

AN INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY CHIEF ANDREW WALSH

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REMEMBERING 1 OCTOBER

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV LIBRARIES

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVE

Today is the day before Valentine's Day.

Oh, I'm glad you reminded me.

CLAYTEE: *Your secretary will not let you forget.*

This is Barbara Tabach and I am sitting with Andrew Walsh [Deputy Chief/Division Commander] in his office at Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department with Claytee White. We are doing an interview for the Remembering 1 October project.

First, we would like to know a little bit about you. How long have you been in Vegas?

I came to Las Vegas and started with the police department in July of '98. I was a New York City police officer from 1992 to 1998. What brought me here was in September of 1997, my girlfriend at the time, who is now my wife, she had a lot of family that had moved out here from New York over the years, the late seventies, early eighties, and in '97 she was coming out here because one of her uncles was turning fifty and they were having a surprise party. As conversations go, "Hey, I'm going to Vegas to my uncle's fiftieth birthday party. Have you ever been to Vegas?" At that point in my life, I hadn't been to Las Vegas yet. Seeing as it was basically a free trip other than airfare and renting a car—we didn't have to pay for a hotel because we could stay with some of her family—we took a trip.

I met another uncle—well, he's not really her uncle, but in Italian families, if you've known each other for more than five years, they are your uncle. But one of her close family friends, Uncle Joe, Joe Cino was a sergeant that worked for Metro. He worked in the Clark County Detention Center. When I came here I met Joe Cino and I met the rest of my wife's family, but I met Joe and we started to talk about my career. My wife was a police officer in New York, as well. Joe basically pitched the idea of, hey, why don't you come out here and live out

here? He got through the whole sales pitch on how great working for Metro was.

At the time, living check to check and living in an environment where I knew I wanted to be a police officer, but Joe said some magic words; that there was no city or state income tax in Nevada. That really didn't make any sense to me because I knew what I paid in taxes to live in New York. I started to do the math.

Anyway, that was in September of '97, and by July of '98 I was living here. It took about a year, but that's how we wound up here. I have not looked back ever since.

You started in '92.

I started with NYPD in 1992, yes.

What motivated you to become an officer at that time?

I had a couple of interesting jobs. Once I was old enough to actually legally work, I worked in a few places in Staten Island. But the biggest, longest job I had was I worked in a deli basically, but it was a bagel store. If you've ever been to New York City, there is a bagel store...I was a baker. I made dough and baked bagels and just worked behind the counter in the store. It was a neighborhood place, and so you knew everybody. It was a hangout spot.

I went from there to working for a small company in Staten Island called Port Richmond Glass. They did storefronts and plate-glass windows, fabricating storefronts; things like that. I worked there for a while.

From there, I sold windows. I went to a company called Statewide Windows. I sold Andersen windows and Marvin windows. I had sales jobs basically.

At the time, too, I started to go to night school. I went to the City University of New York; I went to college in the Staten Island part of the CUNY system. I was going to night school and working.

I had an uncle of mine said, "Hey, why don't you go take the police test?" So I did. It was pretty much that simple. I knew a lot of guys who were police officers that I had grown up with that had gone on to become cops.

When I was a very young, like in 1972 or 1973, so I was four or five years old, there were two police officers in New York City that were killed in the line of duty, Gregory Foster and Rocco Laurie, and Rocco Laurie was buried out of the church that my family went to. His funeral was at Blessed Sacrament Church. I remember my mother taking us to the street, Forest Avenue and Manna Road, the two streets where the church was, and I remember Forest Avenue being filled with cops.

I'd like to give you the real romantic version and say, hey, I saw that and I was inspired, but that really wasn't it. It was just basically just going and taking the test because it was a good job to have in New York City. It was stable, the pension. It was something I looked at that had more stability. Most of all, too, I think it gave me a sense that I would be a part of something that was bigger than just working for an independently owned window dealer. It had more opportunities. I made more money doing that than I did selling windows, so that was good, too. It put food on the table and trying to get to the point where I could own a home and have some things in life. I wanted to live the American dream like everybody else.

Once I got into the profession, it has taken me places that I can look back now and say, jeez. Kind of understanding my own DNA, I guess, there are some pictures you can see on the shelves there, old military photos. My grandfather was a colonel in the army. Each of those photos has a story. Maybe I had a little bit of a gene in me that requires me to wear a uniform by genetics. I have a cousin who was a lieutenant with the NYPD. We weren't really super, super close. But it was just go take the test. Then when the phone rang and I met the requirements to be

hired, I took the job.

What about the brotherhood, though? Wasn't there something about that through the academy?

Yes. I had a sense that there was something bigger, like I said. I think when you watch fictional police shows, you get the sense that there is a camaraderie and a brotherhood with that. As I got closer and closer to actually becoming a police officer that was something that I really looked forward to. It was being part of something. It was being a part of something that clearly was bigger than yourself and that not everybody gets to say I'm a part of.

It's not really like Blue Bloods?

No. I love *Blue Bloods*, too. That's my favorite show.

Me too.

Tom Selleck portrays the police commissioner. It's funny you say that too because I find myself watching that show even though I may have seen every episode more than fifty times. The way he leads, there are a lot of really good lessons there. It's kind of funny to say that I could take that from a TV show.

No. It's good to know.

I think there is a lot to how Tom Selleck runs the NYPD as Frank Reagan. If I could be a little bit like Frank Reagan, especially in how I lead my own family, then that would be okay.

And they have wine with dinner.

Yes, exactly. But, no, I think that was a draw, just being a part of something. The NYPD, as historic as it was, some things good, some things not so good, but it still had a history. It still was something that attracted me to it. Being a part of something was definitely a big thing.

Where in the city were you?

I worked in the first precinct in Lower Manhattan. The address was 16 Ericsson Place. If you're familiar with that area, it's about two blocks south of Canal Street off of Varick Street, so it's right near where the World Trade Center used to be. It was right by the exit and entrance to the Holland Tunnel going into New Jersey. A beautiful area; it was SoHo, which was interesting getting assigned there as a cop. I worked there almost five and a half years. My grandmother was born on Houston Street, which was one of the streets. My family lived in West Village for a while when they were younger. And then my grandfather was stationed on Governors Island, which is right off Lower Manhattan; it's in the New York Harbor. Now I believe it is a Coast Guard installation, but it was an army base during World War II and post-Korea. So I had some family history in Lower Manhattan. It was pretty neat to actually go there as a police officer and work there.

What was 9/11 like? I know that you weren't there; you were here. But what was that like?

It's interesting because I was walking through the parking lot. I was a police officer. I worked at Northwest Area Command. The officer I worked with said, "Hey, a plane crashed by the World Trade Center this morning." I said, "Oh, really?" And he said, "Yes," knowing that I had worked there as a cop. I went to see what happens. It wasn't a time when communication—I have two cell phones now. There wasn't like this urgent need to call home and start checking. My brother worked in Lower Manhattan at the time. I didn't have this burning thought of what was occurring.

I got changed, put my uniform on, and went into—actually, I wasn't even going into uniform that day. We were supposed to do some training. I remember just stopping by my locker and going into the briefing room and people were glued to the television. Then they showed the Pentagon and then they showed the second plane. The second plane, I've got the sequence. But I

was horrified. I was just completely mortified.

The back story behind that was I actually at the World Trade Center when it got bombed in 1993. It was an interesting thing to see it on television and just to know that obviously...When the bombing happened, I was a police officer probably for about six weeks. I was standing across the street when the bomb went off. It was interesting now to see because it was clear to all of us in law enforcement that these were intentional acts. I think the news and everybody normal was like, oh, wow, it's a coincidence. It was clear, though. It was interesting. A lot of people asked me, "Hey, how many people would be down there? How many people do you think are dead?" Knowing that upwards of fifty, sixty thousand people could be in those buildings at that time of day.

People have always asked me, too, was there a tremendous urge to go back? Did I feel like I missed out on something because I wasn't there helping? I didn't. Honestly, I can't say that I did. I guess I had a little tug, or a big tug. I sat glued to the television like everybody else for about a week straight.

I think the biggest thing about that that struck me was, just like we experienced here after One October, were the outpouring and the feelings of goodwill that the community had towards the police in New York City. They were lined up alongside the West Side Highway. They were giving out food. There were flags. There was a tremendous sense of community. They would call it Ground Zero because that's where the buildings were, but really it was Ground Zero for those feelings of goodwill that spread across the country. We were really good to each other as human beings for a very long time after that. Then we got back to driving like we always drive and road rage reinserted itself into the everyday language.

It was painful to watch it, but I knew I lived here and I knew what my role was. I was

sad. I think looking back, too, one of the things was knowing that that was the precinct where I worked, it took a good week or two to find out that nobody that I had directly worked with was killed. It was all people from other precincts.

The biggest thing about 9/11 that strikes me from a law enforcement perspective that always stood out was...The NYPD does a medal day; they do a medal ceremony. Two things. One was my old partner in New York, his brother was the last cop killed in the line of duty prior to 9/11. His name was John Kelley. About a year goes by and then you have the deaths of 9/11, all twenty-three. There is my little memorial up there to 9/11. Twenty-three New York City police officers that were killed. The one that sticks out most, the story that I'll always remember, and probably because I have a daughter, is Moira Smith was a police officer that was killed. At the medal day, so a year or so later—her husband was a detective. But the mayor would typically put the medal on the office. Moira Smith's husband walked their daughter across the stage and they put the medal on the daughter. Carnegie Hall was where they had the ceremony. I remember seeing the pictures of that in the national news and it just made me cry. It just made me so sad. It's meant more to me—I didn't have any children back then—but with my daughter now. It even resonates more now when I think back.

A few years after that they had a museum set up in Lower Manhattan, nothing like the one they have now. They had a museum set up in the original precinct, which was on Old Slip and Water Street. My wife and I went back and they had that set up. They had all these artifacts and things like officers' guns that were found in the rubble. They didn't find anything but small bone fragments of those people, but their guns. Moira Smith's badge was recovered, the badge holder itself and the medals that she had worn on her uniform. It was mangled, but I remember seeing that. God rest the souls of all twenty-three. I think the Moira Smith story, just that picture

of that little girl wearing the medal, she is holding it. Now she is an adult. I follow that story. I Google it from time to time just to see. I don't think it goes away and I think that's an interesting thing for folks here is One October is never going away.

Right. And we do talk about that with the memorialization as we look to the future now.

Right. What's great about 9/11 is that my mom was still alive and my dad was alive. My mother passed away in 2006, so five years after 9/11. Where we did her funeral, that funeral parlor had done, I don't know, thirty, forty firemen funerals. Just constantly doing funerals. I remember too people that I knew that were very cynical about the world. They were like, there's another funeral? It was like, we don't have the emotional capability, doing one, two, five, ten. Three hundred and forty-three firemen and a lot of them came from neighborhoods that I was very familiar with in Staten Island. All those guys were from Staten Island.

Every year or two on the anniversary of 9/11, the New York papers always publish a thing. This past year I looked at it and it has photos of all the victims. Up until this year, I didn't realize that a guy named Eddie Diatri that I knew...I didn't realize he was killed on 9/11. I found that out this year. Not that I kept in touch with him, but it was a guy I knew from the neighborhood and grew up with. In those close-knit Irish, Italian civil service-type neighborhoods, you know everybody, but you're not always hanging out with them. Last year I realized, oh man, I didn't realize he was killed.

What were you doing on 1 October? Tell me what led up to it.

I was a captain at the time. I was captain of the Downtown Area Command. I have one vice and it's cigars. I was sitting in my backyard smoking a cigar and a sergeant that worked for me—his name is Kenny Nogle—Kenny, he called me. He was like, "Hey, did you hear what's going on at Mandalay Bay?" And I said, "No. What's going on?" He goes, "There is an active shooter and it's

legit; it's real." I'm like, "Are we sure it's real?" He's like, "I can hear the gunfire and the screaming in the background on the radio." He was at work. He's like, "I knew you'd want to know."

I went in the house and got my radio and turned it on. I heard the chaos. I was like, oh my god. You have a couple things that race through your mind right away. Obviously, I have to go; I'm leaving. But where am I going and what am I doing, is the question.

In law enforcement in general, one of the key things that we can talk about when it comes to these mass casualty incidents, these types of terrorist-type attacks, one tactic—and 9/11 is a great example—one tactic is these secondary devices. In foreign countries, in Israel, in London, they blow something up and they draw in all the resources and then the second bomb goes off. The first plane flies into the World Trade Center, and then they get all those resources there, and then the second plane comes while all the resources are there, and that's probably what killed a lot of the first responders that were there was that secondary device. It really made the situation unmanageable.

My first thought, I start to process this, and it probably sounds like it take hours, but it takes seconds. It is like, okay, where am I going? I am the captain. I run the Downtown Area Command. Two things that I processed I think will probably come back relatively quickly was when I was a lieutenant, we had done a training exercise for lieutenants and I had the role where I was the watch commander. I was the lieutenant that is responsible for all the valley-wide police operations. For example, if a shooting happens now, the watch commander would be the person that make sure that incident is being run appropriately. If there is a lieutenant from the area command working, he communicates with him.

When I was a watch commander and lieutenant, we did this exercise where you dealt

with an active shooter, mass casualty incident at Mandalay Bay, and so part of the exercise was that you had to physically drive there, establish a command post, and do all this stuff. And while you were managing that, the first or second, third or fourth wrinkle into the exercise was, okay, now there is an active shooter on Fremont Street. The lesson there was when you are there running that, you can't run both incidents. So you have to figure out, okay, who's going to run that. That was a major takeaway; somebody has to be in charge down there. The exercise was that if it is occurring here, the next place that they're going to hit is down there.

Prior to that what goes through my mind is—we're an agency that is very forward-thinking. After the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, we had sent a delegation of people to Mumbai to learn from those experiences. Mumbai was a series of explosions and fires and attacks that were spread out across the city, so resources would converge on the first place and then, okay, now it's happening over here and now it's happening here, so now the resources are spread thin and there is nobody in charge of all these. It took days for it to be quelled.

The training exercise, what we knew about Mumbai, and then me being the captain, if I just freelance and go wherever I want to go and jump in to help out, which is what I want to do, I'm just setting the wrong example because now cops and officers and detectives and sergeants can just converge on whatever scene they want to. I realized I had a responsibility to that downtown community, that Fremont Street corridor, which includes the Downtown Area Command, where the Stratosphere is. I decided—*you know what, I want to go to that scene. I want to help. The best way I can help is do my job.*

And thinking back to other experiences—I always tell people, stay in your lane; know what your area of responsibility is.

The captain who was in charge of the Strip at the time, my peer, was John Pelletier. I

heard John on the radio saying he was going to the Strip. I called John. I have known John for a very long time. I said, "Hey, I'm going to downtown. I'm going to coordinate everything down there. You've got that; I've got this. So-and-so is going to the hospital to start setting up at UMC. So-and-so is setting up the command post." I communicated all this same thing, too, to Charles Hank, who is now the assistant sheriff, but he was in this position when that happened. He was the tour safety chief. When he got promoted, I got promoted. I remember reaching out and saying, "Hey, here's where I'm going to go." Very, very...I'm going to go to downtown. I made the decision because I knew that on a Sunday night in warm weather in October, there were probably three or four concerts going on on Fremont Street. I called a gentleman that worked at the Stratosphere and said, "Hey, are you hearing what's going on?" He said, "Yes." The guy is one of the VPs there that I dealt with. I said, "How many people do you guys have up on the rise and the towers?" He said, "I just checked. We have sold over three hundred and fifty tickets in the last hour and a half, so there's probably two fifty to three hundred fifty people up on top of the building." And I said, "Okay." He said, "Do you want me to shut it down and evacuate those folks?" I said, "Yes. I'll have some cops come there to help with crowd control and do whatever."

I got to Downtown Area Command as quickly as I could and we set up a command post there and we started to control, getting everybody off Fremont Street, just getting everybody out of the public spaces as quickly as we could. I think a lot of the officers that worked for me understood why we were doing what we were doing. If you've ever seen any of the briefs that we've done or any of the follow-up, there were hours of ghost calls, I guess is the best way to describe it. Somebody gets shot out at the Harvest Festival, they stumble down the road to their hotel. They're staying at the Bellagio. They walk in and say, "There was an active shooter." Well, we're getting 911 calls that there was an active shooter now at the Bellagio. We had all these

phantom calls, which were well intended, but they were all related to one. There was one guy, one location. But people stumble into the Tropicana covered in blood, and they go, "Active shooter."

I had folks that worked for me, officers and sergeants that wanted to jump and respond to every one of those calls. I used Normandy as an example when I described it. When Eisenhower's folks hit the beach, some folks had Omaha Beach, some folks had Juno, some folks had...Everybody had an area of responsibility. Our lane was the Downtown Area Command and the safety of everybody down there. That captain and those resources that were there, I had to have faith and trust in the command staff folks, everybody that was going there to run that operation that they would run that operation. Based on the training I had received over the course of my career, too, I'm like, if there's going to be a secondary attack, this is a likely location. It very well could be anyplace along the Strip, but I needed to have control of the resources that I had working.

I had communicated to Captain Pelletier. I said, "I am not sending anybody to you unless you ask for it." Because we over converge, and it's not a bad thing. It's a luxury problem to have, is cops want to go to the danger and help out. I don't have a problem with that. But the problem is that they eventually become part of the problem if they get injured and we don't even know that they are there. Somebody has to know where all the key pieces are.

We quickly formulated a plan and got Fremont Street evacuated. We got all the concerts shut down. We got everybody off the roof of the Stratosphere. Blocked roads, did whatever and waited. Then we saw the sheriff on television saying the one shooter that is involved is dead. We kept our footprint in place just to make sure there wasn't another one, and it broke that down probably within twelve, fourteen hours, and started to resume. I went home, took a shower,

shaved and came back.

Did you go back downtown?

Yes. I went home. I probably got to downtown before 10:30. Whatever time the shooting started, I was probably in my office within twenty, twenty-five minutes at the most. I went home about eight in the morning, slept to about noon, and I was back by one o'clock and stayed all the way through to about ten o'clock that night.

Then we had a command post set up here. We started to get more formal assignments and things assigned to us. We ran the operations out of here for several days. The funniest part of the week was when the president decided he was coming that Thursday. That was one more thing we had to manage.

Watching the sheriff do the press conferences and do all that. It was very painful not to—it hurt not to go to the scene, but it was my role. I had to go do that. If I didn't go there and do that, then who was going to do it? The cops would have just gone wherever they wanted and then if something did happen in downtown, we never would have got them back. Some folks have laughed at that and talked about that decision.

Did you feel in general that was the protocol everybody followed; that they knew they needed to go to their place?

Yes, you have to go to a place. I think that's something we've identified now, too, is, what is everyone's place? If it were to happen today, do I know where to go and what to do? I think we had a good mindset and some folks had a place and knew where to go and other folks just showed up and said, "How do I help?" Which is good, too, if they don't have a specific area of responsibility. If you're a sergeant working doing background investigations and you don't really have a footprint in something like this, you pick a place and show up and figure out, how can I

help? But there has to be a good process so that we can account for those because at some point... We did an exercise this morning with the captains. We do these surprise exercises with them now where we blow the world up and see how they respond. We start to get them in the mindset of, okay, it's ten o'clock in the morning and by ten o'clock tonight this operation could still be going. If you all are doing this, who is relieving you? Who is going to take over from you? Who are the captains that we can bring in? What's the leadership role that needs to be here, say—because you still need your rest; this isn't television; you do have to get rest or, otherwise, you're going to make poor decisions when you're fatigued.

Talk about the healing. You talked a little about after 9/11 in New York. Talk about what you saw and what you witnessed here starting that second day or that evening?

For me personally, I think I had more of a connection to—like we talked about 9/11, so I had been through stuff like this before, I hate to say it. I went through the first World Trade Center bombing. I wasn't there during 9/11, but the connection because of my hometown. I think an understated sense of shock. But what helped a lot of us was tasking; we were busy. You had stuff to do, so you really didn't sit around. The only daily news I watched was when the sheriff was on, so I could get my updates and learn what we were doing or where we were at, and we got some of that internally as well, but that was a great source, was watching him do these press briefings.

But the healing part of it, I think that for a lot of us there was this overwhelming sense of grief and failure that we had fifty-eight people that were killed. We're on the map now. We're the worst shooting in the history of the free world. I personally had a sense of, how did we not prevent this? How did we fail? For me personally what has helped is when I realized there were twenty-two thousand people or twenty-four thousand people at the concert, a lot of people were

saved. Some folks were saved because of their own actions. Some were saved because of the bravery of the men and women of the police department. Some were saved because of the bravery of the people in the community that threw people in their cars and trucks and got them to the hospital. I think part of the healing was—it's cliché to say it—but in some of our darkest moments come our finest hours. You see the good in people. You see the things that people are capable of. I think the healing, too, was the stories you heard about the different things that people had done. It was somewhat therapeutic to find out amidst the one evil human being there is a lot of good still in the world. I don't think we took a breath, though, to be honest with you, as an organization. I don't think we took a breath for a long time. It was several weeks before we said, "Oh, we're going to have to probably do something for our people."

It was weeks.

Yes, it didn't seem...I think we had a core group of individuals, the people that were working the event. There was a young officer that was working for me that was working at the concert, and so he was there all day. Then nine, ten o'clock the next morning, he got back to the substation and he walked in and his hands were shaking and he was covered in blood. Brian Rich is his name. I remember seeing him and I'm like, "Are you okay?" And he's like, "Yeah..." He was going to say he was okay all day long, but he was covered in blood and his hands were shaking. I took the sergeant aside that was with him. They were going to let him go back out. I'm like, "Hey, he needs to go. We need to get somebody here now to talk to him."

As any place would be—this isn't a criticism—it is overwhelming. There is nothing that you have in place to deal with thousands of employees. You had fifty-three or fifty-one that were just assigned to working the concert, so you have that core group of people that you have to do something for, and then you have all the patrol officers that were responding. One patrol officer

that responded was shot, an off-duty officer that's killed. Now we have to reconcile. Charleston Hartfield is out on the field and he's dead. You have all this stuff and, for me anyway, I think it just seemed like it was a very long time before we started to even process the need for some type of intervention.

I can tell you as a member—so that was in October. I got promoted to chief in December, so a couple of months—I got promoted to chief and December of '18 made a year, yes. Forgive me, dates just seem to go by. When I got promoted to chief, I was probably on executive staff for—I can't remember how long it was. But then they brought a lady in to talk to people on executive staff, but this was months after the fact. The executive staff, the sheriff and people greatly affected by it as well. Imagine the burden that the leader of the organization feels on his shoulders. I think that that took its toll on all of us.

We [police] are not the greatest people in the world when it comes to asking for help. We have this thing, I don't know, where we have to have all the answers. I don't know what it is. It's not like they teach it. It's just it becomes where you're the person with all the answers, supposedly. We send twenty-two-year-old kids into gunfire, for crying out loud. We're brilliant and we don't need help. No. All kidding aside, I think we're very slow to recognize. If there was any healing for any of us, I think initially it came from any way that you can reconcile it so that you could keep one foot moving in front of the other, you did, whether it was prayer, whether it was church, whether it was time with your family, whether it was a good meal, a good workout, which isn't healing. It is just bridging the gap between when you can actually sit down and cry. I think we all found a way to do that. My biggest fear, like we've learned from other tragic events, like Oklahoma City, 9/11, I think the bill will actually come due in about five or six years. We will really know how we did with helping our employees five, six, seven years from now.

I know that the ITC, the Israel Trauma Coalition came and just came back again. Was that helpful at all, do you know?

I don't think I ever even talked to them.

When I got promoted to chief, I had heard about a lot of people were in pain, a lot of suffering. I have a friend, his name is Dakota Meyer. Dakota Meyer was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. His other claim to fame is he was married to Bristol Palin. He is Sarah Palin's son-in-law... That's how most people know him, but he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroics on the battlefield in Afghanistan. He and I had become friendly, long story. I have this knack of becoming friends with people, so Dakota Meyer and I are friends. He calls me and he's like, "Hey, I'm coming out there in January for the SHOT Show." The gun show that they do at the Sands and it just concluded last month. It is sportsmen, hunters, outdoor, something; that's what SHOT stands for.

Anyway, Dakota says, "Hey, I'm coming out there. Is there any chance, is there any chance at all I could meet with some of the guys that were involved in 1 October? I just want to meet them and shake their hands."

I said, "I've got a better idea. Why don't you come out and talk to them?" He went through PTS and the stuff that he's gone through, and there are all these stories you read about him being suicidal.

I cleared it with our PEAP [Police Employee Assistance Program] Director at the time, Lisa Hank. I said, "Hey, this guy wants to come out." She said, "We have no money." Folks wanted to come and talk and do things, but, by the way, it cost ten thousand dollars for an hour or whatever. I said, "No, no, it's not that kind of thing. He will do it for free."

He carved out a whole day because he was doing stuff at night at the show. He carved out

five, six hours from eight in the morning until about three in the afternoon, so six hours, seven hours. He came in the morning. What I had in the morning session were just the people that were assigned to the event and the people who were on the thirty-second floor.

He came in and I left him alone with them for about an hour and let him talk. His story is an incredible story of loss. He lost four friends on the battlefield in Afghanistan and he didn't get a lot of support from the military after that. It is a long story and it's well documented. He spent time with them and to a person, they all said it was very helpful.

Then we opened it up in the afternoon session to anybody who wanted to come. It was a lot of people that weren't in that core group. I think we invited about ninety people to the morning session and I think about fifty or sixty showed up. But then we opened it up to everybody in the afternoon. When he walked in for the afternoon session, they gave him a standing ovation.

I think that helped them to some degree, a lot of folks said. This year he came back again and spent some time with some folks. He is committed to doing it; whenever he's in town, he'll meet with folks. I think that is one of the little things that probably helped me. Probably part of the healing and recovery was doing something and trying to help those that were affected by it in a way that maybe I wasn't. We were all affected by it, but there is a difference between lying underneath a police car while bullets are skipping around you and then going to Downtown Area Command and setting up a command post. You're affected by it, but not to that degree.

Did you ever go to the site? Did you have a compulsion to do that?

No. I went to the site. The week that that happened, the president [Donald Trump] came on Thursday and then that Saturday the vice president [Mike Pence] came, and my first visit to the site was when the vice president was here. The vice president was going to speak at City Hall,

and the mayor and all the elected officials from the city were going to be there. The vice president wanted a briefing from Sheriff Lombardo. I had been the person that coordinated Trump's visit when he was there. I have some experience on Metro running dignitary visits, so I had to do that. I was the captain downtown, so this event going on at City Hall where the vice president was going to be there was a big deal for me. I had to make sure that that was run smoothly.

I was working and I wound up coming to headquarters and I spent the morning trying to coordinate—because the vice president wanted to be with the sheriff, and so I had to coordinate getting the sheriff from here to City Hall. My one trip to the site was when, on their way back to the airport, the sheriff rode with the vice president in his limousine and I followed behind. I was in the motorcade with my car. We went to the site. When they were done at the site, because the vice president wanted to see the site, Pence left and went to the airport and the sheriff jumped in my car and I drove him back here.

Then the only other time I was at the site was when *Nightline* wanted to do a story, and they just released about a month or so ago; it's called something on the thirty-second floor; Death and Thirty—it's on YouTube. But there was a *Nightline* special that they did on it. [The sheriff] assigned [me] to be the person to be interviewed from executive staff. We did the interview out at the site—well, across from Mandalay Bay, right near the site.

I did go, though, a couple of times to the Las Vegas sign, where all the crosses were. We took our daughter there and we went there a couple of times to see that.

How old is your daughter?

Nine.

One interview that I did was with a father of young kids and he talked about the hardship

of his children seeing him break down emotionally and not knowing what was going on and trying to explain that. Do you guys get coaching, training on how to handle your situation with your family, especially young kids?

No. What we always say is if the job wanted us to have kids, they'd issue them. It's interesting because my daughter is very smart and she's very intuitive and she's very bright for our age, like every parent says about their kid. But she understood. She goes to a private school and I think they had some conversations at the school. I should probably know what they talked about. My wife probably knows better than I do. But she had an understanding. She goes to a Catholic school, so, of course, there's got to be some guilt in there.

That comes with the territory.

Goes with the territory. But they explained to the kids, but it didn't seem to really...We took her to the site and she understood. I remember a few questions. "Daddy, why would somebody do this?" But nothing that just seemed to be lasting. I don't know if that was right or wrong. There is probably some child psychologist that would say that's very smart and there are some...My daughter is actually adopted. We got her when she was seventeen days old. I can't tell you the range of advice. *Don't tell until she's twelve. You have to tell her when she's nine. Don't ever tell her.* Oh my god, what's right? Nobody knows what's right.

Parental intuition.

That's a great way of putting it. We were very comfortable with, hey, we're going to go see the site; let's go check it out and let's bring her so she understands this happens.

And part of that, too, for me is—again, trouble with certain groups in town or even within Metro, people really love their guns. I'm not against people owning a firearm. I clearly have it and it's part of my profession. But until we get smart and change some rules and laws...The only

thing that has changed since One October is the number of victims and the ZIP code where it happens. That is the only thing that's changed. That is the only thing that has changed since Orlando. That is the only thing that has changed since Dallas. That is the only thing that has changed since Columbine. That is the only thing that has changed since Sandy Hook is the victims and the ZIP code.

We always ask in our interviews about their attitude towards guns; if it changed since that episode.

Sandy Hook was one of those events for me, too—again, it goes back to, what would I do? I see these people and their four-year-old is not coming home. I'm just absolutely mortified that, jeez, that could be here, right? Obviously, there is a difference when it's children, but it's no less painful when it's your sister that's a grown adult. The pain is just so there. But I think what we fail to recognize is, yes, Stephen Paddock bought \$200,000 worth of firearms in an eleven-month period and that didn't alarm anybody, and then he slaughter fifty-eight people. In fact, he didn't break the law until he started shooting. So the scenario would be to sue MGM because they were clearly negligent, is a thought that's out there, right? I give people the example, and I'm not pro MGM. I'm a public servant. I don't have an opinion on that. But if a housekeeper went to that room to pick up a food service tray, deliver more food, change the sheets, the thousands of reasons that an employee of Mandalay Bay could have been in that room, they get in there and they see all the guns and they go, hey, that's kind of odd; I never saw that before. Then they tell their supervisor and it gets elevated to the point where a police officer responds—

But that wasn't the policy.

But even if we did respond, what could we have done? We couldn't legally take one of those guns from him. We would have left him there with those guns. There is one possible outcome,

right? Again, their policies and things have probably changed since, but my point is—and what really is lost in the conversation is across our country every year, the number of people that die from gun violence...It's front page news when it's a guy in an elevated position kills fifty-eight people, but what's lost is how gun violence adversely impacts the minority community, how gun violence adversely impacts...You can look all over town and see where are the shootings, where the violent crime happens. We are a very big city, but they happen in very small areas, and when you look at those small areas, they are areas that are geographically different, they're demographically different, they're economically different, and it's the gun laws and rules that allow that to happen and costs us in terms of human lives. It is just tragic. It gets attention because of the mass shootings, which it should, but when onesies and twosies are dropping in minority neighborhoods, it is just a news story.

It should be getting people's attention, too.

That's where those rules have to change. When we look at it, we want to change it. The impetus for changes is because of these mass events, but I've been here twenty years and we had a hundred and twenty-one murders last year; I bet 80 percent of them—I don't remember the exact number—were because of a firearm. Then look at how many of those firearms were legally owned and then how many were illegally owned. The point is they're out there now.

Did you begin to see Las Vegas differently in any form once this happened? When you saw the outpouring of feelings after this, did you see the city differently?

I've been very fortunate because for me the glass is always half-full. There is always scrutiny when it comes to our profession and we feel it here even though it may happen on the national level. I think for me, though, I've always been lucky to be exposed and see the good that people see in us. In other words, people genuinely support the police department. They like the police

department. In fact, even our critics want the same thing that we want. They just want a good police department that's well trained; that treats everybody the same. I think at times when you're a young officer, you kind of see the negativity and you go, ugh, everybody hates us. I've been exposed to a spectrum of things that have taught me that that's not true. There is always going to be that one part of society that we're never going to make happy, but we have to continue to try and we have to listen to them. Then there is that other part that is the very vocal critics that actually are teaching us something that we should listen to and then there's the fans. You have your people that no matter what will support you. But after an incident like that the outpouring, I think that for me it was important to see. You got that sense of—I don't think I could go into a restaurant and buy a cup of coffee or pay for a meal for a good month. Every time I turned around, "No, some citizen got you guys' check." The outpouring, we ran out of room in the substation for cases of water that were showing up and pizzas and salads from Rachel's Kitchen, stuff just showed up. I thought that was tremendous. I think what people don't realize is that really has an effect on the younger officers who are teetering with they love us, they hate us; they love us, they hate us. I was genuinely pleased, but I wasn't shock. I think it was like, wow, this is really great. You felt like your community supported you.

The other part of it, too, is how they did it for each other, not just for the police department. People were looking out for each other, like human beings being good to other human beings. It's sad that that ebbs after a while. But it was tremendous, tremendous outpouring that just made you feel good. It made you feel, all right, people know we're doing a good job. We care and then they care.

Tell me about the Healing Garden and what that has meant.

The one in downtown? When they started that, they had a commemoration and a few things that

they did. It's been awhile since I've been over there. I think that is an important thing because it gives people a place to go. If you get there at the right moment and the right time, it's just a place where if you're there sometimes—I've been there sometimes where you just don't hear a sound, and I've been other times, too, where it sounds like chaos going on. It's a place that people can go and reflect. I think what happens is for the people, especially those that lost people, is if I've learned anything over the years, it's not right after it happens that is the key part; it's when the phone stops ringing and then everybody has forgotten, or seemingly has forgotten. People don't recognize a name anymore or recognize what your family may have given up on that day. It is really just incumbent upon yourself at that point if you have been affected by this in the worst way that you have a place to go that is going to stand in eternity. And hopefully it grows. Hopefully, it becomes a bigger place and the city can keep it clean and maintained and we can add to it. I think those folks are as deserving of a piece of real estate in our community as anybody else because their loved ones are never coming home.

Did your wife become part of Metro?

Yes, my wife just retired. Yes, we hired on at the same time. She was smart, though. She bought five years of PERS time and she got out. She had twenty years and she said, "See ya."

She wasn't on duty that night?

Yes, she was and she was home. She worked in our office of community engagement, and so her role that night...They got called in. She came into headquarters and they were part of helping the families reconnect. I think the thing that's affected her the most over time is when she sees the news stories or reads the articles or sees the pictures of victims and she says, "That man in the picture; that's her husband. I was with him. He was trying to find his wife that night. I spent an hour with him." She realized after that the people that she was with never saw their loved ones

again. It's not something that ever leaves you. I think still to this day...She is still a cop even though she is retired. She has got that fiber in her that won't go away. I think it dramatically affected her, too, knowing that she was with people trying to connect them with people that were killed and that they wouldn't ever see their loved ones again. It definitely had an impact on her.

Would she ever be ready to talk about her experiences?

Yes, I'm sure she would. I can ask her if you guys want to talk with her.

That would be great if you would.

She's got nothing to do.

Doesn't she have a nine-year-old?

She's in school.

I'm in trouble. I'm sure she would. I think she would be a great person to ask, too, as far as the therapy, the healing part of this. I will tell you that I think that's probably the area where we weren't prepared for. If we failed in any way, I would think that's probably an area where we can greatly improve upon. We were overwhelmed by it. What do you do when you have a five-, six-person Police Employees Assistance Program?

What is her name?

Janeen Walsh. I tell her. There is another officer, too, I think that still works here, Megan Kraut.

I don't know if she would be too willing to...

What about John Pelletier?

Yes, he would. He is the captain of the convention center. He works for me, so he has to talk to you.

If you can help us create a network, we got permission to add to the project.

Absolutely. Is this going through the Sheriff's Office? How did you guys get to me? Because I

thought it was the Sheriff's Office.

Through your PIO through Metro.

Okay. If we get with the PIO and just say, after talking with Andy, he mentioned a few names.

You don't need permission to talk to Janeen because she's retired. Metro has no hold on her.

Megan Kraut. Megan is very shy, so she may not want to talk. I know she was on the field when the gunfire started and I think she might would give you a perspective. She and my wife were partners. They worked together. But my wife wasn't on the field that night. Megan was working overtime. They might be good. John was the captain that was in charge of the area command. He would be a good one.

I think it is wonderful that you are so open and talked like you did. We appreciate that so very much.

I think someday, what you guys do, it's published and people read it, there will be somebody sitting in this chair ten, fifteen, twenty years from now unfortunately that may go through the same thing. I'm on this Dwight Eisenhower kick lately and 1944 is when D-Day happened and here I am in 2019 realizing that his challenges...

One of the things we did learn through this was how people sort of reach out to the next victims, the next community where that's happened.

I'm glad you said that because one of the things that we have, and PIO can probably confirm it, I think we are up to over two hundred, two hundred and fifty, maybe even close to three hundred now requests from other police departments for us to come and present what we've learned. Part of the healing for me really has been that I've done that several times. I have gone to different conferences and conventions and presented this 1 October presentation that we have put together to talk about the experience, but also to help other people.

One of the things we learned from Orlando after the Pulse Nightclub was when money started flowing in. We were like, what do we do with money? How do we distribute this? We were not prepared for that. Then the Family Resiliency Center that is still open is something that we tell people, hey, you're going to have to kick this off really fast, especially a tourist destination. How many of these folks were from other cities? The majority of the victims were from somewhere else. It is a strange town to them. They are not familiar with here. It's not home. They are away from home. They are out of their comfort zone. Now this happens. Jeez, what do we do? It is simple things like: by the way, you were supposed to check out four hours ago. My wife got shot and she's laying in the hospital. What do I do? That's where those things come in.

I forget how long it was after the Pulse Nightclub to 1 October, but I think it was about two weeks, three weeks after 1 October where the first disbursement checks started to occur because Orland started to receive checks and donations from people for the victims. It took over a year or so for those checks to start to go to people. We had to figure out, jeez, someone just gave us a million dollars; what do we do with it? Who gets it? Now you have to deal with that because people were bringing it to the police department or giving it to Steve Sisolak, whatever it was they were doing. What do we do with it? Do we as a police agency even want to be part of it? We get it and we're not advertising it. We're grateful. That's one of the lessons learned that we give to people is be prepared for this because it's coming. People are going to start writing checks. What do you do? What do you do when forty cases of water show up at your substation? We had a company drop off an ice machine. They dropped off a refrigerator as big as this wall that had ice in it. "Here, in case you guys need ice. Plug it in and there you go." I go, "Where am I going to put that?" You got any flat screens? What else you got?

That's how desperate human beings are to feel like they are helping.

I think that's it. They just want to do something. I think that's what you have to realize is no matter where you live, it's their hometown; they want to be a part of the solution. Going back to why did I become a police officer, it's that I wanted to be a part of it. They wanted to have some type of connection. If that connection was, I dropped off food; I made a plate of lasagna; I bought a case of water; I donated a refrigerator; I washed police cars. We had a guy show up and wash all the police cars. As a matter of fact, there is a dry cleaner on the other side of town, my dry cleaner. I go to Green Cleaner's Dry Cleaner. Do you?

You tell Mo you met me.

I will. I go tomorrow. For months I couldn't pay for dry cleaning because there was somebody that came in there—

We contributed to him because we said, "You can't eat all this."

Somebody came to Mo and he would get money from people. I see cops in and out of there all the time. Mo would say, "Oh." And then people would, here is a hundred dollars; here is fifty dollars; pay for their dry cleaning. I'm like, "mo, I can afford it. Let the cops pay. Take care of the cops." He goes, "No, I could dry clean all of the cops' uniforms for a year." It was months. Mo is funny because I've been going to him since 2006 and I live right down the street now.

We are neighbors then.

I live off Serene between the new houses—

You are right around the corner from him.

Oh, yes. I live off Serene between McLeod and Kingston, so between Eastern and Pecos in those newer homes. I just moved there in August. The funniest thing about Mo is he has never once charged me in nine years for anything related to my daughter's clothes, her school uniforms. We just had our first Daddy-Daughter Dance last week and he altered the dress for nothing.

I love that man.

He is just a great human being.

He is. He is the best.

That's so funny. You go to Mo? Of course I go to Mo.

Everybody knows Mo. I've watched people go into his—if I go in I know I'm going to be in there for a good twenty minutes. Somebody came in one day, a man, and he had two or three big garbage bags full of shirts to be starched and pressed and all that. I go, "Wow." He goes, "He saves them all up and drives them over from Summerlin to bring them over to me to do for him and he's been doing that for years."

I started going to him because a friend of mine recommended him. Then Al Phillips kept losing my clothes because they send them out and they would disappear. I'm like, "What do you mean you lost my clothes?" I looked for a place that just did everything in-house and I've never once had an issue. He is a great human being. I've watched his kids grow up. There are pictures of my daughter this big walking around the store and now she says, "Daddy, can I get a lollipop?"

Can you give me the ranking of police officers?

It is police officer, then sergeant, then lieutenant, then captain, and then deputy chief. There are six deputy chiefs, including the jails. I am one of the chosen—everything up to captain is a promotional exam. You take a Civil Service test to promote all the way, so sergeant, lieutenant and captain are Civil Service Exams. Chiefs and above are appointed by the sheriff. You have to do a good job as a captain. You have to be a little bit politically savvy and you have to do a few things and the sheriff goes, "Okay, you're a chief." There are six chiefs, including the chief in jail, then there are three assistant sheriffs. Charles Hank was on one of the emails. He is an assistant sheriff you guys are going to interview. Charles is one of three assistant sheriffs. There

is one undersheriff and that's Kevin McMahon. Then there is one sheriff. Sheriff is obviously elected, which is interesting compared to other major cities where the police commissioner or the police chief is typically appointed by the mayor. But because we're a city and county agency combined, he is elected. I can even give you an organizational chart if you want one.

No, this is perfect. This has been amazing.

I appreciate it. It was actually therapeutic for me, too. This is the most decent thing I've done all day.

Thank you.

[End of recorded interview]