

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANTHONY KAPPENMAN

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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV LIBRARIES

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVE

This is Claytee White. It is May 16, 2019. We are in the Oral History Research Center. And I am with Anthony.

Anthony, could you please pronounce and spell your complete name?

My name is Anthony, the last name is pronounced Kappenman; it's A-N-T-H-O-N-Y, and the last name is K-A-P-P-E-N-M-A-N.

Thank you. I'd like to start by just talking about your early life. Tell me where you were born and what that was like; what your family was like and how you grew up.

I was born and raised out here. I know for an infant, a small time I was in California, but it was when I was too young to really remember it. My mom was a schoolteacher out here and she taught at Boulder City for, I want to say, about twenty-two years, twenty-five years, and then she was the dean at the Southern Vo-Tech School for a little bit. Predominately I went to high school and grade school out in Boulder City.

What was it like growing up in Boulder City? What did you do as a young boy playing?

The same as every other kid. Boulder City is a small town, so it's kind of one of those wholesome all-American towns where you don't really have to worry about your kids and they can go out and play in the streets and have fun. I just did your normal, typical stuff: riding bikes. For a long time I lived with another family because my mom was working multiple jobs, so I actually lived with a different family for about seven years. My friend was the second youngest of nine and then they adopted three and then they had me. At any given other point, me and three or four or five other kids living with them. It was kind of like living in a summer camp, honestly. We did mostly a lot of stuff outdoors, riding bikes and getting in trouble.

What about the lake?

Yes, we went to the lake. I moved back in with my mom in ninth grade. We got a boat right around that time when I was in high school, so we went to the lake a lot when I was in high school. We went up to Utah a lot and went snowboarding. Kind of your normal stuff. It wasn't necessarily a normal life, but I did all the same normal things that most people like to do.

Great. What kind of work after high school?

I originally was going to go to college. I went to Southern Utah University for a little bit. I went there for a semester. I didn't really like Utah, so I came back here and started going to CSN and didn't really like being back here, so I joined the military. I joined the navy. I was in the navy for ten years and then I got out actually right before Route 91. I got out in July of that year. I was in the navy for ten years. I did air traffic control and then I was a recruiter for three years. I had just gotten my first job out of the navy; I'm a service advisor at Friendly Toyota.

Didn't think about air traffic controller?

The FAA kind of works it the same way the military does where you don't really get too much say in where you go. You have to go to their school and it's about twenty-five thousand dollars a year. You can get into the FAA other ways, but you kind of have to really wait for windows to open. The only other options if you really want to make good money is contracting, which most of them I wouldn't be able to do here, either; there is only one contract tower and it's Henderson Executive. It's a good job if you're willing to move around, but at that point, I had bought a house here and I just kind of set roots here. That's actually part of the reason I wanted to get out of the military, too; I just wasn't ready to start moving around again.

Were you a Nave SEAL?

No, no.

We always think that's the romantic part.

Yes. Definitely not.

Tell me about your love for country music.

I have always loved music as a whole. I go to a lot of music festivals, a lot of shows, a lot of events; I always have for at least the last six, seven years, once I've had the money to really go. I travel all around the country for stuff.

Give me an idea. Where have you been for a festival?

I've gone to Miami a couple of years in a row for Ultra, which is an Indio music festival. We just left Stagecoach at the end of April, which is the same place they do Coachella; it's in Indio. Just kind of wherever. I've gone to Texas; I've gone wherever I can afford and make the time work. Country music has been in my life a lot longer than everything else. My mom was the youngest of nine from a farm family, so that's all I grew up with was country. I'm old country: George Strait and Tim McGraw and a lot of that. It's kind of weird because I heard country music so much as a kid that I almost started to...I don't want to say resent it...but I just became uninterested in it.

As I got older I just kind of fell back in love with it. I'd say I started listening to country again, I'd say, maybe around twenty, twenty-one; around that age. As I got older I kind of started to just appreciate a lot more things in life. I think my perspective changed. Definitely as I joined the military and I traveled around and I saw all the different sides of life, I just became much more appreciative of things than when I was younger, which I'm sure happens to most people as you grow older. Honestly, I just really like talent and it doesn't really matter what form it's in whether it's music or sports or anything. I just really appreciate, A, the commitment and the devotion that it takes to get where you are, and the skill. A lot of people don't like to watch

baseball. I love to watch baseball. I think it's amazing that somebody can throw something a hundred miles an hour accurately in a little square, so I like that; that impresses me.

Yes, I just kind of re-fell in love with country music as I got older. I just appreciated the pure raw talent of some of these artists and just kind of opened back up to it.

Tell me about Sunday, October first. What was your day like?

I was freshly out of the military; I had only been out a couple of months. I was still training at my current job as a service advisor, so I worked that Friday/Saturday. I went to a different show Friday; I can't remember. I go to so many shows, it's hard to log them all. But I didn't go to Route 91 Friday or Saturday because I had a different concert that I was going to.

Here in the city?

Here in the city, yes. It was Sublime. It was Sublime With Rome. It was at Downtown Events Center. Yes, I had that ticket Friday night, so I didn't buy a three-day pass. I just figured I'll pick one up. I had worked Saturday, so I was so tired from Saturday of working, I was just like, *neh, I'll just try to get a Sunday pass*. I had asked around on Saturday night if anybody knew of anybody selling one. I go to so much stuff and I spend a lot of money on music—that's really where the majority of my disposable income goes is to music festivals and shows. I just kind of set a mark for myself, like, *if I can find a ticket for under eighty dollars, then I'll go*. Most of the stuff I was seeing, people still wanted a hundred to a hundred and forty dollars for a ticket.

One of my ex-coworkers that I was in the navy with, his wife didn't want to go Sunday. He said, "Hey, you can have her wristband. If you want to come, I'll drive you." He actually just moved down near me, so he lived a few minutes away. I was like, "Yes, that would be awesome. Sounds great." He came over; he picked me up. We went down there. It was no different than any other day.

Where did you park?

I don't think he parked at Mandalay Bay. I want to say he parked at MGM. He parked at MGM. For military, if you take your active duty ID or your DD214, all MGM properties will give you a pearl membership card, which basically allows you to have free parking, so that's why he parked at the MGM.

It's just not fair.

So he parked at the MGM; I do remember that. Then we walked across and over. There was a few—obviously being a local, there were a lot of my friends already there and then there was a couple there that I had met at Stagecoach about, gosh, at that point, maybe three or four years prior. I'm usually pretty good about keeping in touch with people if I meet them and spend the weekends with them, so this couple I had kept in touch with for the last however many years. I had seen them at Stagecoach a couple more times, but they were there. I met up with them and just a few friends as we're wandering around. It's a big crowd, so you'll just kind of catch pockets of people as you move around. But, yes, it was your normal festival.

But this sounds like family. It sounds like you really get to know each other over the years.

Yes. I love the music. I've always loved the music. But I think a big part of the reason that I love going to these festivals is you get to meet people from all different points of life. You get to meet people that are—some people are just like you and some people are completely opposite of you, but you all have one thing in common.

The couple that I had met, the guy, his name is Kelly, he was actually a Marine officer. The first year I met him he was just getting ready to retire and then his other buddy Jason, who was not at Route 91 that year, is still a Marine officer. He didn't go to Stagecoach this year, but he's coming back from Japan and he'll be there next year and we all plan on going to Stagecoach

next year. But, yes, you keep in touch with these people. You form friendships and bonds, some closer than others, for sure. My best friend in the whole wide world I met at a music festival about three years ago. It's interesting. It's a community. It's its own community. You get a lot of people who regularly go to these things year after year and it does, it forms its own little separate community.

Most people thought the equipment had malfunctioned or there were fireworks. What did you think?

I kind of was right there. I immediately thought fireworks at first. Then I looked up and I saw no fireworks. My second command was at San Clemente Island, which is where the Navy SEALs try to do all their underwater demolitions, so I heard automatic gunfire every day or every other day, every couple of days, explosions. I'm very familiar with all those noises. I looked up and immediately saw that there was no fireworks, and I grabbed my friend and I said, "We've got to go." She said, "What's going on?" I said, "We've got to move." And she said, "Is everything okay?" And I said, "No. We've got to move." I was trying to move because I knew that people were going to panic soon and I was trying to—if you're facing the stage, I'm sure you may have seen diagrams of the layout and everything like that.

Yes.

We were stage right on the Mandalay Bay side and then you had that center divider where it had the bar on the back end and then it was the sound booth and the runway through the middle for the equipment. We were just forward enough to be next to that equipment side past the bar.

Immediately I grabbed her and just tried to start working our way through people. I would say we probably got—it seemed like a really long time; it probably wasn't because I'm pretty sure my adrenaline was spiked way before everyone else's was. But it seemed like I was

making pretty good progress without anybody moving. But we maybe, probably, honestly only got ten, fifteen yards, twenty yards, maybe. It wasn't very far. We had gotten from closer to mid where that grate is, granted that we're weaving through people as well, to about right where the bar is starting before people started moving.

When I heard the gunfire and I knew it was gunfire, in my head I kind of mapped it out immediately. I just was like, *okay, it's gunfire*. I wasn't really thinking from a 3-D linear angle. I was like, *it's gunfire. It's coming from my right*. I just kind of looked and there was a whole crowd of people between us. On the outside there's more crowds of people. And then amongst that there's cops all over the road. That was my first thought. I was like, *there's gunfire coming from that direction; it's not going to get to us; we just need to get away from it*. That was my first thought. I really started moving, thinking we were perfectly safe. When I was moving my friend, yes, I didn't even think...I just thought we were just going to leisurely walk to the other side and be fine. I thought it was going to hectic.

Right around when we were getting to the bar area; that's when people started running. At that point people are kind of pushing us around; you're getting bumped around. I was trying to keep her in front of me so I could see her and maneuver through the crowd as well. She got knocked over and I remember seeing...Where the bar is, there are tables there. I remember she got knocked over and I'm trying to get to her to get over and I just remember seeing somebody frantically trying to grab her. Then I looked to the left and then you can see just bullets spotting off the ground. I didn't really know what else to do. They were heading right for her, so I kind of just dove on her and I threw my head in front of hers, and I got shot in the face. A bullet hit probably about, I don't know, a quarter of an inch off the ground in front of me and snapped my head back.

Then I got up and picked her up. At that point, as I was picking her up, I was trying to get her to move and I got about a step off and I felt almost probably like a baseball pitch would be on the inside of your leg. My knee just kind of pushed out. There wasn't really any pain. But I remember I got up and I got her running.

Could you run?

Yes. Well, I thought I could. In my head there is this adrenaline going so fast and your heart's beating. The reason I remembered that...not necessarily that I was hurt because I felt something hit me already...but I remembered kind of realizing that I was injured because my friend is only five-four; she's very little. I remember I'm getting her to run. *Don't look back; just run; I'm right behind you; just keep moving.* I'm kind of picking people up along the way. I remember going and I'm like, *how is she moving so much faster than me?* I looked down at my leg where I got hit and I didn't see anything. There was a small hole on my pants. At first, when I saw that there was just like a small hole in my pants and I didn't really see anything else, for a second I thought, *maybe they're rubber bullets and this is just some weird prank.* I had gotten hit in the face and I knew my face was bleeding, but the fact that it hit right in front of me, I thought maybe it just busted me open.

We're running at that point, and I said, "Hey," and she turned. She's like, "Are you hit?" Because she saw me looking at my leg. I said, "I think we're okay. I think they're rubber bullets. Just keep moving." I said, "Don't worry about me. Just keep moving. We just need to get over there." Then right after I said I got maybe about another three or four yards, and I just felt like a release of pressure, and I look down and my whole pant leg was covered in blood. At that point I knew I had been shot for sure. I told her to keep going and we went a little bit more.

At that point I looked down and I saw how much blood was coming out of me. I'm not really a medical professional. It looked like a lot of blood. I stopped real quick. She kind of stopped. She is kind of looking back and every time she noticed I was too far, she would stop. I would tell her to keep going. But I stopped and I took off my belt and I remember just cinching it as tight as I can. Then I folded it up and under and pulled it up towards me where I could hold it tight. Of course that made me run even slower, but I didn't know if I was going to bleed out. Really my main goal was just to get her to safety. I did that and we kept running, hobbling.

Everyone is escaping towards the airport. Really they're just running opposite of gunfire. It really didn't matter necessarily that it was the airport on that side; it could have been anything on that side. Everyone was just really trying to go the opposite way of the gunfire. But I remember seeing a fence and it's to the airport, so it's a pretty large fence. I'm six-four, so it's probably an eight-foot fence. It wasn't a small fence by any means.

Were people climbing over that fence at this point?

Yes, at that point people were climbing over the fence. Maybe even eight and a half feet; it was a tall fence. I just remember thinking, *I'm not going to be able to get over it*. I was getting ready to just get her there and get her over and that was it; I was going to figure it out from there.

Fortunately I got really lucky right when we were getting to the fence; first responders, Metro, had opened up a small fence way right as we were getting there. That was a huge relief because I just remember thinking, *I'm going to get her over this fence and I'm going to have to run back through gunfire to figure out another way*. That was it; first responders opened up the gate and we went through there.

There was a gate in this fence?

Yes. There was like a double-sided swinging fence that was chained shut. I don't know if the cops got bolt cutters and just put it open or if they got a key. I imagine at that point they probably just cut the thing with something that they had. People started funneling in through there. Now at that point we're in the private part of the airport, at least where we entered through.

You ran towards Giles Street?

I'm not familiar with that street.

That's the street behind the venue. Or are you towards Hooters?

If you're looking at Mandalay Bay, literally directly behind the venue, so going into that airport on that side because I'm not familiar with the street there. We got in there and at that point it was such chaos because at this point there is no security, there is no police officers, there's nothing. It's just people hiding in hangars and just wondering where to go. Nobody really had any clue what to do.

We got to a hangar and at that point my friends—at that point everyone is calling me and my phone was going off the hook because everyone is trying to see if I'm okay. I actually forgot about that. I did actually answer my phone at one point. I only answered it because of who was calling. My friend who was my ride down there, the one that gave me the ticket, he left probably about, I'd say, maybe ten to fifteen minutes before the shooting started. When I saw it I thought maybe he might have stopped or something and that he was still in there. I immediately answered it. He's like, "Hey, I heard there's shooting going on down there. Are you okay?" And I said, "Yes. Did you leave?" And he said, "Yes." I was like, "Okay, I got shot. I've got to go." And just hung up the phone. But I didn't know if he was still in there, so that was the only reason I answered it.

But we got out and we got to the hangar. At that point, one of my childhood friends from high school—we played football and bowled and we were very, very close—he called me and he was like, “Where are you at?” He knew I was there. He’s like, “Were you there? Where are you at?” I was like, “Don’t come down here. You’re not going to be able to get down here.” I guess, I don’t know, he didn’t listen to me at all. He tried to drive down and he called me again. He’s like, “Hey, I’m down near the Strip. Where are you at? I’m coming to get you.” I was like, “I’m in the airport. I can’t tell you where I’m at. I have no clue where I’m at in the airport. I don’t know what to do. You’re not going to be able to get in here. Don’t even try to get in here because there’s so much chaos going on you may get hurt, honestly.” And so he’s like, “Okay, hold on one second.” He hangs up his phone.

His wife is actually a daughter of one of the Henderson Fire chiefs. She calls me and she’s like, “Where are you at?” I’m like, “Somewhere in the airport.” And she’s like, “I’m going to get you an ambulance.” I was like, “I don’t even know where I’m at.” She was like, “Tell me what you see.” At that point I saw a hangar and I just read the name of the hangar.

You were in the private portion of the airport.

We were in the private portion of the airport, yes. It looked like corporate hangars, yes. At that point I had a few people around me. There were two nurses who were severely intoxicated, so they probably wouldn’t have been much help anyway, but they were trying to do their best to help. Yes, at that point I checked my leg. At that point I had enough time to really process what was going on and I didn’t have to worry about my friends. Fortunately the other group of friends that I was with also happened to be in that hangar.

Wow.

Yes. I was sitting there. They kind of threw me on one of the conveyor belt loaders for a plane. I was just lying on that as I'm taking a look at my leg. These nurses are trying to see what condition I'm in. I undid my belt to see the bleeding; I didn't hit an artery or anything. I just kind of kept it on loose just to regulate the bleeding. But my friends found me while I was on that conveyor belt. And I said, "Is everyone here?" And they said, "Everyone is here. We're all fine."

Surely enough, about fifteen to twenty minutes later an ambulance showed up for me, specifically for me. It worked out very weirdly.

Did other people pile into the ambulance?

No, they wouldn't let anybody else in. I was the only one in that immediate area that was injured. My friend, I told them, "She's with me. She's my friend. Please." And they said, "No." I think it was just for security purposes; I don't think they were willing to take anybody but injured. The amount of people that they were in-taking to the hospital, they just couldn't...Even when you were at the hospital, they weren't allowing anybody in.

Where did they take you?

They took me to Saint Rose Sienna, which I've talked to lots of people...I talked to a customer of mine who actually does emergency procedures at the airport, so I've kind of gotten the inside of the airport side of it. One of my friends was actually a nurse at Saint Rose Sienna and she was actually on shift. I saw her while the whole thing was going on. I've gotten the points of view from it everywhere in the city, not just from where I was at.

It was like something out of a war movie. They just really couldn't have anybody else come. There wasn't enough stretchers for people. There was blood everywhere, in every portion of the hospital, all over the floors. There was just people sitting along the walls, hunched over. They tried to take me in and I told them, "No." Basically they tried to get me a gurney and give

me pain meds and I said, “No.” I just said, “Keep going. I’m fine. I’m not bleeding anymore. The bleeding stopped. I’m good.” There was not enough medical attention to even remotely help the chaos.

And that was at Saint Rose, so you can imagine the closer hospitals.

Right. Well, Saint Rose Sienna, even though they’re technically rated as a trauma center, they even told me there, “We normally only handle minor car accidents. We don’t handle bullet wounds. We don’t handle any of this stuff.” Which that day they did. They were calling surgeons. The guy that worked on my knee, he was an ankle and foot specialist. When he went to inject my knee to see if there was any infection, he missed it like three times. It was crazy. You can’t fault him. That was all they had.

How long were you in the hospital?

I was in the hospital twenty-three hours, and I know that because when they did the divvying up of the Route 91 fund, even though I had been shot three times, they only gave me the minor portion because they did it off how long you were in the hospital, and because I was in less than twenty-four hours that’s what I got. It was better than nothing. I got like eight thousand dollars, but I had to miss work for a few months with rehab and all that jazz. In the grand scheme of things it didn’t... Yes, it was twenty-three hours.

What about your face?

When I got there, there was so much stuff going on and it was really funny because that was actually the only part of me that I cared about. I was just like, “Will you guys please take this bullet out of my face?” And they were like, “Oh no, we can’t do that. The surgeon has to do it.” Everything had to be seen by a specialist. If you had a facial wound, a plastic surgeon was supposed to handle it. For my knee, an orthopedic was supposed to handle it. Everything with the

exception of critical stuff was supposed to go to a specialist. It took so long for them to determine for my knee if I was going to need to get surgery to have the bullet removed or not. First, they wouldn't let me eat or drink anything because if I had to go into surgery. I went twenty-three hours without food, so that made me mad. I'm kind of a stubborn person. I got up and I walked and I tried to walk to different parts of the hospital to get somebody to feed me, and people told a lot, so I got narked on so they wouldn't give me anything. They kept trying to make me use a wheelchair, and I was just like, no. It took them so long to determine if they were going to give me surgery or not to remove the bullet that by the time it had happened, I was at the twenty-one-hour mark when I found out I wasn't going to need surgery. They had been so focused on that that they completely forgot about my face, which blows my mind because every hour when the nurse walked in, I said, "Will you please take this out of my face?" It didn't hurt, but I was really afraid that it was going to scar really badly. I have photos.

Where is it?

You can see if I look up. You can kind of see there's a horseshoe shape here. The bullet hit the ground and basically filleted open and so I've got like a horseshoe-shaped scar right there. It's faint. I can feel it. I got really lucky. I was worried it was going to scar really bad. The whole bullet was still in my face.

The whole bullet was right there?

The whole bullet was in my face. It looked like there was just a small metal fragment in there, so I didn't even know the whole bullet was in there. I could just see a small metal piece. I was like, "Will you please take this out of my face?" thinking it was a little...

What most of us think about as the bullet is that thing with the shell over it, but you're talking about just one of those beads from the—

No, no, no, no. A lot of people think of an old-school lead bullet, which most bullets aren't like that anymore. Most bullets are a full copper jacket. This round, it basically hit the ground. A two-two-three round is very thin; it's like the standard round that they use in the military. It's not meant to do a lot of impact damage. It's meant to go through things normally. It's a smaller, thinner bullet. If you get shot with one, it doesn't leave a big hole. It's a very tiny, thin hole. But it goes through stuff. It hit and fortunately, at the distance we were at—he was shooting from, I think, over five hundred yards really with the distance between—so fortunately with the distance we were at, it took enough off of it after it hit the ground that it didn't do any damage to my jawbone, but it hit my jawbone. But when it hit, the bullet, basically it's a whole copper thin bullet, when it hit off the ground, it kind of filleted open and horseshoed out.

I actually still have it at home. They were supposed to collect all that stuff for the FBI; it was supposed to go as evidence. They took so long, because they forgot that it was in my face, which I'm still salty about, that by the time they took it out of my face, all the FBI was gone. I was like, "Can I keep it?" And they were like, "I'll tell you what. We're not supposed to let you keep it. We have to give it over as evidence. But if I can't find anybody here to collect it, then it's yours." They couldn't find anybody, so I got to keep it.

It filleted open and it stuck in my face, but I could only see a little corner of it, and so I just thought it was a small, little piece. When they finally got to it—they were trying to check me out of the hospital, and I was like, "Would you please take this out of my face? I don't want to go home with this in my face." They were like, "What? What's in your face?" I'm like, "The bullet." There is a whole bullet in my face." They're like, "Oh my gosh, we've got to get you a plastic surgeon." And I was like, "No. No, no, no, ma'am, we do not need to get me a plastic surgeon. You just need to take this out of my face. I haven't eaten in twenty-three hours. I don't

want to be here anymore. Just take it out of my face.” She said, “Well, I’ll take it out of your face on one condition because I’m really not supposed to.” I said, “What?” And she said, “I’m going to go ahead and pull it out, but if it hurts at all, then I’m going to stop and we have to get a plastic surgeon.” Because she didn’t want to do nerve damage or who knows what else.

I remember realizing that it was way bigger than I thought it was because I remember she grabbed onto it and the first time she pulled my whole face jerked with her. I remember seeing a look of shock on her face. I’ve had enough of my fair share of injuries to know when something is worse than I think it is, and I immediately was like, *yes, this is worse than I thought it was*. I kind of see her do one of these numbers and she wiggles it and kind of pries it out. I remember seeing it coming out and I was like, *oh, oh*. She got it out.

The only other wound I had, which we also found out while I was waiting—like I said, I was impatient and stubborn; I didn’t want to be there, so I kept taking walks around the hospital. It was weird. I didn’t know what else to do, so I was just trying to console other people. I was just kind of going room to room and talking to other people and just trying to kill the time, I guess, really. But when I was walking around I had laid down and they noticed that there was blood on the bottom of my foot. I was like, “Well, I’ve been walking around a bloody hospital all day, so it’s probably just someone else’s blood.” They were like, “It looks like your blood.” I’m going, “There’s no way it can be my blood. It’s not my blood. I just probably stepped in something.” They were like, “We’re going to X ray you to make sure.” They took me and X-rayed my left foot and there was shrapnel in my left foot, a piece of bullet. I grabbed my shoes after they told me and I was like, “I don’t believe you.” There is a doctor coming in with an X ray and I’m like, “I don’t believe you.” I grabbed my shoe and, surely enough, there was a little pinhole on the side of my shoe. A piece of bullet went through the left side of my foot. Basically

I had my shoe on, so it hit on the bottom and kind of like flattened out, so the exit on the bottom. It was like a tiny pinhole up here that you couldn't even see on the side of my foot, barely, and then like a little hole about that big on the bottom.

In the grand scheme of things, I came away pretty okay. I was up and walking around and making jokes, as I do in all situations whether I should or not.

Have you been in touch with other people that were at the hospital with you?

No, I didn't really talk to anybody. It was so chaotic and there was so much emotion in there.

The only thing, I just tried to help where I could, but there just wasn't a lot of help to be given. I offered my bed to a Canadian couple. There was a Canadian couple there that I started talking to. Again, I didn't know what to do except for just trying console people. They were hysterical and I was pretty calm and collected the whole time. I was making jokes in the ambulance. I was making jokes at the hospital. I had a smile on my face for half of it because there wasn't really anything else you could do except be happy that you weren't dead.

I remember seeing a Canadian couple that I talked to, and they were just kind of hysterical and crying. I was like, "Are you guys all right?" And they're like, "We don't know what to do." And I was like, "Well, what's going on?" And they're like, "Well, our stuff is at Mandalay Bay. We don't know how to get to it. We're supposed to fly out in the morning. Our kids go to school tomorrow."

Then I was like, "Well, I mean, you're not looking for anyone and you guys are here?" And they're like, "Yes, we just don't know what to do." I think they were just really more in shock. And I was like, "Well, who's watching your kids?" And they said, "My mom." I was like, "So it's probably pretty feasible that they'll watch them another day, right?" Then they're like, "Well, yes. Well, we don't know how to get our stuff." I said, "I imagine that one is going to be a

little bit harder.” And they’re like, “We don’t know where to go.” I was like, “Well, I have a big house. I’ll call my roommate right now. I’m going to give you my roommate’s number. Just call him when you get out of here and get a ride there and you’ll have a place to stay at least.”

I called my roommate and I told him to clean some comforters. He obviously had known what was going on at that point. He did that and we offered that. They ended up finding another place. One of the nurses actually had a vacation home, so she let them use that.

But that was all you could really do is just try and console people. I did talk to that Canadian couple after just to make sure they were okay, and they said, “Thank you.” But most of it—I was talking to people and consoling people, but it was really just playing Patch Adams, just giving them a temporary laugh in a moment of uncontrollable sadness. Yes, a lot of it was just trying to take people’s mind off of something for a few minutes, even if it was just a few minutes. A lot of those people had way bigger problems.

What did you learn about yourself through all of that experience?

Oh man, honestly I learned a lot of things. You don’t really ever know, there’s no way to ever really know... You can always kind of talk about situations, and, *oh, I would do this* or *I would do this*, but you don’t actually know until you’re in those. You can get people that are take-charge leaders who will just break down like everyone else, and you can get people who might be very soft-spoken, scared of everything that may just take control. I now know; I know that I didn’t get scared or afraid; I reacted in what I needed to do at that time, which is more than a lot of other people can say. I think my mental toughness has definitely been put to the challenge since. A lot of people let tragedy stop them or mold their life, and I didn’t. It definitely still brings emotion, not even to think about what happened to me, most of the time I usually get emotional thinking about the other people that I saw.

Overall, though...I was supposed to be on bedrest for two weeks. I wasn't supposed to be up and walking around. I went to a show the very next weekend on a walker because that's just who I am. That's all I wanted to do.

The way the city responded, giving blood the next day, all kinds of food, did it surprise you that our city responded that way?

Very much so. I was so, so pleased, so happy and proud of our city and of the first responders. That's one thing I will say, I've heard rumors and I've heard people talk about how Las Vegas is supposed to be one of the best well-trained police forces, and without a doubt I now know that to be true because those guys didn't have fear in them, they were just handling the situation. It was very impressive. Hindsight, twenty-twenty, looking at it, it's very impressive. I was very proud of them. It's a weird sentiment, but I was, I was proud of them. They executed their jobs flawlessly and they were calm and collected and they were everything that you need a first responder to be.

The way this city came together was very impressive, too. For a long time prior to that I would usually tell people—I was kind of embarrassed to come from Las Vegas because it has all these negative stereotypes. It was a very weird year for Vegas because...So when I was in the navy, I lived in Philadelphia for a while; that was my first command. I was raised on all Philadelphia sports. My stepdad was originally from Philly. Actually, he used to live five minutes from where my first base was; that just happened by chance. But I was raised on all Philadelphia sports.

I had gone to Philadelphia, and even though I don't really like Philadelphia, the city or the people that much, it was very interesting to me see how a sports town operated. I had never lived in a sports town before and it was weird because, especially on the East Coast where you

get these rough people who were kind of brawly and standoffish, it's weird to see people who are standoffish and kind of mean to each other come together out of nowhere for no reason. You could put these guys in a room on a Tuesday and they'll all want to fight each other. But you put them together on a Wednesday or a Thursday during a game and they're best friends.

I was really, really excited for us to get a sports team. I think that was magical. I was excited for it. It was very weird for this to happen and then also for us to get a sports team because it just really solidified the whole city.

I do remember I was talking to people a little bit after it all happened and they're asking me what I thought of the city. I was very proud to say Las Vegas was my home, which is one of the first times that I've ever said, "No, I'm proud to be from Las Vegas." There's lots of stereotypes and there's lots of negative stigmas on it, and before I wouldn't have thought that the city would come together the way it did, I really wouldn't have. I would have said, no, it's an industry town; it's a lot of selfish people; it's a lot of this and that and I don't have faith in them. The way this city came together was beautiful, it really was. It was amazing.

Yes, I think so, too. Do you think that changed the attitudes of other people, other cities, other countries, other states?

I think it does to an extent. Globally, even watching what we went through...

When I was in the hospital, I had people—my friend works for a news channel, and another friend works for a news channel, so while I was in the hospital, in the twenty-three hours I was there, I did three news interviews on the phone. I would say within the last few hours of me being in the hospital to really within weeks after, I had people reaching out from places. I had people saying, "I think you helped me." It was weird because I'm like, *who knows? It could have*

been any other tall guy helping people. But it may have been me because I did try and help a lot of people.

I had a girl reach out from Australia and just say, “Hey, I’m so sorry for everything.” And I was like, “Do I know you?” And she was like, “No, I live in Australia, but I saw your news interview and I just want to say I’m sorry and my blessings.” I got one from Vietnam. All over the globe, people were reaching out just to say something.

I don’t know if it really changed people views on Vegas as far as the way we came together and as far as the way I feel. But I’m pretty sure it changed people’s views on Vegas one way or another.

Yes, I think so, too. You’re a military person. Has the way you feel about guns changed at all, either pro or con, after this?

That’s always a weird question, too, and a lot of people ask that. I feel like the majority of these questions I’ve probably been asked a hundred times. I’m pro Second Amendment. I think at this point it’s too late to restrict the gun laws, honestly. That’s my personal opinion. I think the way that our country has developed with how many guns are already out there, it’s too hard to regulate them; it just wouldn’t happen. You’re not going to show up on every person’s doorstep who has a gun registered to them and knock on their door and say *give it to me* without a fight. It’s just not going to happen. It’s never going to happen.

I do think there should definitely be, possibly some different processes. In my right mind I don’t think that that man should have owned however many guns he owned. At that point it’s not logical. I don’t think anybody’s right to purchase a firearm should be taken away. My view on guns I don’t want to say has changed, but the bump stock that he used to make his firearm fully auto; that shouldn’t exist. There is no reason anyone needs that.

I do think there is minor regulations that could be made, but as far as a completely opposite side, full gun control, I don't think it will ever happen. It would be something that just seems impossible at this point. There is too many people out there that are prepping for Armageddon and, unfortunately half of those people that are prepping for Armageddon think that you taking their guns is Armageddon. It's true. I think to an extent there should possibly maybe a regulation on how many firearms you can have, possibly. I don't even want to say the type of firearms because, unfortunately, the firearm that he used, it was a semiautomatic rifle, I think it's something that everyone should be able to own. I just don't really see—and it sucks because especially it feels like after Route 91, not that there hasn't been shootings in the past already, but it seems like after Route 91, every other mass shooting that happens just has so much more focus on it and that's the first thing everyone wants, is more gun control. I'm pretty sure a lot of these other factors played in way more than owning a firearm.

I don't think it's really changed my stance on ownership of guns, being around guns. I do think there's possibly some small changes that could be made, but in the grand scheme of things, no, I wouldn't say it's changed my opinion too much on firearms.

Have you been to the Healing Garden?

I have not yet. I thought about going a couple of times, but the first couple of times I thought about going, it's always been for a Route 91 thing, and so the first two times... They built it and they did an opening ceremony, and I didn't want to go because I was still in a walker; it was very apparent that I had been shot. I just didn't want to deal with the confronting and the having to... I'm a pretty open person. I don't mind talking about stuff. But especially right after, it just got so, so repetitive of the same questions ten times a day. I didn't really necessarily not want to

go because I thought it was going to be too hard or anything like that. I just didn't want to deal with talking to people over and over again about the same thing.

Then next two times... They had a reunion this year and I was at work and I was kind of tired after work and just thought it would be—I know it would be emotional for me. I was fatigued and I was like, *I don't really need to go fatigued myself anymore.*

But I do probably need to go make a stop down there and see it with my own eyes for sure. I've heard it's really nice.

It's beautiful. Yes, they've done a great job.

Yes, I've heard nothing but good things about it. I heard they did do a really good job with it.

Stoney's is one of those places that a lot of people got together afterwards, probably still do.

Did you ever go to Stoney's?

I did not. I've been to Stoney's before, prior. I haven't done any of the group things or anything there. I'm participating on a Facebook page of a Route 91 survivor. It's nice to be in the loop and know those things, but—honestly it's not necessarily like I don't want to be involved in it. Just, like I said, for me this didn't really impact my life a lot overall.

I was really nervous that I wasn't going to be able to walk correctly again. I was really athletic when I was in the military, which that's one thing I need to work on. Ever since I've gotten back up, I've just never really gotten back into being as active as I was, mostly just because I'm not at a hundred percent like I was. I want to go do things and then I realize I may hurt myself if I try to do them. I really like to play sports, but if I try to run too much with this leg, I'll hurt myself. That's kind of a lot of it, too; I just haven't rehabbed myself the way I need to.

But it really hasn't impacted my life as a whole. I still go to a lot of festivals. I still go to a lot shows. I still go to do a lot of things.

This is my last question. Was that first show that you went to after the shooting, was that difficult?

No.

How did you handle that?

It was at Brooklyn Bowl, so it was indoors. It's weird because even now I'll go to things and maybe I'll look up and see a light on in a building where it's only one light, and I think to myself, *oh...* It's natural instinct. You go there for a second. But then I just think, *eh, whatever.* It's a sad world that we live in sometimes, but the fact of the matter is somebody could have broken into my house that night and shot me in cold blood and there would have been nothing I could do about it. I can't not do the things that I enjoy for fear of something that could happen anytime, anyplace, anywhere, anyways regardless.

And may not ever happen again in our lifetimes.

Right. I've said that a lot of times, too. People have asked that question a lot: How do you still go out? The chances of getting shot in your lifetime are slim to none. I think the chances of getting shot twice are even slimmer.

What about your friends; how did you reunite with them?

Like I said, I was supposed to be on bedrest, so a lot of people came to my house. A lot of my friends were very concerned. Like I said, I was really calm during the whole thing, so a lot of people were... One of my really good friends called me and he's like, "Hey, I know you were down there. Are you okay?" And I'm like, "Yes. Man, I got shot, but I'm okay." And he's like, "All right, man. But you're okay, all right." I was like, "Yes, I got shot, but I'm okay." And he's

like, “All right. So, like, you got shot. Are you okay?” And I was like, “Yes, I’m okay.” And he was like, “All right, good.” And I was like, “But I got shot.” He’s like, “Which one is it: Are you okay or did you get shot?” And I was like, “Jimmy, I got shot, but I’m okay.”

Honestly I would say, especially initially, off the bat, I would say my friends took it harder than I did. All my friends were showing up crying and sobbing. I was just like, “Yes, it is what it is. I’m here and some people aren’t and let’s not cry.”

Are you all right?

Yes, I’m all right. There’s definitely some things that can stir emotions. It’s one thing...A lot of people can be sympathetic, but not very many people can be empathetic. It’s few and far between. I never really get upset thinking that I was in danger or that I was hurt or anything like that. Most of the things that usually draw emotion out of me are thinking about the people that were hurt or the people that lost people. I talked to a lot of people that night, just walking around. Some of the stories I heard, I knew right then and there...There wasn’t a lot I could even say. You try to be lighthearted and keep a smile on your face, but in the pit of your stomach you knew some of these people lost people and that’s sad. That hurts my heart. But in the grand scheme of things, anything that’s really happened to me has been fine.

I’m glad you’re okay.

Me too. I got to meet this beautiful woman and marry her.

That’s fantastic. Did you know each other prior?

We did not. We have been together since June and we got married in September. We have not even known each other a year.

Fantastic. That’s great.

It’s amazing.

Love at first sight. People say it doesn't happen. I'm glad it does.

It does.

Wonderful. Thank you so much for coming in. These are the kinds of interviews that we appreciate. We will be sharing them with the world. We know that people who will go through the same thing will go to our website and will use these for their own strengthening and their own healing. We really, really appreciate you for just talking to us and answering the questions that we know that so many people want to hear the answer to.

Hopefully, if anybody is going through a hard time and they hear this that's probably the only message I can give you is don't give up. If you give up or stop, then he won or they won or whomever.

We know that this was someone who was really sick.

Yes.

Anthony, I appreciate this so much.

You are a fortunate young woman.

WIFE: I agree. I definitely agree.

Thank you.

You're welcome.

[End of recorded interview]