no. Most of the time people call me up and they say, "Hey, are you available to shoot this?" Like I say, I have the wedding this weekend; otherwise, I'd probably be photographing the Billboard Awards.

You're not going to photograph the wedding, are you?

No, no. My son and daughter-in-law decided to hire somebody else.

They've given you the day off.

They didn't want me to have to work.

That's very kind.

This is amazing, just simply amazing.

What is your favorite type of photography?

Anything with people, one-on-one situations whether it's a portrait of somebody, something like that where you have a little interaction with somebody, talk to them a little bit, find out a little bit about them and then you photograph them and try to make a good picture.

How did your attitude about this city change especially the following days when the city was so loving to each other?

I guess I have found it...I guess it's difficult—I mean, it's wonderful what the city and the people have accomplished in the six months with all the fundraising and the outpouring of support, the Vegas Strong logos. It's wonderful. I see that sort of—well, I can't say I see it, but I've heard of it after other horrific shootings that happen, which is great support.

After the 9/11 incident so many years ago, we were in a little business back then and the amount of patriotic sales skyrocketed; everybody had to have an American flag flying from their windowsill or pasted on their window or their bicycle or whatever it was. I wouldn't say it's the same, but it's similar in respects that it brings a community together. How long it lasts, I don't know.

It's unfortunate that what has to bring them together has to be such a tragic and horrific event. When an individual chooses to murder fifty-eight people for no apparent reason other than he has some ax to grind, I don't know. But why somebody has to do that, whether or not we'll ever know, I don't know. The city coming together is a wonderful thing. How long it will last going forward, I don't know.

I guess what I was trying to make my point is the issue with gun violence. It is such a divisive topic when it comes to how to prevent events like this in the future. That is what is so terribly sad is there are obviously proponents of guns and opponents of guns who will never see eye to eye apparently in this society that we're living in today, and whether or not anything could be done to prevent such tragic events from an almost daily occurrence across this country...I mean, I wake up to alerts on my phone now that there's a school shooting in Los Angeles or Seattle or Texas or wherever it may be. It's a shame. Coming from and experiencing such tragedy firsthand and why people can't understand, I don't know, and whether or not anyone will ever know is...

Claytee asked you what you learned about yourself. I'm just curious, as a photographer and in that moment and the moments afterwards, in your keen eye of observation, what did you learn about the people that were there and first responders and the people who got in front of your lens?

One thing that I did learn—and I've been asked this before; people have asked me what image that I made that night really stands out, and there were three of them that I chose. Essentially it is photographs of people coming together. I guess deep down in every person is the ability to help one another. There were acts of heroism that came out of that which I will never forget.

I personally saw the man lying on top of the woman. Apparently they didn't know each other, but he felt it was his duty to protect her, selflessly.

There is a photograph of a rather tall gentleman running with two women, two young girls it looks like, and in my mind he is there pushing them along to get them out of harm's way, so he in himself was doing the right thing. There is a photograph of a woman lying with blood running down her legs. I thought that she had died when I saw that. I later learned that the person lying next to her—and if you look closely in that photograph there are three people lying down. There is a woman and a gentleman. It turns out that the woman in the middle was the friend of a woman who was shot in the leg. She could not move. She was alive. She was unable to [move], and her friend could not move her as well. The gentleman who was a stranger came in, laid down with them, and when the coast was clear with respect to the gunfire, the two able bodied people helped the wounded person escape.

The woman who was lying there with her friend did not want to leave her. She had wrote to me and said, "That is me in your photograph. I just saw this picture. I want to thank you for it. It's helped me recover." She wanted to let me know that she and her friend were okay. She wanted to know if I knew the name of the man who was lying with them so she could personally thank him. I said, "I'm sorry, I don't know."

Those three images in my mind were the epitome of the best in what people have to offer. I think at the end of the day, when tragedies like this happen, there are good people out there

who are willing to risk their own lives to help others.

Do you think you are going to have or have had problems with PTSD after this?

Getty Images was, one can say, extremely proactive with my emotional state. My sister, who is also a professional psychologist, encouraged me to seek counseling, which I did. I haven't had personally any issues. There are symptoms of one would say PTSD that are quite relevant, if you have trouble sleeping or weight loss or weight gain or whatever the case is, and personally I haven't seen any effects of any distress emotionally or physically since the event.

I am curious, a follow up to that. When you have these monumental experiences, the next time you go to a big event, do you look at your surroundings differently?

Absolutely. I have found myself taking notice where exits are. I hear sounds and I may do a double take. Personally I think I'm the same person as I was on September 29th. I don't think anything physically has changed.

That's good.

How do you know Aaron?

That's Aaron Mayes.

Through coming to UNLV a lot, photographing events I've met him. He also was a roommate for one of my colleagues years ago back when they worked together at the Las Vegas Sun before he came to the university. Over the years. I met Aaron years ago. It's not as though we associate with each other, but we see each other and we meet and we talk. Occasionally I come here on campus and we're photographing the same thing. There was a time when I photographed something down in his collections. I think it was the works of Shakespeare.

The folio.

I think I came here for the R-J and I photographed that.

You recognize that photograph?

This one? Yes, I recall that was at the groundbreaking.

That's the one that Aaron took.

For the stadium, yes.

Yes, yes, for the stadium. Yes, I didn't make it there. But, no, I remember those and I've seen other similar things.

I woke him up. I drove through it. I was coming home and I texted him. I said, "Aaron, what are you doing?"

Well, that's good.

No pressure. But he did that.

I've been called many times early in the morning or late at night for events. Covering news events is nothing unusual. Had I been home at the time of the shooting and people are calling me—because literally I had probably a half a dozen different companies calling me and saying, "Are you available to photograph this?"—obviously I couldn't because I was already there, but I would have gone down there and photographed the exterior, the stuff on Las Vegas Boulevard where a lot of the people ended up and the police and the first responders and that sort of stuff.

Anything else you would like to add?

How much fun is it to do the Knights?

The Vegas Knights?

Yes, the Golden Knights. Do you like sports photography?

I enjoy the Knights tremendously. But when I'm working I'm not there to have fun or to root per se because I'm supposed to be the objective journalist there. But it is very loud in the arena.

There's a lot of emotion and excitement and there's a spark. I think the Golden Knights could not

have come and started their season at a better time for this city. It's something that the city can own and hold onto and grasp and come together on after such an event. Quite frankly, I think it's because—this is maybe wishful thinking, but there are a lot of people who say that they are who they are because of what happened. I saw somebody had posted something not too long ago after their fifty-eighth win and they said that that's all they really wanted to do was win fifty-eight games. When you think of stuff like that and what's in the back of their minds of what they wanted to do, then they've accomplished so much and then so much more obviously, becoming such a winning team that has brought a city together.

Like I said, last night I'm at this woman's forum and in the middle of the forum, which happened to start at five o'clock, which just happened to have been the exact same time as the puck drop, midway through, the moderator of the event says, "Well, I just want to let you know that the Knights are up two-zero and it's the end of the second period."

I love it.

You can't go anyplace in this town without seeing some sort of element of the Knights whether it's to the supermarket or to the gas station or someone drives in with a sticker. You've got twelve people in the library wearing hats and shirts.

It's exciting. That identity is positive.

It is and it's wonderful.

The timing was perfect.

To answer your question, it's a lot of fun.

Thank you so much.

I thank you so much for this. I appreciate it.

Sure. [End of recorded interview]