Jeff Orrange and Raul Rivas II - Episode 842

Mon, Oct 30, 2023 3:27PM 🕒 1:20:51

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

talk, people, happened, started, years, pulse, orlando, swat, shit, ucf, bathroom, team, home, eap, shooting, fire, active shooter, work, point, day

SPEAKERS

James Geering, Raul Rivas, Jeff Orrange

James Geering 00:00

This episode is brought to you by Thorne and I have some incredible news for any of you that are in the military, first responder or medical professions. In an effort to give back, Thorne is now offering you an ongoing 35% of each and every one of your purchases of their incredible nutritional solutions. Now Thorne is the official supplement of CrossFit, the UFC, the Mayo Clinic, the Human Performance Project, and multiple Special Operations organizations. I myself have used them for several years, and that is why I brought them on as a sponsor. Some of my favorite products they have are their multivitamin elite, their whey protein, the super EPA, and then most recently, Cyndaguil. As a firefighter, a stuntman and a martial artist, I've had my share of brain trauma and sleep deprivation and Cyndaquil is the latest brain health supplement. Now to qualify for the 35% off, go to thorne.com th o r n e.com. Click on Sign In and then create a new account, you will see the opportunity to register as a first responder or member of military. When you click on that it will take you through verification with Gov X, you simply choose a profession provide one piece of documentation and then you are verified for life. From that point onwards you will continue to receive the 5% off through Thorne. Now for those of you who don't qualify there is still the 10% off using the code BTS 10. Behind the shield 10 for a one time purchase. Now to learn more about Thorn, go to Episode 323 of the behind the shield podcast with Joel Totoro and Wes Barnett. This episode is sponsored by NuCalm and as many of you know I only bring sponsors onto the show whose products I truly swear by. Now we are an overworked and underslept population, especially those of us that wear uniform for a living and trying to reclaim some of the lost rest and recovery is imperative. Now the application of this product is as simple as putting on headphones and asleep mask. As you listen to music on each of the programs there is neuro acoustic software Beneath that is tapping into the actual frequencies of your brain, whether to upregulate your nervous system, or downregulate. Now for most of us that come off shift we are a exhausted and B do not want to bring what we've had to see and do back home to our loved ones. So one powerful application is using the program power nap, a 20 minute session that will not only feel like you've had two hours of sleep, but also downregulate from a hyper vigilant state back into the role of mother or father, husband or wife. Now there are so many other applications and benefits from the software. So I urge you to go and listen to episode 806 with CEO Jim Paul. Then download NuCalm and you see a L M from your app store and sign up for the seven day free trial. Not only will you have an understanding of the origin story and the four decades this

science has spanned, but also see for yourself the incredible health impact of this life changing software. And you can find even more information on nucalm.com Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering and this week it is my absolute honor to bring you a unique interview I recorded whilst attending the brothers helping brothers conference in Ohio. Two good friends that have both been on the podcast individually. Orlando firefighter Jeff Orrange and Orlando Police Officer Raul Rivas sat onstage with me and I interviewed them side by side. What made this conversation incredibly powerful and unique is their different perspectives of the events leading up to during and after the Pulse nightclub shooting here in Orlando. So as you will hear Jeff's perspective comes from a mental health lens as he stood up their peer support team. Prior to this event, Raul had an up close and personal experience being one of the SWAT operators that responded and ultimately killed the shooter. Now before we get to this incredibly powerful and important conversation, as I say every week, please just take a moment. Go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show, leave feedback and leave a rating. Every single five star rating truly does elevate this podcast therefore making it easier for others to find. And this is a free library of almost 850 episodes now. So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men or women's stories so I can get them to every single person on planet earth who needs to hear them. Now one last thing to mention I I'm going to upload the video of his interview onto my YouTube channel as well. So if you wish to watch it, you can there. So without further ado, I will come back onto the behind the shield podcast, Jeff orange and roll, reverse enjoy Okay, so we'll start with you, Jeff. Give me a little insight into where you were born. And then what your kind of career aspirations when you were young?

Jeff Orrange 05:45

Yeah, so I was born in Buffalo, New York. We moved when I was pretty young, to Orlando, the Orlando area, dad was sick of the cold, sick of the furnaces sick of the snow. Grew up a mile down the road from where I live. Now, my childhood was pretty spectacular. I did have a raging alcoholic and for dad and a very codependent mom, but I never didn't feel safe in my house. I'm the youngest of four. My next oldest sibling is five years older than me. So I was 100% and accident. But with that, you get a little bit of strength when you're not supposed to be there, and nobody planned for you to be there. Great relationship with my parents, with my siblings, great family life growing up. We had our challenges, but I don't think I realized them until I really started on packing in therapy. So use that as a caution when you go to therapy, you might find out that you actually did have some childhood stuff that happened to you. But no, my my childhood was great growing up. What, what I found through all of it was community. So I when I was younger, I wasn't very close to my siblings, because it was such an age gap. But I was close to my friends. I found a really supportive culture in the punk rock scene that was in Orlando at the time, the skateboarding scene. I was all in. And I knew from a very early age that this is what I wanted to do. And I found a few people in that punk rock community that also wanted to do that as well, which I thought was pretty amazing. And then when I got into the fire service, this was exactly what I thought it would be. As far as community goes, I found some of my best friends in the world were people that were sitting across the table from me, came from different walks of life came from different perspectives, different views, but I found a community in there. And I think that that's helped me through a ton of things if I hadn't had that community that that cohesiveness with with the crews that I came up with. I don't know that I would still be in this profession. And yeah, it's no surprise to anybody in my family. This is what I always talked about doing Halloween, I was a, I would dress up as a firefighter. And now I guess I get to wear the gear that goes along with it.

James Geering 08:28

My parents said I was a mistake, and I'm the second oldest. So that's kind of rude. When we're gonna go all the way to where you are. Now when you look back, this is an important point and we'll get to Rails kind of on ramp. Next. When we think about mental health, we always talk about where you were at Pulse. Well, you know, you were on the Vegas shooting you were an insert thing here. And only a few years ago it was I educated like Oh, childhood trauma is so important. And no one ever asks what happened before you put the uniform on. They assume that your trauma started on year dark. The moment that bad hit your chest, when you look back. Now what are some of the things you mentioned alcoholism? What are the things that you would consider a fracture to the foundation that you brought into the profession?

Yeah, I mean deal. If anybody has had an alcoholic parent, I think you can probably relate. You're just on eggshells. That's it. That's how I can describe it. My dad was a very kind and loving person. I would go to work with him in the summers. I was just telling the story actually we moved down to Florida to escape the cold. So in the winters if it got below 60 My dad didn't go to work. He would get grumpy. He'd be like that's why I moved from that godforsaken place and and I will get a snow day just because it was 60 degrees out but we will go to work on the way home there's a little gas station and we would stop Get A Six Pack, sometimes a 12 pack or 24 pack. The six pack is gone before we got home. And that was every day, every day, the six pack is gone, crack into the 12 or 24 pack if it was a 12 pack that was gone to. And if it was a 12 pack, there's probably Scotch after that. He was a professional. I never felt threatened. I saw some things with my siblings occur that I never had to. And my dad made a very tough decision when I was 13 years old that it was the alcohol or the family. And luckily, I was lucky enough that he chose the family instead of the alcohol. But there was always that eight shells. And I remember even the little things like, like some of the untruths, right, so we would get home from work. And my mom would say, How many of you have you'd say one, she's like, one, be like, Dad, I just saw you drink six of those things. Like in a mile. I saw you during six, like you put any college kid to shame. It's like, well, there's one kind. There's Budweiser. That's all I just have one kind of beer that you didn't ask for a specific. And so I would see little things like that. And I would see my mom avoid conflict at all cost. And that's definitely carried over into into how I converse, especially with my wife. Some of the patterns that I fall into the avoiding the conversation, feeling like I have to walk on eggshells, making sure that I avoid whatever kind of conflict or diffusing it with self deprecating humor. Sometimes I don't know if any of you have picked up on that throughout my presentations. But I think that those things are definitely things that I learned about myself that that have carried with me, again, not a violent upbringing. I never felt unsafe or unloved. But there are things that you can't avoid picking up from your parents, intentionally or not, that aren't going to carry with you. I'm fortunate enough with with my wife, I was telling the story the other night, we're coming up on on retirement age, our kids are almost out of the house, we have a great relationship. And we're still going to see a marriage counselor. Things aren't even bad between us. But man, things are so much better than they've ever been after 2021 years, our anniversary is next month, after 21 years. And proactively we just went and saw counselor. And then I started learning about all these things that I carry into this relationship. And it's just gotten better. So I would say that the biggest thing to wrap up a long story, the biggest thing that my take away was I always felt like



I had to walk around on eggshells so that I didn't disrupt what was going on because it was it was right there. The balance was always right there is always really close to volatile. And I thought I played a way bigger role in whether whether it was volatile or not.

James Geering 12:57

Again, it's Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It's still security within that story. So thank you for sharing that role. Firstly, again, where were you born? What were you dreaming of becoming?



Raul Rivas 13:10

Oh, first, I'm nervous.

James Geering 13:12 You me both?



Raul Rivas 13:13

I'm like the only cop here I think. So but you're a disk. It's been great. You guys have been real nice to me. And last year when I was here, it was amazing. So I want to know, Thanks, Jim. And Nick had just invited me back and, and you have me here you guys made me feel at home even though you're always rager. So So I was born in New York. And Manhattan. moved guickly to Jersey with my family moved to Jersey pretty quick. came down to Florida when I was nine. So I'm listening to you. I'm like, shit sounds like the same thing. Right? So, you know, we wanted to get away from the cold, you know, so we came out of Florida when I was nine years old. You know, just like he was saying ahead of you know, really good family life, you know, parents, their loved on me. I played sports, you know, got a scholarship, play some football. So after the second year of football, I joined the Reserves. And, you know, said okay, I'm gonna get partial scholarships. So that's okay, I'm gonna take a break. I'm gonna go down to UCF transfer over there. And then my reserve time, and that's right when desert storm happened. So I ended up going into the desert for 10 months in a reservist. And that was that was different. And while I was out there, kind of, you know, contemplating the meaning of life that Scud missiles are going okay, what did one would do in my life, you know, when a school wasn't seeming, like the thing anymore? Well, I was out there and, you know, cancer, I think about the police thing there. And you know, when people were talking about and like that shit sounds kind of grim Of course. Sorry.



James Geering 15:04

Yes, yes, you have an extensive right and on my podcast.

ິ 15:10

So taking that shit sounds fun, you know, when I, you know, came back and put an application in and, you know, shocked that they hired me. Because while I was loved, I did some stupid shit. You know, when I was a young kid, I may have fractured a minor law too. So I was shocked that they hired me got hired. And really, you know, put my head down and started working pretty hard. Fast forward, you know, I've just listened to him talk about when he went to therapy and kind of fine and you know, I call it peeling the onion, right? So when you peel, peeling the onion back. And I'm in my 40s Now we're talking about peeling the onion, and I'll talk about this a lot, but shocked that I had put some memories in the back of my mind and just kind of forgot about them, shit that happened before we left up north. I had a family member touching on me, you know, and and I just, I had thought about it. Because I think I did come to find out there's a lot of reasons why, like things up, you know, throughout my, my life here and I have a like a self sabotaging thing, you know, I kind of make sure it may be looking good, but I got to figure a way to mess it up. So that's kind of how my life went. And I carry that into the career into the career with me, of course, my relationships and, and and of course, that pulse happened and that's in a pulse was the was the and we'll get into it. But I always tell people pulses in my story, right pulse the things that happen at Pulse. Horrific and tragic, but it's but it's not my story, it did let me know that there was help out there. So I had to go through that to kind of figure that out. So it's, that's me?

James Geering 17:09

Well, I appreciate your courage. I don't know if everyone has the same perspective that I have. But 841 episodes of which 500 plus 600 are responders or military, the number of people that have significant trauma in their childhood, and specially the sexual abuse as a kid. And then that feeling of guilt and shame over that. And the post traumatic growth when these people have then unpacked it, and forgiven themselves, because they felt at fault for some reason. I mean, I didn't think eight years ago, I was gonna have these kinds of conversations, but this is what we need. Otherwise, Jeff goes to 10 counselors and does EMDR and Jeff has pulse pulse pulse pulse, when no one's talking about that, you know what I mean? So it's important. So thank you for sharing that. So back to you, Jeff, as you enter Orlando Fire Department, talk to me about the mental health landscape, then, like what was the ethos? I mean, obviously, we most of us have the same same kind of thing, but just kind of paint the picture because of obviously, where we're gonna go with this.

ິ 18:20

Is this a comedy show? So I mean, I think like everybody, I got into the I got into the fire service. And there there was nothing, right. Alcohol was our mental wellness protocol. Everything that we did, involved that we would have people come in and they were hammered. And it was easy at the time, because we had four person engines so we could just drop down, have them go sleep it off and start a line and, and I to be completely honest, I don't have the story that led me to this. One day, I never thought about it. The next day, I was like, Holy shit, we need to do something about this. That's how it was for me. It was an immediate switch. I've had in my family I've had, we have a lineage of of mental health issues. My cousin wound up hung hanging himself. years ago. His brother was the one who actually some joggers found him. He hung himself from a tree his his brother went out there and had to help get the body down. And then a year almost to the day my aunt takes her life. Same way She hung herself as well. But I never realized that this could happen to me or us or the people that I work with. I mean, we sit around we bust each other's balls all day long. Like this is a this is a frat house.

This is a clubhouse. It doesn't happen to us. And then I started seeing the the rates of suicide and and actually I didn't even, I didn't even see it, I just was in the right place or the wrong place, however you want to determine it depending on looking at where I'm at now. But we were teaching a class down at, at our EMS, and it was about customer service. So I broke my leg skateboarding was kind of my last wake up call. That's, that's my trauma. I didn't know when to quit sport like skateboarding. But I broke my leg, I got pulled down on light duty to our EMS division, and I was told you're gonna teach a class on customer service. And this, if it was probably the scariest moment in my life, because we have to take people offline, tell them how they need to treat the citizens better. And that goes over really well when you're telling people what to do. But what they let me do was they let me just kind of run with it. So instead of just focusing on the external customer, we started focusing on the internal customer and saying, What can we do better for us? At the time, we didn't talk about it, we absolutely didn't talk about it. But enough people came up to me after that class and said, look, we've got our annual physicals, we've got our pure fitness assessments, we do nothing for people who are hurting up up here. And so me and luckily, one of my mentors, at he was assigned to EMS at the time, we started looking into it, we're like, something's gotta be done. Like, this is crazy. This could happen here. And we're shocked that it hasn't. And it probably already hasn't been swept under the rug. There's a couple instances where people are sure that this was not accidental. This was a suicide. But we didn't. We didn't take into account. That's weakness. We don't talk about that. That one of my firehouse is still has an I think I've told this yesterday, still has a sign above the door that says check your feelings at the door. It was my old firehouse still has that son, and I walked in there and not long ago, I said, I'm I'm taking a picture that time and they're like, Oh, you're gonna take the sign down? I'm like, no, no, no, I love that sign. How are you doing? Let's check our feelings at the door. How are you doing, man? They're like, Ah, you ruined it. I can't believe you ruined it. The one cool thing we still have in our firehouse you just took it away from us. But that's how it was it was check your feelings at the door. Work, stays at work. home stays at home, those two things don't coincide. And if they do, we need you to leave.

JJ

James Geering 22:41

Or I'm gonna go a different direction with you more operationally. So now you go into OPD, you join the SWAT team. Talk to me about through your lens of preparation from a mass shooter perspective prior to pulse.

<u>ິ</u> 22:55

Shed that was the thing back then. So you know, I came on I'm an old guys, let me just set the stage for you. I came on in 92. I know some of you fuckers when even born here, right? So. So I came on 92 A gun to swat team right at 2000. And, you know, because it was my sports background, and like you guys just worked really hard. I wanted to always be the tip of the spear be that guy, the first one to the door. Never wanted to be a sniper. They just they just too far away. Right? I wanted to be in the action. And that's, you know, active shooter, hostage rescue. Those are things that that's the coup de gras. I mean, that that is the the worst, the worst that can happen. And I wanted to be the one amongst my teammates that to say the day if you will, you know, and to be there for my teammates, and that is a little more of a kind of what it morphs into, you know, you just don't want to miss the day that it happens because you can make a difference to make sure your teammates come home right. So that's kind of

my attitude and we so we have the world started changing right and active shooter became a thing, because I just don't in the beginning of my career, I'm not sure that I remember active shooter being a thing back in 92. It probably was but just not if you guys know what I'm saying. But as that kind of morphs into being a thing, man this this this one of things we just we we practiced and we got to the point where we always knew it's going to happen here one day, you know when and it actually it happened before that we actually had an active shooter that happened at the travelers building. Which was which it was an eye opener. He went in shot a couple of people didn't make national news and came back out. We caught him a few miles away. Then make national news but that was an eye opener for us like we do The police the fire, we knew, we knew that it was common. You know, we didn't know how they know when and all that good stuff, but we started ramping up even more. So I think we were pretty focused, uh, tactically on getting the job done whenever it did happen. You know, I don't know what anybody thought about it would be a club, I think everybody was thinking it was going to be a school or a business. That was what we practiced. It was always going to be in a high school, or in a business somewhere, you know, somebody's pissed off at you know, being fired, or whatever the club is, I think what shocked us and like you already alluded to Disney Springs. I'm not sure who's been who's been to Orlando. Okay, okay, who's been to Orlando, not just Disney, Orlando, but Orlando, Orlando, see, somebody's hands went down. So I'm talking about so it's a different thing. Because you know, and you guys, you guys don't know. But you can go into Orlando. And they've got it figured out now where you when your plane lands, the magical bus. You just get off the plane and go to bus and your bags will magically appear on the bus. And then when you go to Disney, you know, to whatever resort the 1000 resorts they have, your bags will magically appear in your room. So they've got it all figured out. You don't gotta come off the as the property. Well, Disney Springs where he was talking about earlier. That's an entertainment district. And that means is a mall there. A movie theater, restaurants, it 1000s 1000s of people walking around in any given moment, when it's open. The carnage that would have happened there would have been just astronomical. So yeah, I think we were I think we were we were laser focused on something like this happened. We were we just knew that it would come.

James Geering 27:02

I think I articulated that after the event. Just to put my perspective for a second, when I went back and said, What are we doing? They were like, not like nothing was even mentioned. Then they got upset when I mentioned it, like, hey, you know that we almost had all these people killed? Don't want to hear

ິ<mark>ດ</mark> 27:17

these different. Just say you're listening. You're, we don't fuck with the mouse. Sir, if I'm if I'm lying, you can, you know, we don't play with the mouse. And so every everything you say about the mouse, you measure a little bit. So

<mark>ິ</mark>ດ 27:47

Disney won't talk about it. I mean, we've asked them to kind of, you know, be included in any of these talks that we do about what happened here. They just not they don't have any interest in it, that they acknowledged that he came there, but that's really about it. And they behind

closed doors they did their systems of how they do stuff is what helped deter that guy from doing stuff at Disney. But they don't want any parts of that because that shows that they know that shits unsafe in the world. Right. So and they don't want anybody think that Disney acknowledged that the world is outside their, their walls, right. So Disney? It's a great place. And I love Disney and everything's good.

James Geering 28:42

Well, I'll add to that is complacency kills. So you know. All right. Well, prior to the event, you get this new assignment, you start realizing that our people in the customer service to talk to me about the creation of the peer support team and the time like when it actually was put in place because it's kind of important. Yeah, so

29:05

we we started ours, probably late 2012, I would say so we've been around only for about 11 years, but even then, there was nothing in Florida that resembled what we thought we needed to do. So we had to get creative look outside we started looking at places like Phoenix and FDNY and and what I found was that people were very willing to share whatever they had, which was awesome. Oh, FD and I don't know that OPD was the same way. We didn't need anything. We're ofd you know, we're the we're the best in the state. We have 1500 people apply for 20 positions. Because we are the best. Our SOPs are the best, everything is the best. So it got me off my island which was fantastic because I didn't know what the hell I was doing. I just knew we had to do something. So we started it probably about then. And there was a few things that we stumbled upon that we did, right, that really set us up for success. We didn't wait for the chief to come out with a memo saying that we were doing this, me and a few guys just hopped in our cars and on our off days drove from station to station saying this is what we want to do this is why tell us how we can do it better. Make this your team, tell us what we need to do, to be able to get these resources to you. And a magical thing happened. And that's not a Disney reference. But a magical thing happened. And they started talking right then in there, the conversation started immediately. And if anything, firefighters are very skeptical, so why are you doing this, but they had the people, they were asking questions to the people that were doing this, why are you doing this? What are you trying to get promoted? You know, in our department, in order to make a rank above a lieutenant, you have to have a special project. So of course, everybody thinks that this is my special project. When are you getting promoted? What are you trying to do? What are you trying to accomplish? When they saw that the intentions were real and pure, they started talking, this is where I was a year ago. And this is what would have helped me. And that person sitting across from them was like, Holy shit, I didn't know that you were there. That's where I am right now. And the conversation started. And we were so lucky that it was a grassroots effort. Because had we waited for that fire chief to tell us, hey, here's what we want to do, we would still be waiting at this point. We hit a lot of roadblocks, a lot of barriers in those early days that we still encounter now. But we were able to find ways around them. So we were able to say this is important enough. We know that this is happening. If we don't do it, who will. And we were able to find ways around that through our benevolent through through systems that were already in place, we could just latch on to. So we had a head start just in the fact that people trusted what we were saying. We had UCF in our backyard, and UCF their trauma clinic is is amazing. It is amazing. Dr. Vital, a girl named Maddie mark, she was there at the time. She She was instrumental in US setting up our team,

and then having a resource to turn to. We had EAP at the time and even then EAP at the time, the posters on the walls weren't even our our current EAP provider. So I call just to ask what the processes and if you've never called Your EAP system, do it. Because you'll get a call taker in Connecticut, one in Kentucky one the next day in New Mexico. They asked you your zip code and they give you for people that are in that zip code. They don't know. I don't think there's any malice in the in the clinician side. They they want to help. They're just not equipped to help. But we had UCF in our backyard. We we made that connection very early. So we were very fortunate that we didn't wait for somebody to tell us go ahead and do it. We did it because there was a need and and I think that that's something very inspiring about our our services well that most of this stuff is born out of a need and people refusing to say no. In the process.

James Geering 33:44

Beautiful. So I worked like I said that time Disney Springs area that was my area and before that I was Orange County, which was the county around Orlando. And our hospital RMC which I'm sure will probably talk about. You had that you had station five Orlando, you had a dotted line in the road then you have my first year so I'm passing pulse all the time. So June 12 2016. For everyone listening, I did a week we had Raoul Swat. We had two of my friends that were rescue medics, and then we had Davis Odell, who was the LT in that station across the street. So if you want to hear the whole story from three very powerful, different perspectives, I urge you to listen to that but for the sake of time, through your eyes, tell me about that day.

ິ 34:35

Yeah. Refer for us know being a SWAT guy we always for us, it happens in threes. And this is my world here for a second just give me the floor here. But I believe the SWAT gods gave us two hostage situations that happened 48 hours before this happened. So I think they were just kind of sharpening us up and getting us ready and that's That's the way I think about it but yeah, get the call. You know, look I remember looking at the phone thinking active shooter Pulse nightclub I'm thinking myself shit I'm 25 minutes from the city. An active shooter goes above what 510 minutes alright, so I'm thinking I'm gonna scratch my balls and I'm sorry that was not supposed to say that ladies I'm sorry. I'm gonna scratch my butt and it's gonna be over right and a bit the phone keeps chirping you know updates so remember getting there and and I'm skipping a whole bunch of stuff but I remember getting there and moose grabbing me because the word kind of comes down from a pie everybody I grabbed the next person and take them into the dance floor and because he's already kind of secluded in the back of the club now so we go to the main dance floor which against it was fronted by orange Avenue when we go in there you know we saw the carnage it was just bodies everywhere and well I tell people the bodies This is tragic, it's horrific, but doesn't bother me that much. I don't have any negative you know type reactions to that. But I do remember was all the phones there were phones everywhere. The club was dark. The you know the lights were on but they weren't strobe and the DJ before he left turn the music and the damn strobe and shit off. And but the swag gods but the light the phones, were lying at that dance floor. That bothers me because my mind went to who was there? somebody's mom, right brother, sister significant other, trying to reach out to the loved one. And that bothered me. So and you had to turn it off real quick. They had to grab the next guy, bring him in there. And then we had to turn that off and get to the mission at hand. Which is, you know, killing the son of a bitch and excuse my language but uh that's what had to get done. And that's kind of what we did. We just started focusing on

killing him or getting people out you know, and or doing both, depending on what was going on. And that was the focus I mean, it truly was the focus when I got there was just saving any any more lives we can save and stopping him. You know, the problem that we had. I'm going fast you guys but it came to a point where he was in the bathroom. He had four bomb first on the hostages one himself and it was a bomb in the car that he the van that he drove up there. So we had six bombs. He's in a bathroom. And we're trying to stop this and saw Orlando, much like you're saying about the FDA Orlando, we're the best. I mean, that's that's the way we kind of walk around with where to best and we tout ourselves in the SWAT team. We're the cream of the crop. So that's how we feel. And so we're a team of free thinkers. And what that means is whether you get three months on or you got 30 years on, if you notice solution to this problem, you speak the hell up right now. That's what we that's what we expect with this problem right here with five bombs and that bathroom went out and that by that van, we couldn't figure it out without everybody dying.

ິດ <u>39</u>:13

And what I mean everybody that included us and so the only time in my career and the only time in my career we're standing around and we're doing our stuff and when it when we had a minute to think and talk

39:35

these bad actors that are around me these other SWAT dogs around me. Were talking about how we're gonna die tonight.

° 39:44

And that was we don't we don't fucking die. We win. We win. But tonight we're talking about dying and we had to make peace with our makers. On that because we were going to blow up. And that was that was a, that was a different night for that reason.



James Geering 40:12

So he's killed a lot of people in the main part of the club, he's basically pushed a bunch into the restrooms. Just before we get to the breach. From your perspective, obviously, it's secondhand information, the ofd. Orange County, talk to me about some of the heroism that you heard from your guys before we go to, to the next bar.



ဂိ 40:34

Yeah, so I think you, you have to understand the proximity of station five to the Pulse nightclub. Most of the time, when I'm in the cab of the truck, I'm able to formulate some would have a plan. That couldn't be the case here. If, if it's as far as that wall to that wall, I might be exaggerating a little bit, it's probably closer than that. There's literally a four lane street, a parking lot in the Pulse nightclub. That's what separates station five from there. So when

Lieutenant Odell looks out the the bay windows, we have windows in our bay, and it looks like a zombie apocalypse. And people are pounding on the doors. There's no time to formulate any kind of plan. It's there and it's happening. And you're simply reacting. You don't know what is across the street, you don't know how far across the street is. And you don't know if it's even in a building. The way they describe the gunshots is it was so loud. They didn't know if they could make entry into the building because there were talks of bombs. So once they actually had to open up the door, one of our rescues happened to just be transporting at RMC and and again, to give you a reference. If this is as far as the Pulse nightclub is from station five, just add two blocks to it. And that's our level one trauma center. So we had a rescue truck that was just clearing or MC, very aggressive, paramedic, very, two very aggressive paramedics. And they decided that they weren't going to wait either. So So what they started doing was once those doors open once we realize once that crew realized that they could start treating and triaging these people, this rescue would drive up, they will put people into the back of the rescue. And that rescue would just go to the ER, rinse, run, repeat. And it was just happening over and over. That Bay engine fives Bay Enta FIDE never turned a wheel that Bay turned into one of the triage sites. So these people were coming up, what do they see? They see help, that fire station is a help. So all of the people that were able to make it out of the club, stop that engine five, for help, until we could set up an actual triage spot which wound up being across the street at Einstein Bagels. Andrew five was it. And so while I was not there on the night of the pulse, the very next morning, I got a phone call it was 630 in the morning ish. I was there just before seven, I went to station five and and the light had come up, you know the sun had come up. And I couldn't even imagine what these guys went through. Because I couldn't even imagine what our guys went through. I mean the the amount of blood that was in the Bay of of station five, and on the tarmac and on the street, it was it's almost undescribable the first thought that came into my head when I was walking up there. And again, this is this is over. Bodies are starting to be bagged by the time that I was there. The first thing that I thought of was that old Indiana Jones movie, the very first one, at the very opening scene when he's got to step on the certain blocks in order to not have the arrow shoot at him. That's how I felt like I had to walk up to the station to avoid the blood that was on the ground. So everything happened all at once. There was not time for these guys to formulate any kind of plan. They had to rely on training. And again, like like we've spoken about most of this training is so hypothetical you're not dealing with somebody who's actually breathing yet dying and still not the priority compared to the other people who are around them. So they didn't have a lot of time to react once things did get set up. You know, we had a we had rescues coming from everywhere. What I didn't realize until afterwards, maybe I'm jumping ahead a little bit is there was rescues just outside of there who had a lot of issues following that, because they were not allowed to go help. Like they, they wanted to be there and help. And there was a lot of guilt about not being able to go there and help. This, this event affected our whole entire Fire Department, whether you were there or not, if you weren't there, you were upset that you couldn't be there. And if you were there, you wished you weren't there.

James Geering 45:34

So when we were doing the Orange County training, it was obviously the Orange County Sheriff's we were doing it save training, we got that acronym, right. And it was again, hallways, classrooms, you know, was it latch on all that stuff. And then you have a nightclub, you know, with barely any windows, barely any doors. So paint the picture of the access problems you have of the person and how many people they had. And let's get to the near miss and the actual, you know, extermination of this gentleman.

6 46:07

Paint the picture of the small nightclub is not as big as you may think. I'm not sure if you guys even know it by but it's not a it's not a huge nightclub. Basically two rooms. And this is where you want to go tenants explain, okay, you got the main dance floor and there's a wall between it, then you've got the back of the club that has like a bar, and it's kind of narrow back there. And then to the very back of the club as you go down this hallway. And there's two opposing doors, and there's the north and the south bathroom. We didn't I'm not sure if we mentioned this as the gay nightclub. I say that because there's four bathrooms in this place. There's a men's bathroom, a woman's bathroom, then down that hallway, you have two bathrooms either side, you can go anywhere you want on that hallway. You know, didn't matter if you have male female, you just turn into one two bathrooms and when. So during this whole thing that was like we didn't know about the whole gay nightclub thing, or we knew but we weren't thinking about it. And remember talking to the manager and saying, hey, you know which one's the men's bathroom? And he's like, No, it's not like that now, but the break is they have negligee but fucking to answer me like which one's a men's bathroom. And he's trying to explain to me this is not like that. So anyway, get off on a tangent there. So you go down that hallway, he ended up being to the bathroom to the right, which is gonna be a North bathroom. He had people in there, there were people in the south bathroom, we kind of found out that he's in a North bathroom by talking to people that were in rooms around him. And we also had the robot that went in there, went to the bathroom in the lift, and they're like, he's over there, you know, so big and everything was kind of slow because of the bomb thing. And he had made contact with negotiators were talking to him and that kind of thing. It was the guy's coming. So as that's gone on, and he's kind of trapped in the back. There are officers coming through the patio, and was slowed them down. Because when he did the shooting, then he stopped and went to the back. They're coming in and the shooting stops. And I'm not sure if everybody knows the tactics here. But once the shooting stops, we got to slow down. And they don't know exactly the the officers that are coming in don't know where he went. So they've got to slow down and move slow. And now you're going through two bodies. Because is he pretend to be one he's dead people. You know, was he hiding down here? Is anybody alive? Right because there were people grabbing at the legs of officers as they were going through and just yelling Don't leave me Don't leave me. You know, so a lot of that stuff. And were people playing dead until the officers came. Yeah.

° 49:12

Absolutely. To survive. Let me to go into so the call comes in about the bombs and that you know he's going to send



°∩ 49:28

a hostage out in 15 minutes with a bomb vest on. The crazy thing about that was whenever I'm not sure how it happens in the fire, but whenever you have one of these things, the cap and I'm not sure what the equivalent of a captain is for the fire department but they go into command post and they and they start moving the chess pieces right from 30,000 feet. And we never have never seen a captain the 18 years I was on SWAT and never saw a captain at one of my call outs because he was always in the command post well when this happened right here he

came out and touched every person that had a gun pointed into that club said if somebody comes out with a bomb vest they don't do exactly what you said you got to shoot him in the face and the captain was looking at it to make sure you understood what he was asking and if he saw any hesitation there was no ill will move you aside and went to the next person now you could have been a dick right and been that one just know that on the radio Hey by comes out with a BBS shoot him in the face but he knew what he was asking so you made that eye contact so that happens they decided to use the explosive breach guys an explosive guys here mom guys fucking one weird guy did them guys a weird love you guys man. I just think it's you know when you get the bomb guys for Team Leader whenever they say hey we need the bomb guys here that tickles us we got to start getting you guys information right you wanna know what the walls made out of the doorframe that door right you want to because then you go in your little pink room and you make a math thing and you come up with a bomb right so that's basically what happened you know called bomb guys when we made an explosive breach into the south bathroom to get those people out as fast as we could before the bombs go off long story short we they put this shake charge up there and it blows and we finally get that hole in there we're not in the bathroom we're in the damn hallway. So we missed it by like a few feet but it ended up being good because now we got guns on the door of the bathroom that he's in and we're outside the club and you know safer location so it kind of worked out in our favor. At one point he comes out shooting it and it was a cloud of dust when you came out because I would do a flash bang in that hole there and so the cloud that's all I could see was the figure of a man and muzzle flash is now shot the figure of the man to the muzzle flash that that's kind of how that went down. Not sure where you want to go.

James Geering 52:47

Now woven painting a picture we don't get to hear these specific boots on the ground perspective. One more just area quickly before we transition to the aftermath. Tell me about the near miss how you almost lost one you guys.

ິ 53:01

Oh, yeah. So toma when he came out shooting right? Yeah, so when he comes out shoot when he came out like Rambo. He had a long gun in one hand handgun and the other hand I suspect because of the cloud of smoke in there in that hallway that he really couldn't see. So it came out firing. nappy or the peloton or everybody in the dance team got a nickname right? We call them nappy he's only had six months in the team one of those bullets hit him right in the head if not for his helmet who were killed them hit him we have night vision goggle plates that are right there. Hit it right into play right we're just the mount would be sort of Mount kind of pushed in and that's what cut them and he started bleeding. This sexy mother he the bullet hits him in the head. He falls on his ass returned fire from his ass gets up. At that point somebody sees them shoes and back a few feet goes back does a mag chain you just like this tactical shit. I'm sorry, but it's sexy to me. He just doesn't match change. Like, you know, instinctively instead of walking back like John Wayne, I could have kissed them. I mean, that's the shit that you you know, you can't I tell people I can train all the shit you know, I can give you all the damn the principles and everything but you got to come through the door with the heart. That makes sense. So that's nappies near miss and God bless him that uh you know, he started bleeding, and then the bloods coming down and he's, you know, he he's six months and he's like, think them hit and we're like, you know, like Monty Python, right? Not as a flesh wound.

Good. You know, don't worry. You're good. You're good. And, and so, we skipped over this but there was an F 150 that kind of became are a little transit to the hospital memories only a few blocks away. So they threw him in the back of that damn F 150. And it's one of our guys now, right? So the guy that's driving he floors in damn nappy almost led at the back almost died twice. God bless him so

James Geering 55:19

well, again, thank you, like I said, there's there's so many takeaways. I mean, one, for example, you know, we're thinking about stock triage, we're thinking about, you know, all the things that we're supposed to do. And then you have the men and women that just act in the moment, sometimes their support, their departments support some, and sometimes they pull someone out of the fire in Atlanta, and they get fired. So I think, you know, the reality of some of these unique situations, and the way you have to adapt is just another another seat for everyone. All right. So, you guys, I'm gonna say you without the support of your actual department created a peer support team. Talk to me about the following days and weeks with all I mean, it was literally on your doorstep at one of your fire fire stations, you know, they were mopping blood up the next day. What was the impact of that on your men and women? And how did the peer support that was already in place? help so much in mitigating that?

Yeah. So I think you, if I haven't driven home, you have to kind of understand the culture. We've been told no. For years. Now. This is this is three, four years in the making that we've been told no. In fact, one of the conversations with the head of our HR was even went so far deteriorated so far. It was myself our health and safety chief and our fire chief meeting with the head of HR. It deteriorated so far that she said, What makes you so special secretaries kill themselves too. That was the that was the environment that we were working in. Right? It just so happens I think I told the story yesterday, but the gentleman that was sitting next to me almost went over the table, I physically had to pull my hand on the shoulder. I didn't restrain him. You see me I'm a I'm a noodle. I'm not restraining anybody. But maybe it just broke his attention enough that he didn't get fired that day. But that gentleman was our District Chief Matt Negley who later took his own life. Ironic that she says that to him. And I, my response was pretty measured. I said, Well, if you know that this is a problem with Secretaries killing themselves. Let's do something about it. We'll help. Let's change the number to EP first let's start with that. So this is the environment that we're working in. This happens and the support floods in right. So so the support from our mayor, the support from our fire chief, the support from everybody, listen, we know that this is going to be the fallout, we know that we're going to have members who are struggling, we know that we were going to have people who are having a hard time with this. We are here we're going to help you. We thought, Gosh, what a what triumphs and tragedy, right like we don't want this to happen. But now we've opened the eyes and people know that there's going to be hurt. One of the things that happened in the in the following days was I got a call from my union president who said a gentleman named Pat Morrison from the IFF from up in DC said, we have help if you need it. And I said thank God, because I have no idea what I'm doing. Yes, we needed. There was no roadmap, this, this wasn't a common enough occurrence that we had designed what we do after right. We hadn't done enough before. We got lucky that we at least had to trust before. But we hadn't done enough before. We hadn't built in those proactive measures. And we were not ready for the

after either. The IFF came down they sent a few people that I'm forever indebted to. And actually that that is one of the reasons why I'm so dedicated to giving back because when I had no idea what I was doing, people were there to help me through it. They didn't know either, but collectively we developed a plan. So in the following days, we did what would probably look very similar to a CSM debriefing. We had people speak up we gathered the crews together, we were able to take them offline and have everybody talk if they wanted to volunteer it. But really one of the one of the things that that kind of empowered our members was to hear people from outside of our organization say, Look, we don't know what it is that you're going through. But we've been through something similar and there's help if you ever needed Right, if you don't need it, you don't need it. But if you do need it, it was it was it was special to, to hear people from things that we will always compare ourselves to 911, the Boston bombing, those people come in and tell us, it's okay to not be okay. Our members listened. Following that, so So you know, we knew that that this could not be it, we knew that we had to follow up with our members. And we were able to create a pretty solid roadmap that allowed us to do that. We will check in with our members, our peer support team went to work and they went to work for a very long time after this happened. In fact, I would say the biggest amount of people that stepped forward to say that they were hurting were two years after the anniversary, two years after the anniversary, the floodgates open, but people warned us about the anniversary, they said pay attention to these things. So three months, six months, nine months, right before the anniversary, we had small units come and we would just kind of talk how's your year going? What is going on? Because everybody okay, how is that buddy system, we set up the buddy system very early on. If you're okay, perfect. You can be okay. Chit look out for the person who might not be okay. And that is really how we we made this thing happen. Because following pulse after the the, the memorials went up and things got back to normal and, you know, life went on. We didn't have the support anymore. So we had to rely on the things that we had done on our own, and figured out the way that we could do this on our own that did not involve an administration that was not going to support us. And I don't want to sound like I'm super negative. And I know that I do right now. This was a roadblock that we had to encounter. But what this ultimately was able to do was our members saw that we kept working for them. Right? We're not getting paid to do this stuff. In fact, we're not allowed to do this stuff on duty. But we're still doing that, that gave them the the trust that we needed to make sure that they could get the help that they got UCF, huge resource again, in our backyard, their program is free. Anybody in the state of Florida that needs a trauma program can go to this intensive outpatient program and spend two weeks there at the time it was three weeks, but their program is two weeks long. And odds are you're going to come out much better than you were. So I know I kind of zipped around there. But really the thing that set us up for success was that we started well before this the best time to plant a tree is when 20 years ago, right? Second best time is when no 19 years ago, the 20 is the best time. The 20 is best time is now but at least this is still a good time to plant the tree. Right? So so we didn't take no for an answer. Our members knew that they saw how how we were working. And they saw that it was helping the people that they cared about. There are some horror stories from our members asking for help after pulse and not receiving it through any kind of official means horror stories. Letters being written, please help me. I can't do this on my own and being written up for jumping the chain of command. How do you do that? That's what we were dealing with. We didn't care. We had to do it. We had to do something. If these people weren't going to listen, could we save a life by saying we don't give a shit about the chain of command? Because technically we don't fall in the chain of command. We were able to work around it we were able to find that system that worked. Whether it was within our policies and procedures or not and and get our members there. That was the blessing in this curse.



James Geering 1:04:27

I had Jocko willing call my podcast twice. First time I told him about the issues in my small fire department and the frustrations he said well, you just follow the chain of command. My chain of command the ladder has four rungs and the top two, they've never even done the job. My operations chief as a dispatcher, so sometimes that you said within the department on the union side, outside of that, or even as I did, come outside, brick and throw fire from outside the wall. squeezed. So I think that's it because like I said, with the Disney thing, it's not about talking crap, it's one day it will happen. And you keep putting your head in the sand. And one day, the screen is going to be adorned with your first you because you weren't ready, you know that women, if you are ready, they'll still be there. But imagine if you're not ready, and you talk about mental health. Imagine knowing that you hadn't trained and all those people died because of you carry that shit. So tangent, sorry. So let's go back to you. I mean, you were literally as Lieutenant Colonel John, Dave Grossman talks about the proximity of the killer is more acute for trauma, you end up taking this person out, walk me through the days and months that you experience and then what OPD provided for you

ິ ∩ີ 1:05:52

much different for us. So whenever you're involved in a shooting, or critical incident, you know, those guys been involved in three in and you get whisked away, you know, you get you go to detective bureau or, you know, for this instance, we went to the SWAT briefing room because a few more people involved. And we're kind of removed from everything. And in this instance, we had to wait for all the alphabet boys, right? You can pick the FBI, ATF internal affairs, if the LED Oh, I had to get the leads our state police, they all had to come talk to us. And you know, it was weird and big and FBI. This is this big. I've been involved in some stuff. And the FBI came and stripped this naked. took every stitch of clothing we had except for underwear and think, Oh, we had clothes in the car. But they made us walk in the parking lot like that. So the parking lot. So I'm only playing we didn't walk in the parking lot like that. But anyway, the we go home, you know, when we're I think at home, the start at two o'clock in the morning, we shut them at 520 something, I get home at noon. And that's after all the previous call out so it was a long freakin day. Anyway, on the way home, we get the text from the cat and saying, Hey, be at the FOP Lodge, and bring your families. I'm thinking What the hell's this about you know, so we get there. And kudos to the cat, the captain he invited every past member of the SWAT team and their families all of us paid out of his pocket for a barbecue took the present guys over to the corner had his little three to five minute speech and in order no shop talk, just go be with one another go check on one another buddy check. Just go ask didn't know we needed that. They know we needed that that was huge for us. Then we had to go to our critical incident stress debriefing. They had a huge one, they went to the high school. And you know everybody was there all the different agencies that were involved. And you know, a couple of SWAT guys went there, you know, and and we're Swat. So we went there ain't saying shit. People were talking but not us. GAAP and again, says, Hey, we're gonna do our own critical incident stress debrief. And he calls a couple of guys that he thinks that we're going to respect from the team. And he would go to the SWAT briefing room and you know, sex comes out, you know, meet at 12 o'clock and we're going to cater lunch and they're going to have this debrief thing. And I'm just like, okay, great, you know, go eat some lunch, and I'll be home by one to catch a soap opera. I've never done that shit. So I want to try it. So

U T:02:00

my mom used to watch the shit out of him. I would like to try it one time. So anyway. We get there. And the critical incident stress guys, they do their little spiel. And we're in a big semi circle. There's 40 of us and we have you know, there's there's a couple of warriors in the team. I think we're all warriors, but the ones that we look up to. Scott Smith is one of them. And he's the first one to stand up and he happens to be a deputy team commander. But he's that dude, he's that worried that brings us back. He stood up and spoke from his heart and said he has some shit in his head. He's trying to square away and you need some help. And because he led the way, and doing that, four hours later, every man in that room spoke. And we realized that guys that weren't even there, we're hurting. For not just just, we die together. And that's the sentiment that we were all talking about there that it's the first time we've ever talked about dying. Because whenever we're at a call out, we're figuring out the win. It was huge dude at the Warrior was the first one to speak up because nobody questions that he's a warrior tomorrow. nobody questioned that shit. It opened the door for everybody to speak, whatever's in their head. That was amazing. Then we had to go to EAP mandatory, right? Whenever, you know, get involved in a shooting or critical incident, you gotta go to EAP doc and, and I did you know what they what they told me to do, like, you know, it's my third time having to go and I go there. And, you know, she opens up a little file thing. And you weren't involved in impulse, like, You got to be crazy. I'm thinking like, I'm not denying this ship. But how do you know, like we spoke? How you know? So I went right back to folding my arms. You ask your questions, I'll answer the way you think, you know, the way I think you want to hear it, sign my papers, and we went to work. And that's kind of how that happened for us. And then we I wasn't the only one. I guess it happened to a couple of guys came back. We were kinda like, what was your experience? Like, you know, and, and so it got back to the command staff. And kudos to our chief. And he said, it's a kudos. He said, I'll notice shit, guys. I don't know the answer. But go find the answer. You tell me what mountain to move. I don't want to hear about the obstacles. You guys, let me know. I don't know, I don't know this world. But go figure it out. And I'll be right there to move whatever mountain and that was huge for us. We found UCF. So we're way behind the ofd. As far as finding UCF that was our first hit into UCF. And they were amazing. They, you know, got there and started speaking to them. And they just talked to us. And I hope that makes sense. I just first couple times. We were just talking. I think it was me filling her out. And actually the bit was kind

°∩ 1:12:42

of mean to me. Yeah, yeah. You're not the only one. Yeah.

ິ∩ 1:12:50

I mean, so. But I mean, because I go in there, you know, and my, I was way off the map or what I thought was supposed to happen. Like, you know, when you see those, those, uh, those competitive checker chess players that had the little clock thing when they like, I went in there and I put the clock down, I hit it, 60 minutes, fix it. I kind of wanted to be done. And I wanted to, you know, and she was like, What in the hell is wrong? And she just went off on me and I'm thinking, you're not supposed to talk to me like that. is supposed to be nice. And she's like, where does that say that? Where there's no written anywhere? I'm like, and but has she been nice? Yeah, I ran right over as, right. So she gave me what I needed for me to sit down like a little boy and, you know, figure some shit out. And that's when we started peeling the onion, right and after after the second, because I thought the first one was a fluke. I thought, you know, just gotta go back and I'm gonna get her to say, but she got me a second time and then you know, that's when we started talking. So that's kind of how our journey went. And I can tell you about you know, my story being different because pulse the bodies were horrific, like I said, and it's absolutely tragic. But the fucker kill people. He shot at us, I killed them. I think like a baby. They don't bother me at all. Their shit before and after that bothers me. And there's there aspects of pulse that I think about and I you know, so remember that. That's when the member the iPhone was when they used to ring the damn camera light would flash and shit. That's back when that shit was happening a lot. So, when there happens when that would happen? I would think about that, but I didn't have like a horrible negative reaction just would take me back there. Right. So that's kind of thing that you know, there's other little things that I think about but yeah, I didn't have a negative stuff. And then the therapist, you know, she found out It was crazy. So

James Geering 1:15:01

she's like, l'm right.

ິ 1:15:03

So in in real quick just to tag on to that, that is a lot of what our response look like as well. And that really shaped how we started doing these outreaches. Afterwards, because we brought everybody to our union hall, they took care of the families. That's a huge component of this, this rocks, the community, not only is our family at home, watching the news, not sure where we are in all of this, whether you're on duty or not, sometimes their vision of what we do all day is completely changed by a situation like this. Families are affected. I know my family was even affected. And I wasn't even there that day at Pulse. My kids were very affected by this. So they had that family component. We did, we had our our health and safety chief fantastic guy, Ed Griffin, I would follow him anywhere. He had, his playbook was a policy that we had written in 1992. That was a CSM policy that said 24 hours you do this 48 hours to 72 hours, as it's called this, this is what this is what it's called, when you're doing it this way, this is what it's called. This is where you bring everybody. So we have very large groups sitting in our union hall, they're not going to talk there, it's not going to be conducive to this, they're gonna listen, maybe you can provide education and still in a situation like this. But when they started talking was afterwards, that social aspect, the breaking bread, we had food for them as well, that breaking bread in these small groups without anybody listening, or they thought nobody was listening, they talked to each other. We do a completely different now, we don't gather everybody in a big group, we go station to station. And really the magic in that is I trust this guy. And if this guy speaks up, I trust him enough to know that I can speak up to we don't make anybody talk about anything. It is all you can talk about golf, the weather, whatever you want to talk about. Inevitably, when you empower them to talk or not talk, you've just given them a gift to say I can do whatever I want on my terms. This is my terms. So often after a situation like this pulse included, they feel powerless. They didn't get to train the way they wanted to train. They didn't get to respond the way they wanted to respond. There is a lot of moral injury happening throughout this whole entire scene operation in the aftermath. If you can give them that little piece of empowerment, they are going to give it back to you tenfold.



You can see how fragile everyone was on that scene. You've got certain groups that absolutely created tribalism, healing, fostering even post traumatic growth. I think it's very important to point out that if you have a lack of support, whether you're FDNY in 2003, and people don't seem to care anymore, or whether you're an Orlando firefighter that you're benevolent has a peer support team but your city is doing something different. Now you're compounding it with organizational betrayal. It's a very, very dangerous place to be. So I want to underline a couple of things. Firstly, the men don't cry bullshit. Or boys don't cry. 841 episodes I have shs crying. I have Navy SEALs crying Green Berets SWAT operators, firefighters, I got Timmy Gleason is coming out soon. Who was one that every disaster we've been in Florida use our team. You know. So firstly, that shit is so old school that needs to

ິ 1:19:06

go you're really depressing to be around. I am here I am.

James Geering 1:19:09

I was singing every single time and they just burst into tears, your voice like an angel, a Hells Angel. But secondly, to your point, when you have someone who says, Don't tell me about what you're going through, let me start by telling you what I'm going through. That is opening the door. That's that courageous vulnerability. Once you open that door and say, Look, I was in a house fire when I was four. Let me tell you about that. I almost died, my sister got me out, blah, blah, whatever, wherever it is my divorce, you name it, that then sets the stage for someone else to come tell your story. You know, whereas if you're kind of folding your arms like what's wrong with you that gap thing, then all you're going to do is have the same response. So I just want to underline some things that you were saying I think it's it's amazing. and contrasting the two. And just what you guys did. They say if you want to change the world start at home. That's what you did. You didn't wait for someone in some government building to change your department, city country. You rolled up your sleeves and you did it yourself. So so we are out of time I was going to do g&a, but we have about 97 seconds left. So I just want to thank these two gentlemen. I mean, I'm sure the rest of you had the same experience. I did. I've heard these stories before and I'm still blown away. So I just want to thank you for being so courageously transparent and telling you stories today.