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And as many of you know, I only bring sponsors onto this show

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whose products I truly swear by.

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Now, we are an overworked and underslept population,

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especially those of us that wear uniform for a living.

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And trying to reclaim some of the lost rest and recovery is imperative.

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Now, the application of this product is as simple as putting on headphones and a sleep mask.

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there is neuroacoustic software beneath that is tapping into the actual frequencies of your brain,

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whether to upregulate your nervous system or downregulate.

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Now, for most of us that come off shift, we are A, exhausted,

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and B, do not want to bring what we've had to see and do back home to our loved ones.

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So one powerful application is using the program Powernap,

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a 20-minute session that will not only feel like you've had two hours of sleep,

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but also downregulate from a hypervigilant state back into the role of mother or father, husband or wife.

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so I urge you to go and listen to episode 806 with CEO Jim Poole.

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Welcome to the Behind the Shield podcast.

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As always, my name is James Gearing, and this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show

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police officer, author, and member of the Operation Enduring Warrior team, Jeremy Sharlow.

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Now, in this conversation, we discuss a host of topics from Jeremy's journey into law enforcement,

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working within the SWAT team, the officer-involved shooting that left him with life-changing physical and mental injuries,

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his powerful mental health story, the tools he used for post-traumatic growth,

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the power of community, Operation Enduring Warrior, and so much more.

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Now, before we get to this incredibly powerful and important conversation, as I say every week,

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please just take a moment, go to whichever app you listen to this on, subscribe to the show,

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leave feedback, and leave a rating.

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And this is a free library of almost 900 episodes now.

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So all I ask in return is that you help share these incredible men and women stories

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so I can get them to every single person on planet Earth who needs to hear them.

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So with that being said, I introduce to you Jeremy Sharlow. Enjoy.

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Well, Jeremy, I want to start by saying firstly, this is a long time coming.

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You and I have known each other and gone back and forth,

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and we're at the operation during Warrior Gala together a couple of years ago.

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But the universe has a way of just putting someone in front of me when it's supposed to happen.

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And obviously, this is now. So I want to welcome you onto the Behind the Shield podcast today.

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Thank you, sir. Yeah, we have been going back and forth since what, 2020?

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Something like that, yeah, I think.

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So where are we finding your planet Earth today?

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I'm in Bay City, Michigan. Yeah, I move around a lot.

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But for the time being, I'm in Bay City.

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So I would love to start the very beginning of your story.

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I mean, you have some pretty powerful chapters when it comes to your time in uniform

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and then out the other end, but let's start at the very beginning.

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So where were you born? And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic,

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what your parents did, how many siblings?

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Okay. Well, my family, I got a crazy family, but I was born in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina,

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military kid, obviously.

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Right away, my mother, my sister and I moved up to Michigan when her and her dad,

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my sister's dad split up. And I basically lived in Michigan all my childhood.

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I lived in different parts of Michigan, Bay City area, Saginaw, Everett, Reed City.

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Standish is where I went to high school.

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I finished high school in Standish-Stirling Central, which is about 45 minutes north

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to where I'm living now.

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And then, yeah, I ended up making some poor decisions in high school,

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ended up getting my girlfriend pregnant.

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And that led me down to Illinois, where I started college.

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And how old were you when you became a dad?

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I was 18. Yeah, I was 18.

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When you look back now, what were the pros of having a child so young

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and what were the cons?

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I'm going to put the cart ahead of the horse a little bit.

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And being retired, I'm not in a relationship or anything.

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So no kids in the house at age 42.

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That's kind of nice.

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So that's definitely a pro of having your kids early.

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You know, I think also I had the energy to keep up with my daughter.

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You know, I still wanted to play.

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You know, I wasn't sitting on the couch exhausted from being at work.

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I had energy.

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So, you know, I got to play with her a lot.

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I enjoyed that.

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And what about cons?

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If you look back now, is there anything detrimental?

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Yeah, there's a lot of detrimental.

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I don't necessarily recommend it.

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Obviously, you know, in raising my daughter, I tried to get her to do better than I did.

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That's the goal for all of our children, I would think, you know, do better than we did.

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And, you know, I always explained to her, you know,

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you don't want to go the same route we did because of the struggles.

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And, you know, finances were one of the major ones.

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You know, we both still, my ex and I both still lived at home with our respective parents.

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When this occurred, we had nothing of our own.

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You know, we, you know, we ended up moving out onto our own and getting our own apartment

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and tried to be a family.

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But, you know, we were 18.

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She was 17.

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She was a little bit younger.

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And, you know, we didn't know what we were doing and not that anybody does.

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But we weren't done growing up ourselves.

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So that even made it more difficult, I would say.

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It's interesting.

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I was just talking to my son about this literally a day or two ago that a lot of more ancient cultures,

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we were having children, you know, when we were about 16, 17, 18.

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But now we've leaned into this career element and getting stable and homes and jobs.

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You know, it shifted it way back to where the idea of having a child at 17 or 18

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seems way too young to us now.

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But it actually goes against what we did probably for most of the human resistance.

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Well, I'd even say that the physiological aspects of our bodies are geared towards that as well.

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It's a cultural thing that's moved us away from it.

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You know, the way we live is through making money.

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So in order to have a job, you know, these things, it's not the manual labor.

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It's not going out in the field.

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You're not cutting your you're not hunting your own food.

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You're not building your own house with your hands.

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And, you know, when we were generally having the children at 14, 15, 16 years old, that's what was doing.

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I mean, a 15 year old with the right tools can go build a house.

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You know, that's not that's not a problem.

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A 15 year old signing a contract is a whole other thing.

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Yeah. What else is that whole concept of it takes a village?

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I think it doesn't matter how old you are trying to find childcare now,

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trying to afford childcare when you are, you know, one two person household slash income.

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I mean, there's so many people that literally by the time they pay childcare,

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they may as well not be working because it's literally that expensive to put a kid in care.

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Back in those days, you had a village and obviously, you know,

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there was a kind of sharing of overseeing children while, you know,

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hunting was done, while gathering was done and all the other things you needed to make a community thrive.

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Absolutely. And the children were always under somebody's care.

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And at that time, if you messed around and you did something wrong,

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your neighbor would put you in your place.

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You know, now, if you tried to yell at your neighbor's kid,

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you know, the cops would be knocking on the door within 10 minutes because Karen is upset that little Bobby didn't get treated right.

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Absolutely. We're going back to your childhood again for a second.

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So what about sports? What were you playing back then?

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Oh, man, all sorts of sports. I was always I was big into football.

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I was actually pretty good. If it wasn't for my size, I'm not a very big individual.

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And even then, I was smaller, maybe weighed 150 pounds,

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soaking wet, but I played on the defensive line.

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But yeah, I did football, wrestling, track, long distance running if I could,

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you know, just just the normal high school sports.

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And what about career aspirations? Were you dreaming of law enforcement then?

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Or was it something else?

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So I decided I wanted to be a cop.

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You know, this sounds cliché and they even recommend you don't say this when you're interviewing to become a police officer.

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But I actually wanted to be a cop since I was about six.

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There is an incident that occurred in the apartment building we were living in at the time and the building caught fire.

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And the police were the first on scene and they were helping get people out, et cetera.

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And that had a very big impact on me.

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You know, in addition, with some of the early stuff with my mom,

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I felt like I was the protector of her and my sister.

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And so that resonated with me as well.

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I see, you know, I'm seeing these events. I'm the protector.

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I decided the police officer is what I wanted to do.

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I wanted to continue to protect and make a difference in my community.

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So since the early age, I decided that was what I was going to do.

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And I did it.

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As I progressed through this podcast, as I learned more and more and spoke to more and more people,

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the impact of early life on us in uniform became more and more apparent.

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And so many, especially people that struggled later on wearing the uniform.

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When you look back, a lot of them had significant trauma when they were younger.

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It's not a conversation that we have, you know, Jeremy, oh, he's having struggles because he had that shooting.

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Well, they're not talking about, you know, the 18, 20 years before you put the uniform on the first place.

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So now with this, you know, wise mental health lens that you've created now,

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when you look back at your early life, were there elements of that you think that contributed to struggling later?

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I would say no. And the only reason I would say that is simply because I'm not saying I didn't have any traumas.

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I'm just saying that I don't believe they had anything.

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I don't think there was an effect on the things that I've dealt with later in life.

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I mean, to become a police officer, and actually, it's funny that you even mention that through my proceedings,

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the city, the workman's comp with the city tried to claim that I didn't have PTSD for my shooting.

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It was because of childhood trauma. And they tried to deny me services because of that.

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So, but to answer your question, no, I don't think that it did.

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And I passed a psyche valve to prove that, you know, like in order to become a police officer, I had to take a psyche valve.

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I'm sure you're familiar with them. I'm sure you've had to take them as well.

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And then, you know, when I don't pass the psyche valve later and then they tell me it's from childhood trauma, that just doesn't it didn't make sense to me.

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Yeah. Well, first, I mean, those evals are absolute crap anyway.

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I've spoken to numerous people in that field now. It was never meant to select someone in uniform.

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It just wasn't. It's just it's a usually it's one of what should be many tests that when you put them all together, give you a profile of an individual.

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But when I think about childhood trauma, I'm not thinking that you're coming in already with PTSD.

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It's more so when people have trauma and it's addressed, I think you come in with more tools.

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It becomes a strength. It really does. But there's a lot of us that had trauma that was kind of buried down,

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that just didn't rear his head and was amplified by the job.

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So, yes, 100 percent, the job was a big part of what happened.

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But if you're trying to get to the bottom of someone's struggles and you're missing those formative years,

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a lot of times that can cause the frustration of people not understanding why they're not healing us.

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Because what happened to you when you were eight was absolutely a contributing factor to why you struggle when you were 38.

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I mean, just logically, that would make sense to me.

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And I'm not saying because I didn't experience that that that isn't the case.

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You know, that would be too anecdotal. The sample size is way too small, obviously.

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But I mean, just logically, that would make sense, you know, almost as if the job was the trigger to a pre-existing trauma that maybe was underlined.

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And I can see that being a thing, you know, especially with some of the things we see on the job.

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You never know. I mean, one minute you're shaking somebody's hand, the next minute you're in a fight for your life.

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And then there's everything in between.

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So the opportunity to be exposed to a trigger for something that you didn't even know is very high.

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Absolutely. Well, you said that you wanted to be a cop since you were six.

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Walk me through your journey into police academy and then your first department.

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So obviously, you know, being a young father, I needed to start making money right away.

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And so I started I went to a community college and at the community college, I started out in computer sciences just because at the time, 18 years old, I wasn't eligible to be a police officer.

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You had to be 21 and most and most everywhere in order to have a firearm and whatnot.

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But so I started in the computer sciences and I was going to be a computer network administrator for a while.

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And then I changed majors and ended up at the University of Illinois in Springfield studying computer science as a bachelor's.

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And I kind of that transition is actually what catapulted me into the police police world.

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So while I was a student worker at the community college, I was working on their computers.

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Like I got hired as a student worker.

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So in order to have the job, I had to be going to the school.

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Well, because I changed my majors and I wasn't the best student in the world, I ran out of credit hours versus financial aid that you can use at a community college.

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And they told me either they're going to cut me off financially or the financial aid would cut me off financially or I had to go to a university.

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So I transferred to the university. I mean, the progression isn't a bad progression.

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I just probably should have done it without that motivation, I guess.

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But at that time, though, I was a student worker.

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So I lost my job as well because I couldn't I had to be a student at the community college in order to be to work there.

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While I was a student worker supporting their computers, I was one of the areas I supported was the police department.

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So in doing that, I had to get a couple of different certifications for some clearances for the state, you know, to access NCIC, things of that nature, reads and stuff like that.

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And to support their computers, I needed those certifications as well because of the privacy issues, et cetera.

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So when I explained to them, hey, I'm no longer going to be serving, you know, working on your computers, they were like, oh, cool.

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Well, we have a part time position open as a dispatcher.

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00:16:20,140 --> 00:16:25,540

So I took it, you know, paid a little bit better, got me into the police department.

212

00:16:25,540 --> 00:16:30,040

And, you know, I was a dispatcher and this was a dispatcher at a community college.

213

00:16:30,040 --> 00:16:32,140

So we handled all of our own calls.

214

00:16:32,140 --> 00:16:35,340

We didn't if 9-1-1 got a call, it was disbatch.

215

00:16:35,340 --> 00:16:39,240

It was routed to us and then we would dispatch our officers.

216

00:16:39,240 --> 00:16:41,140

It was also a public safety department.

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00:16:41,140 --> 00:16:44,540

So they were required to be an EMS as well.

218

00:16:44,540 --> 00:16:46,940

They were all the MTBs.

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00:16:46,940 --> 00:16:53,740

So fast forward about six months of doing that part time, I'm still working on my bachelor's in business, or I'm sorry, in computer science.

220

00:16:53,740 --> 00:16:57,240

And a police officer position comes open.

221

00:16:57,240 --> 00:17:01,140

And of course, I've told these guys that I've been talking to them for six months.

222

00:17:01,140 --> 00:17:02,940

They all know I wanted to be a cop, et cetera.

223

00:17:02,940 --> 00:17:04,940

So they talked me into testing.

224

00:17:04,940 --> 00:17:09,840

I test, I end up getting one of the positions and I start out at the community college.

225

00:17:09,840 --> 00:17:12,040

That was my first policing job.

226

00:17:12,040 --> 00:17:13,840

They sent me to the police academy.

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00:17:13,840 --> 00:17:16,640

They paid, my wage was paid while I was there.

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00:17:16,640 --> 00:17:17,840

It was a pretty good gig.

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00:17:17,840 --> 00:17:26,440

And what I was making part time as a dispatcher compared to what I was starting out as a police officer was like \$32,000 a year or something like that.

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00:17:26,440 --> 00:17:32,140

I just thought it was great and more money than I'd ever seen at that point.

231

00:17:32,140 --> 00:17:41,340

Were there any areas when you actually got into professional policing where you look back at your time in dispatch and it gave you a different perspective on a call?

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00:17:41,340 --> 00:17:50,040

Because it's very easy in police and fire and EMS to have the kind of them and us mentality when it comes to the voice behind the radio.

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00:17:50,040 --> 00:17:53,640

Yeah, I mean, just the way I interacted with my dispatchers was different.

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00:17:53,640 --> 00:18:03,140

You know, I made like one of the things that I hated as a dispatcher was dispatching a call and then not knowing how it turned out.

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00:18:03,140 --> 00:18:10,540

You know, you hear something and you might hear something bad on their phone and then you don't know what happens and you might never know what happens.

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00:18:10,540 --> 00:18:16,040

So that that as a dispatcher for me would sit with me a little bit like I didn't like that.

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00:18:16,040 --> 00:18:23,440

I had the benefit of those all those officers would come back to our department and I could debrief with them and find out if I so chose.

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00:18:23,440 --> 00:18:26,840

But even that period of time where I was left there wondering, I didn't enjoy.

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00:18:26,840 --> 00:18:38,140

So I can only imagine that would be amplified at a 911 center, for example, where they're dealing with much higher volume, much, much more serious calls than we were taking at a community college.

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00:18:38,140 --> 00:18:44,440

You know, so when I got to the point where I was a police officer full time,

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00:18:44,440 --> 00:18:50,840

I ensured that even if it was just a message over the NBC or even a quick phone call or just stop by the 911 office,

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00:18:50,840 --> 00:18:57,840

if it was something major that I would have wanted to know about, I'll let my dispatcher know how it ended so they don't worry.

243

00:18:57,840 --> 00:19:00,540

They don't have that hanging on them.

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00:19:00,540 --> 00:19:03,240

That was, I think, the biggest takeaway I took from that.

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00:19:03,240 --> 00:19:07,040

Yeah, I love that. I've had a few dispatchers on here, a handful.

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00:19:07,040 --> 00:19:14,640

And I think one of the things that most people don't realize is they're firstly more often than not, they're not even seeing daylight.

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00:19:14,640 --> 00:19:17,540

You know, they might come in 6 a.m., leave at 6 p.m.

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00:19:17,540 --> 00:19:21,640

So if anything, they're seeing sunrise, sunset, but that's about it.

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00:19:21,640 --> 00:19:25,940

They're in a dark room, you know, obviously barely any windows or computer screens.

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00:19:25,940 --> 00:19:28,840

But then they're getting these calls. They're getting the choking baby.

251

00:19:28,840 --> 00:19:30,840

They're getting like I had Beth Bauer Sox on.

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00:19:30,840 --> 00:19:38,540

She was a dispatcher who lived in Paradise, California and was also working when that wildfire killed numerous members of her community.

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00:19:38,540 --> 00:19:41,940

And they were calling her screaming before they got burned over.

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00:19:41,940 --> 00:19:43,440

But they're sitting there.

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00:19:43,440 --> 00:19:47,640

You know, if you have a foot pursuit, if I have to, you know, throw a ladder to a building and make entry,

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00:19:47,640 --> 00:19:54,140

at least as a physical offload for some of that stress, a dispatcher is simply sitting there.

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00:19:54,140 --> 00:20:00,140

So not only they're not getting closure, they're not getting any real physical offload of their own trauma.

258

00:20:00,140 --> 00:20:01,540

Yeah, and that makes sense.

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00:20:01,540 --> 00:20:08,340

And I've actually heard a couple of different dispatching centers where they're bringing in service dogs and such to help with that kind of thing.

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00:20:08,340 --> 00:20:15,740

I mean, I mean, it's putting a bandaid on an open wound, but at least it's something they're trying.

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00:20:15,740 --> 00:20:21,540

Yeah, yeah, I think just getting them outside, getting them moving, you know, there's a way of rotating people through so they can literally,

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00:20:21,540 --> 00:20:26,840

you know, yeah, be exposed to sunlight, get their blood pumping offload, some of that stuff.

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00:20:26,840 --> 00:20:31,540

You know, it's important because a lot of dispatchers, sadly, I mean, they're not they're not in great health.

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00:20:31,540 --> 00:20:38,440

A lot of the ones that I've seen, at least it's a very detrimental physically and mentally to a lot of them.

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00:20:38,440 --> 00:20:43,940

And I mean, unless you work in the field, a lot of people don't even think about a dispatcher.

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00:20:43,940 --> 00:20:46,740

They don't consider the person behind that phone.

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00:20:46,740 --> 00:20:50,340

They don't they don't consider them at all.

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00:20:50,340 --> 00:20:52,540

So what was your experience?

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00:20:52,540 --> 00:20:53,940

You wanted to be a police officer.

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00:20:53,940 --> 00:20:57,540

You had this kind of campus policing that you'd been a part of.

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00:20:57,540 --> 00:20:58,740

Where did you find yourself?

272

00:20:58,740 --> 00:21:01,840

And was it a big culture shock for you?

273

00:21:01,840 --> 00:21:06,140

So, yeah, I went into this thinking, you know, I'm going to be a police officer.

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00:21:06,140 --> 00:21:10,740

This is going to be great. Turns out at a community college, they don't want police officers.

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00:21:10,740 --> 00:21:12,540

They want armed security guards.

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00:21:12,540 --> 00:21:19,540

Essentially, they don't want you to do anything proactive because if you do anything proactive, it can skew, you know, statistics.

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00:21:19,540 --> 00:21:24,140

And then all of a sudden, they're looking at federal funding issues or something of that nature.

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00:21:24,140 --> 00:21:30,040

You know, so they don't want policing on a community college campus.

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00:21:30,040 --> 00:21:36,740

Me at 20, I think I was 23 at the time, 23, 24 at the time, I wanted to be a police officer.

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00:21:36,740 --> 00:21:41,140

And so I found myself in the chief's office a lot.

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00:21:41,140 --> 00:21:46,340

You know, I got I think I'd written the.

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00:21:46,340 --> 00:21:52,040

The only two do I that had been written in 10 years at that college, like they didn't even have do I packets.

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00:21:52,040 --> 00:21:55,440

They didn't have the paperwork in the office because it didn't happen.

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00:21:55,440 --> 00:21:59,940

Like I had to go. I had to borrow it from a neighboring agency type thing.

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00:21:59,940 --> 00:22:07,140

So I was after about a year and a half, almost two years there.

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00:22:07,140 --> 00:22:16,140

It was suggested that I might not make probation and that I should look for policing in a different environment.

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00:22:16,140 --> 00:22:27,240

And so I quit. I you know, I it was a Friday night and I my I received an email earlier that day and my boss was like, hey.

288

00:22:27,240 --> 00:22:33,240

I know your last day is Sunday. We worked for for tens at the time and I know your last day is Sunday morning.

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00:22:33,240 --> 00:22:41,940

I need you to hang over so we can come in and talk like, why the hell would my chief come in on a Sunday to talk to me that that didn't add up.

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00:22:41,940 --> 00:22:46,640

So I made a couple of phone calls, found out what was going on, you know, talk to my sergeant and whatnot.

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00:22:46,640 --> 00:22:52,240

And he told me that, you know, it probably is going to get fired.

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00:22:52,240 --> 00:22:55,140

I just said, well, you know, I have my daughter this weekend.

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00:22:55,140 --> 00:23:02,540

We had a joint custody agreement, my ex and I. I have my daughter this weekend and I'd rather spend time with my daughter than sit here to get fired on Sunday.

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00:23:02,540 --> 00:23:06,740

So here's my gun. Here's my badge. And I walked out.

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00:23:06,740 --> 00:23:12,140

I don't recommend that very bad, very hard to get a policing job after that.

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00:23:12,140 --> 00:23:23,940

Very difficult. But luckily, the chief of police who was going to fire me happened to be friends with the neighboring chief of Mohammed, Illinois.

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00:23:23,940 --> 00:23:31,040

They both retired from the Champaign Police Department and were now chiefs of these other departments.

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00:23:31,040 --> 00:23:40,340

My chief at the college heard that I was applying for the Mohammed Police Department and he actually gave me a reference for the Mohammed Police Department.

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00:23:40,340 --> 00:23:46,740

And so the guy who was firing me essentially got me my job at the other police department.

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00:23:46,740 --> 00:23:50,740

He told me I was a great cop, just not in the college environment.

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00:23:50,740 --> 00:23:57,340

OK, well, that's good, though. So he realized that you were a bad fit because you were so proactive and aggressive in a positive way.

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00:23:57,340 --> 00:24:00,440

So it wasn't that you were a terrible employee.

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00:24:00,440 --> 00:24:03,240

No, no. And it was never a terrible employee thing.

304

00:24:03,240 --> 00:24:06,940

It was, you know, stop taking a little bit of weed off these kids in school, man.

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00:24:06,940 --> 00:24:11,640

Like that kind of thing. You bring a weed to school. Stop it.

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00:24:11,640 --> 00:24:14,240

And here we are now. Right.

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00:24:14,240 --> 00:24:17,340

Laws have changed. All right.

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00:24:17,340 --> 00:24:22,240

Well, then walk me into your journey into the actual police force.

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00:24:22,240 --> 00:24:24,440

All right. The actual police force.

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00:24:24,440 --> 00:24:29,540

It's funny how when I was at the community college, I would have taken offense that we are the police.

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00:24:29,540 --> 00:24:34,440

But when I went to the actual police department, I saw such a huge difference.

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00:24:34,440 --> 00:24:38,740

You know, and this isn't to downplay any of the work that they do at the community colleges.

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00:24:38,740 --> 00:24:43,940

The work there is important. And, you know, college environment is just a different type of policing.

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00:24:43,940 --> 00:24:51,040

There's no other way to put it. It's just different than being a municipal or a state or county officer.

315

00:24:51,040 --> 00:24:55,040

So I end up going to Mohammed Police Department.

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00:24:55,040 --> 00:24:58,240

I go through their FTO program. Don't have any trouble.

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00:24:58,240 --> 00:25:03,140

Make it off probation. And the moment I make it off probation, I go and hit up the chief.

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00:25:03,140 --> 00:25:07,240

And I asked to get put on the county SWAT unit.

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00:25:07,240 --> 00:25:13,640

So he gets me the interviews I need, fill out the paperwork I need.

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00:25:13,640 --> 00:25:18,940

And next thing I know, I'm going to SWAT school and I end up on the countywide SWAT team.

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00:25:18,940 --> 00:25:23,040

And I stayed there for pretty much the rest of my police career.

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00:25:23,040 --> 00:25:27,040

I mean, I just I don't know how to describe it.

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00:25:27,040 --> 00:25:31,740

It was just a kind of got into this rhythm. You know, I work nights most of the time, you know,

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00:25:31,740 --> 00:25:35,440

and with a small department like that, we didn't have a whole lot of turnover.

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00:25:35,440 --> 00:25:37,340

So there was not a lot. I'm sorry.

326

00:25:37,340 --> 00:25:40,540

I should explain the Mohammed Police Department was a small police department.

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00:25:40,540 --> 00:25:44,840

We had maybe I think it was 10 swarm total.

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00:25:44,840 --> 00:25:49,640

So we had enough to where we were working full time around the clock and we weren't a part time police department.

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00:25:49,640 --> 00:25:56,540

But we you know, there are shifts where there was only one of us on duty and we would rely on county for a backing officer.

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00:25:56,540 --> 00:26:01,340

So describe the city to me, you know, when you talk about one police officer, you know,

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00:26:01,340 --> 00:26:08,940

what is the what is a 24 hour or 12 hour shift most likely going to be for a police officer at that time?

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00:26:08,940 --> 00:26:12,940

It depends on the day. I mean, when you go to police, when you get in there,

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00:26:12,940 --> 00:26:15,840

you usually arrive early, get your squad car together, that kind of thing.

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00:26:15,840 --> 00:26:21,740

You go out and do patrol. Usually there's emails from the chief telling us to do some directed patrols in some certain areas.

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00:26:21,740 --> 00:26:27,940

The area that we were covering was upwards of about 14 square miles. It was huge from tip to tip.

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00:26:27,940 --> 00:26:31,140

You know, it was some places it was the size of a county.

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00:26:31,140 --> 00:26:37,740

But this was our town. You know, when you drove one end to the other, it was 13 miles across.

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00:26:37,740 --> 00:26:42,440

So, you know, you do go out and you start doing your directed patrols.

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00:26:42,440 --> 00:26:44,740

You had your areas that you'd want to check that, you know,

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00:26:44,740 --> 00:26:51,140

where common where you knew criminal activity was common usually, you know, that some of the parks and we had believe it or not,

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00:26:51,140 --> 00:26:53,740

Mohammed actually had a heavy drug use issue.

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00:26:53,740 --> 00:27:02,640

And whereas some of the local towns, you know, they they were dealing more with weed and some of the more less expensive drugs.

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00:27:02,640 --> 00:27:08,540

And Mohammed, they had access. It was kind of the rich suburb to the larger city champagne there.

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00:27:08,540 --> 00:27:10,240

And all the kids had money.

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00:27:10,240 --> 00:27:17,740

So they were rolling around with like cocaine and stuff like that that you wouldn't normally found, you know, on your just in that environment.

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00:27:17,740 --> 00:27:22,940

I wouldn't think but so, you know, they had their drug issues.

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00:27:22,940 --> 00:27:32,840

And so there is if you wanted to be busy, you could be proactive and I could be busy all day writing do eyes, you know, doing drug interdiction.

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00:27:32,840 --> 00:27:34,940

And then at the same time, you're answering calls as well.

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00:27:34,940 --> 00:27:40,740

So, you know, any any calls that come into the city, if you're working by yourself, obviously, it's your responsibility.

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00:27:40,740 --> 00:27:44,940

Most of the time, we were able to cover it where we had two officers for most of the shift

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00:27:44,940 --> 00:27:48,340

where there might only be like a three or four hour period where you're by yourself.

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00:27:48,340 --> 00:27:53,640

And we would arrange that. So it was like at the beginning where it was like two o'clock in the afternoon where you're not getting any calls.

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00:27:53,640 --> 00:28:00,340

But at seven o'clock where it's busy, you got two officers type thing, you know, like a power shift situation.

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00:28:00,340 --> 00:28:02,240

So, yeah, just every day was different, man.

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00:28:02,240 --> 00:28:03,940

And that's kind of what I loved about the job.

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00:28:03,940 --> 00:28:06,740

I never would I go to work and expect the same thing.

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00:28:06,740 --> 00:28:10,840

You know, I had my places. I like to run traffic, but I really wasn't into writing tickets.

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00:28:10,840 --> 00:28:15,140

I use traffic more for interdiction than anything else.

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00:28:15,140 --> 00:28:22,240

When I told people in law enforcement and bearing in mind, this is a firefighter observing your community from the outside looking in.

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00:28:22,240 --> 00:28:28,840

One of the things that seems to be insanity to me is riding one to a car, no matter one to a whole city.

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00:28:28,840 --> 00:28:36,340

So, you know, because, you know, the the false multiplier effect of a second person is way more than two people.

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00:28:36,340 --> 00:28:38,540

It becomes, you know, much greater than that.

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00:28:38,540 --> 00:28:43,040

Did you feel vulnerable at those times, even if there was two of you, especially if you were on your own?

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00:28:43,040 --> 00:28:47,440

Because, I mean, literally, you had no one watching a six at that point.

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00:28:47,440 --> 00:29:00,140

So, yes and no. I can think of specific times, even when we had two officers, but we knew a county backing officer was still an hour away or 40 minutes away.

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00:29:00,140 --> 00:29:04,740

You know, there are times that, you know, we weren't doing something proactive.

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00:29:04,740 --> 00:29:13,940

For example, there's a traffic stop I made and there are four individuals, obviously gang members.

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00:29:13,940 --> 00:29:18,040

And there I saw open alcohol in the car.

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00:29:18,040 --> 00:29:21,740

Well, there's two of us and five of them and our backup's 40 minutes away.

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00:29:21,740 --> 00:29:25,340

I have all the reason in the world to pull them out and start searching.

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00:29:25,340 --> 00:29:28,840

And but again, the force multiplier there.

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00:29:28,840 --> 00:29:33,940

So I call my partner over, she comes over and she was like, no, we don't have the manpower.

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00:29:33,940 --> 00:29:38,440

We don't have the ability, if this goes sideways, to do anything about this.

374

00:29:38,440 --> 00:29:41,540

So maybe we just let this one go.

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00:29:41,540 --> 00:29:45,940

And so I wasn't happy about it, but I kind of agreed with her at that point.

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00:29:45,940 --> 00:29:52,840

And so instead of pushing the issue, I kind of said, hey, I see the beer, dump it out and they dumped it out.

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00:29:52,840 --> 00:29:58,840

I checked her of the traffic issue that I originally stopped him for, but I didn't pull them all out to search the car.

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00:29:58,840 --> 00:30:04,840

Specifically because we were outnumbered out and I guarantee you had to search that car. There was guns and drugs in it.

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00:30:04,840 --> 00:30:13,540

I mean, it was writing as if it was a, you know, they'll place people in certain positions and a gang car when they're moving stuff.

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00:30:13,540 --> 00:30:15,340

And that's what it appeared to me.

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00:30:15,340 --> 00:30:23,840

Yeah, yeah, it's an interesting way of looking at it, you know, with the whole defund conversation, like minimizing the ability to just simply make an arrest.

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00:30:23,840 --> 00:30:35,340

You know, that's the person that, you know, killed someone's child minutes before. And now you've only got two of you and you physically don't have the option, you know, in that case, to overpower five people.

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00:30:35,340 --> 00:30:39,240

You know, I mean, obviously, if it was guns drawn, it might be a different story.

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00:30:39,240 --> 00:30:43,140

But up until that point, if they're not resisting and all of a sudden it kicks off.

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00:30:43,140 --> 00:30:49,140

Yeah, I mean, sometimes you see this even in some of these horrific videos that we're seeing at the moment in Mexico.

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00:30:49,140 --> 00:30:57,940

And I think Ecuador just happened where gangs are literally coming out and kidnapping police officers and corrections officers, and they just simply outmanned them.

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00:30:57,940 --> 00:30:59,240

That was it.

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00:30:59,240 --> 00:31:07,740

Yeah, so a hundred percent. And because we were always at the risk of being outmanned, we we learned to talk a lot.

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00:31:07,740 --> 00:31:16,340

Like instead of fighting, you know, I'd rather talk to somebody for an hour than wrestling for 10 minutes, you know, just because you 10 minutes of wrestling somebody.

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00:31:16,340 --> 00:31:19,840

That's that's a fight like you're going to be winded after that.

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00:31:19,840 --> 00:31:23,440

But imagine having to do that by yourself with no backup now.

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00:31:23,440 --> 00:31:29,940

So if I can sit there for an hour talking to you and then talk you into the handcuffs, that's what I'm going to do.

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00:31:29,940 --> 00:31:35,540

We relied a lot of I call it gerbil voodoo, but verbal judo.

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00:31:35,540 --> 00:31:37,240

I'm sure you're familiar.

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00:31:37,240 --> 00:31:39,340

I like the first name better though.

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00:31:39,340 --> 00:31:43,140

Right. I mean, because it is it's kind of like a voodoo. If you do it right, it works.

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00:31:43,140 --> 00:31:52,740

I don't know why, but it does. But so yeah, you rely a lot on talking and communicating and trying to reason with people.

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00:31:52,740 --> 00:32:03,140

And so I think that's a that's a huge difference of policing in a small community and a larger community where you roll up with five deep to a traffic ticket.

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00:32:03,140 --> 00:32:06,240

Absolutely. Well, you talked about wrestling.

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00:32:06,240 --> 00:32:18,540

You were testing for SWAT. How much did all the athleticism of your early life factor into not only succeeding physically just in regular police uniform, but SWAT selection as well?

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00:32:18,540 --> 00:32:29,940

Yeah, so. I think it helped give me that no quit that that I think the sporting as a child helped develop me into that type A personality, I think.

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00:32:29,940 --> 00:32:34,940

And if you're going to be successful in SWAT, you're going to be a type personality, type A personality.

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00:32:34,940 --> 00:32:44,740

They're actively looking for that type of an individual because generally speaking, type B personality don't want to run towards into buildings with gunfire and whatnot.

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00:32:44,740 --> 00:32:51,640

So at any rate, not to say they can't, but that's just a generalization.

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00:32:51,640 --> 00:32:54,640

That's what they're looking for in those tests that they made us take.

406

00:32:54,640 --> 00:32:59,640

They're putting us into those categories so they can see which direction that we would likely go.

407

00:32:59,640 --> 00:33:09,040

But at any rate, I feel like I really learned not to quit. And then when it got to some of the SWAT training, you know, it was difficult.

408

00:33:09,040 --> 00:33:12,940

You know, there was a two mile run. There was an obstacle course.

409

00:33:12,940 --> 00:33:19,940

Then, you know, the moving and shooting. When we were training as a police officer, they just did these triangle stance, you know, push out and shoot.

410

00:33:19,940 --> 00:33:24,040

There wasn't a lot of moving. It was it was horrible training, to be honest.

411

00:33:24,040 --> 00:33:29,740

You know, it really wasn't functional training. And then I got to SWAT and all of a sudden they're like, what are you doing?

412

00:33:29,740 --> 00:33:34,740

No, we're rolling on the ground. We're shooting under cars. We're, you know, we're running while we're shooting.

413

00:33:34,740 --> 00:33:39,840

We're moving while we're shooting. And I think just.

414

00:33:39,840 --> 00:33:44,040

The higher level of activity.

415

00:33:44,040 --> 00:33:51,840

And in that decision making that you learn how to do on the spot while playing sports.

416

00:33:51,840 --> 00:34:00,640

I think those are probably what helped push me into the SWAT school and help and help me succeed as well.

417

00:34:00,640 --> 00:34:08,640

Now, prior to 2016, what was some of the notable kind of career calls that you ran in that time period?

418

00:34:08,640 --> 00:34:17,240

Oh, one of one of the SWAT call outs we had, we had an individual armed with a 308 rifle and a scope.

419

00:34:17,240 --> 00:34:24,040

And we were at his home for seemed like 15 or 20 hours, but I think it was like 13 hours.

420

00:34:24,040 --> 00:34:27,640

But it was like negative seven out the entire time.

421

00:34:27,640 --> 00:34:33,640

And so I was on the react team right next to the door and we weren't 100 percent sure he was in the building.

422

00:34:33,640 --> 00:34:38,640

And this was in 2008, 2009 ish.

423

00:34:38,640 --> 00:34:45,940

And. I don't know why I thought of it, but just right away, I'm like, why don't we ping his phone and see if he's at least here?

424

00:34:45,940 --> 00:34:50,740

So not chasing our ass off, sitting outside this building for no reason.

425

00:34:50,740 --> 00:34:53,740

And everybody looked at me and was like, holy crap.

426

00:34:53,740 --> 00:34:57,240

It was like, wow, nobody thought of that.

427

00:34:57,240 --> 00:35:03,240

So we think it's when we find out he's inside and that helped, you know, we send in a robot,

428

00:35:03,240 --> 00:35:07,940

we start breaking windows and things like that to break and make contact, throwing a phone.

429

00:35:07,940 --> 00:35:15,040

And as soon as he sees the SWAT truck pull up up front, because we were doing stuff off to the side for a react team.

430

00:35:15,040 --> 00:35:21,940

But when we started making notifications, we pulled up with an MRAP is what it was, is a converted MRAP.

431

00:35:21,940 --> 00:35:29,640

I'm sorry. It was a bear cat at that time. And we used a loud loud haler and we're blasting, hey, come out.

432

00:35:29,640 --> 00:35:33,440

He tried to go out the back window instead and get into our perimeter unit.

433

00:35:33,440 --> 00:35:38,840

So and took him down without an issue. But that was a very memorable one.

434

00:35:38,840 --> 00:35:44,140

I had a car fire that I responded to in the county and I had my actually had my wife with me at the time.

435

00:35:44,140 --> 00:35:47,240

And she was a ride along. We were allowed to do ride alongs if we so chose.

436

00:35:47,240 --> 00:35:51,840

And she I get bored once in a while. So she rode along with me this evening.

437

00:35:51,840 --> 00:35:58,740

And it was a car. Some kids were driving a van. They lost control.

438

00:35:58,740 --> 00:36:04,340

They had a tree van caught fire with entrapment.

439

00:36:04,340 --> 00:36:07,840

So I haul asked to get there. It's outside my jurisdiction.

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00:36:07,840 --> 00:36:13,440

It's about a mile outside my jurisdiction. Not quite a mile, but at any rate, I get there.

441

00:36:13,440 --> 00:36:18,240

I'm first on scene and I see the fire. I grab my I tell my wife to stay in the car.

442

00:36:18,240 --> 00:36:23,840

Obviously, I grab my fire extinguisher out of the car.

443

00:36:23,840 --> 00:36:28,640

And I run up there and I see three, there's four kids total in this car.

444

00:36:28,640 --> 00:36:33,440

And I see three of them with obviously broken legs and stuff trying to get out of the car and they can't.

445

00:36:33,440 --> 00:36:36,140

So I helped drag these three kids out of the car.

446

00:36:36,140 --> 00:36:40,240

And then I go back for the driver, who was the one who was entrapped.

447

00:36:40,240 --> 00:36:46,840

He was fully entrapped, not out at all. And I he he as I was walking up to him,

448

00:36:46,840 --> 00:36:53,240

I the fire kind of wrapped around him completely like flashed up on us.

449

00:36:53,240 --> 00:36:59,840

And I'm hitting the fire with the fire extinguisher and I'm getting flash burns on my arm and my face from this.

450

00:36:59,840 --> 00:37:05,840

The coming up right there. And and unfortunately, we weren't able to save him.

451

00:37:05,840 --> 00:37:13,040

But he burned to death right there. What made it so much harder is right after that,

452

00:37:13,040 --> 00:37:16,940

because one officer, county, county contacts me.

453

00:37:16,940 --> 00:37:22,040

He I actually knew this kid. We dealt with him a couple of times for not anything major,

454

00:37:22,040 --> 00:37:25,440

but he lived inside my jurisdiction.

455

00:37:25,440 --> 00:37:28,640

So now came the time for the death notification.

456

00:37:28,640 --> 00:37:31,640

And the coroner contacted our department.

457

00:37:31,640 --> 00:37:33,440

And of course, I was the only one working.

458

00:37:33,440 --> 00:37:41,240

So I just watched this kid burn to death. And then I had to go assist the coroner in giving the death notification to the child's mother.

459

00:37:41,240 --> 00:37:49,940

And. That was probably the hardest thing ever did as a police officer.

460

00:37:49,940 --> 00:37:54,040

I mean, it sounds horrendous. I mean, kudos to you for the rescues that you made.

461

00:37:54,040 --> 00:38:01,940

But I think the I've said this so many times, we in our training in fire and police and EMS,

462

00:38:01,940 --> 00:38:05,940

you do A, B and C, you get outcome D and you get out into the real world.

463

00:38:05,940 --> 00:38:10,340

And you discover that a lot of people don't make it no matter what you do.

464

00:38:10,340 --> 00:38:16,340

And that inability to save can be a crushing weight just within itself.

465

00:38:16,340 --> 00:38:21,840

I wrote an article about that. It's actually on my website and I posted it a couple of different times.

466

00:38:21,840 --> 00:38:27,040

It's called a mother's death. And I wrote it as a it's more of like a poem, I guess.

467

00:38:27,040 --> 00:38:34,840

And it talks about how. It sometimes feel like death is just following us.

468

00:38:34,840 --> 00:38:41,940

No matter what we do, we can't stop it. And it's almost like death asks in that, you know, like the concept of death.

469

00:38:41,940 --> 00:38:50,640

It humanizes death and so, yeah, but it's really it's really sad.

470

00:38:50,640 --> 00:38:59,140

To experience those things and then look back at them and realize how much.

471

00:38:59,140 --> 00:39:04,540

More you should have done like in terms of getting help like that hurt me bad.

472

00:39:04,540 --> 00:39:08,540

And looking back now, I'm sitting there thinking I didn't go talk to anybody.

473

00:39:08,540 --> 00:39:12,740

I didn't do a critical debrief. You know, like I went home that night.

474

00:39:12,740 --> 00:39:16,840

I took my wife was a little freaked out.

475

00:39:16,840 --> 00:39:23,540

I took a shower and proceeded to cough up soot and stuff from the fire for the next week.

476

00:39:23,540 --> 00:39:29,340

You know, and I should have went and talked to somebody, you know, I should have went and, you know,

477

00:39:29,340 --> 00:39:33,340

and sought that help just, you know, seeing how it's even affecting me now.

478

00:39:33,340 --> 00:39:36,540

And I'm losing my train of thought. I'm shaking a little bit.

479

00:39:36,540 --> 00:39:42,540

You know, that tells me that maybe I didn't deal with all of the emotions and feelings behind that.

480

00:39:42,540 --> 00:39:48,940

This isn't as acute, but I was on a plane a few weeks ago about to fly from London back here to the US

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00:39:48,940 --> 00:39:56,940

and the passenger had a cardiac arrest and I ended up working a code and it was a really interesting perspective.

482

00:39:56,940 --> 00:39:59,240

The gentleman didn't make it, which is horrendous.

483

00:39:59,240 --> 00:40:01,940

And we did everything we could with the I mean, I was the only one.

484

00:40:01,940 --> 00:40:05,940

I think that any sort of pre hospital experience whatsoever.

485

00:40:05,940 --> 00:40:10,740

And so the stewardess, the flight crew were slowly able to get bits of equipment

486

00:40:10,740 --> 00:40:14,040

because they had protocol and everything that needed to be open needed permission.

487

00:40:14,040 --> 00:40:21,540

I mean, there was, you know, not a good system when it comes to getting a responder to help the equipment that they need.

488

00:40:21,540 --> 00:40:26,540

Very long story short, I'm helping the London ambulance crew doing compression still.

489

00:40:26,540 --> 00:40:30,640

And then finally it gets to the point where we change it off and I tell them, look, I'm probably in the way now.

490

00:40:30,640 --> 00:40:35,540

Now I've done my bit on the chest. Do you need me? And they're like, no, we'll come find you when we're done.

491

00:40:35,540 --> 00:40:39,040

So I went, washed the blood off my hands and went and sat back down.

492

00:40:39,040 --> 00:40:43,040

And it kind of, it struck me, it hit me hard.

493

00:40:43,040 --> 00:40:51,540

And I was like, wow, you know, 14 years of literally wiping down gear after someone's died and just going back in service and doing it all over again.

494

00:40:51,540 --> 00:40:57,740

But what was striking was I realized what I was feeling is what actually is supposed to happen when someone dies.

495

00:40:57,740 --> 00:41:01,340

And so when it happens to us, like as you sit here, when you're shaken,

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00:41:01,340 --> 00:41:10,340

it was because of what you saw was horrific and tragic and you felt completely helpless in helping the young man that was trapped.

497

00:41:10,340 --> 00:41:12,740

And sometimes we look at it as like, what's wrong with me?

498

00:41:12,740 --> 00:41:18,040

And actually that's how it's supposed to feel because it should be because it was horrendous.

499

00:41:18,040 --> 00:41:23,940

But when we wear a uniform, we try and burrow it down at what's wrong with us because you've got another call to go to.

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00:41:23,940 --> 00:41:30,540

So it's kind of like, where is that medium between feeling because you're supposed to feel,

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00:41:30,540 --> 00:41:34,940

but obviously, like you said, not being overwhelmed where it consumes you?

502

00:41:34,940 --> 00:41:39,440

Yeah, I don't have an answer for that, but I think those are very, very good points.

503

00:41:39,440 --> 00:41:49,240

And I think that's essentially what I've been trying to highlight is, you know, we need we need to pay more attention to our mental health.

504

00:41:49,240 --> 00:41:52,440

I mean, there's just no doubt that I know it sounds cliché.

505

00:41:52,440 --> 00:41:56,940

Everybody says that nowadays, but damn it, it's true.

506

00:41:56,940 --> 00:42:02,540

Especially in these fields that we're working, you know, we're all these again, type A personalities.

507

00:42:02,540 --> 00:42:06,140

I can handle anything. I was in a shootout last week.

508

00:42:06,140 --> 00:42:12,540

Like, come on, we can be Billy Badass, but that only goes so far.

509

00:42:12,540 --> 00:42:16,640

The way I've framed it recently is I'm almost 50 now.

510

00:42:16,640 --> 00:42:20,840

So I grew up in the Rambo Schwarzenegger, you know, the 80s movies.

511

00:42:20,840 --> 00:42:26,740

And that was a manly man, you know, the bodybuilder and the emotionless face.

512

00:42:26,740 --> 00:42:31,240

And then you get into this profession and that kind of bleeds over into us.

513

00:42:31,240 --> 00:42:34,040

You know, now we're wearing uniform, believing that same thing.

514

00:42:34,040 --> 00:42:40,540

And you see a lot of these, you know, firefighters, police officers, you know, that still believe that kind of rub some dirt in it.

515

00:42:40,540 --> 00:42:43,040

You know, don't be a pussy, boys don't cry.

516

00:42:43,040 --> 00:42:46,940

But then when you take a step back and ask yourself, why did you become a police officer?

517

00:42:46,940 --> 00:42:48,540

Why did you become a firefighter?

518

00:42:48,540 --> 00:42:55,340

It was kindness and compassion. On the yin yang, it was the yang, which is the black, which is, you know, the soft,

519

00:42:55,340 --> 00:42:57,340

the kind of, you know, feminine energy.

520

00:42:57,340 --> 00:43:02,740

And I mean, in a positive way, but somewhere along the line, we think that we're just a white circle.

521

00:43:02,740 --> 00:43:04,440

We're all yin or might have a back.

522

00:43:04,440 --> 00:43:05,540

I think yang is actually white.

523

00:43:05,540 --> 00:43:13,840

But, you know, we're all we're all hard and we forget to show ourselves the very compassion that led us into this profession,

524

00:43:13,840 --> 00:43:17,440

the very compassion that we show other people when we go on calls.

525

00:43:17,440 --> 00:43:24,840

So that's the disconnect is that we believe this two dimensional facade of what Hollywood told us masculinity was.

526

00:43:24,840 --> 00:43:29,340

And I always say you want a perfect example of what a man actually looks like.

527

00:43:29,340 --> 00:43:34,540

Watch the band of brothers and listen to the real men talking about something that they did.

528

00:43:34,540 --> 00:43:41,940

It was 60 plus years prior to that filming and they're still broken and they're still in tears because that's what's supposed to happen.

529

00:43:41,940 --> 00:43:44,540

When you lose people, it should affect you.

530

00:43:44,540 --> 00:43:46,840

You're not this Robo cop.

531

00:43:46,840 --> 00:43:53,840

And that mentality, I think, is what a lot drives a lot of our men into the ground because they feel too proud to reach out thinking that they're weak

532

00:43:53,840 --> 00:43:55,840

and thinking that they're alone when they're not.

533

00:43:55,840 --> 00:43:59,340

They're just simply being human beings.

534

00:43:59,340 --> 00:44:01,640
That 100 percent happened to me.

535
00:44:01,640 --> 00:44:03,840
You know, I had that mentality.

536
00:44:03,840 --> 00:44:05,240
I was I was a Billy.

537
00:44:05,240 --> 00:44:06,540
I was swat. I was this.

538
00:44:06,540 --> 00:44:08,540
I was that I have all these trainings.

539
00:44:08,540 --> 00:44:12,340
I've been you know, I have these degrees, you know, nothing can hurt me.

540
00:44:12,340 --> 00:44:16,140
And then I got hurt and I didn't know how to handle it.

541
00:44:16,140 --> 00:44:19,940
I'm sure we'll talk about that a little bit more as we as we progress.

542
00:44:19,940 --> 00:44:22,140
But that's exactly what happened to me.

543
00:44:22,140 --> 00:44:32,440
I was that guy who would have talked shit and probably did talk shit to other officers at some point prior to experiencing it myself.

544
00:44:32,440 --> 00:44:42,140
And, you know, so I'll be the first to say I was wrong then, you know, like when I was when I had that attitude that I'm invincible,

545

00:44:42,140 --> 00:44:44,840

I can handle this all by myself.

546

00:44:44,840 --> 00:44:47,340

A, there's no need to handle it by yourself.

547

00:44:47,340 --> 00:44:58,440

I mean, there's just too many other options and there's no there's no reason to burden to carry a burden like that on your own.

548

00:44:58,440 --> 00:45:00,040

I completely lost my train of thought there.

549

00:45:00,040 --> 00:45:00,640

I apologize.

550

00:45:00,640 --> 00:45:04,740

No, you were saying you saying that you used to buy into that yourself that you were that guy.

551

00:45:04,740 --> 00:45:06,140

Yeah. Yes.

552

00:45:06,140 --> 00:45:10,840

Yeah. So so I was that guy, you know, especially when I was doing the SWAT callouts.

553

00:45:10,840 --> 00:45:15,440

I thought I thought I was Billy badass and I didn't I didn't think it would happen to me.

554

00:45:15,440 --> 00:45:25,440

You know, you know, you joke around with the guys after, you know, you're on an armed subject column, even if there were shots fired or whatnot, you're still joking around.

555

00:45:25,440 --> 00:45:36,840

And then something so horrific happened to me in May of 2016 that I just it it scrambled my head is the best way I can put it.

556

00:45:36,840 --> 00:45:38,640

It put me into a different dimension.

557

00:45:38,640 --> 00:45:41,440

I didn't know where I was.

558

00:45:41,440 --> 00:45:44,340

You know, I didn't know where I was emotionally, what was going on.

559

00:45:44,340 --> 00:45:48,440

And I turned out the hall, unfortunately.

560

00:45:48,440 --> 00:45:50,340

So let's talk about it now since you opened the door.

561

00:45:50,340 --> 00:45:58,840

So May 7th, 2016, how did that day start for you and then walk us through how it obviously evolved?

562

00:45:58,840 --> 00:46:05,940

So May 7th, 2016, Saturday, normal day, not a big not a big nothing was going on.

563

00:46:05,940 --> 00:46:07,940

I'd actually been texting friends prior to work.

564

00:46:07,940 --> 00:46:08,740

I worked to three p.m.

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00:46:08,740 --> 00:46:14,440

to 11 p.m. shift and I've been texting friends off and on about going and seeing a movie.

566

00:46:14,440 --> 00:46:18,840

I think it was a new Avengers movie or something that came out that weekend.

567

00:46:18,840 --> 00:46:23,040

I was supposed to meet a state cop friend of mine at the PD at 11 o'clock.

568

00:46:23,040 --> 00:46:27,540

He was going to him and his wife and I were going to go see this movie again.

569

00:46:27,540 --> 00:46:30,040

So I didn't want to do anything that day.

570

00:46:30,040 --> 00:46:34,740

And like I said, this was one of those departments where I wanted to find a hiding spot.

571

00:46:34,740 --> 00:46:36,140

I could find a hiding spot.

572

00:46:36,140 --> 00:46:37,140

Nobody would see me.

573

00:46:37,140 --> 00:46:41,740

I wouldn't get a call like I could literally disappear and just sit around.

574

00:46:41,740 --> 00:46:42,440

That's what I did.

575

00:46:42,440 --> 00:46:43,540

Didn't make a traffic stop.

576

00:46:43,540 --> 00:46:45,340

Nothing.

577

00:46:45,340 --> 00:46:46,340

Fast forward to the end.

578

00:46:46,340 --> 00:46:48,340

So this was a Saturday.

579

00:46:48,340 --> 00:46:49,540

So at 7 p.m.

580

00:46:49,540 --> 00:46:57,540

we had a power shift officer come on his name doesn't matter, but he came on and so we had two officers for the remaining of the shift.

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00:46:57,540 --> 00:46:59,740

He actually stayed till 3 o'clock in the morning.

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00:46:59,740 --> 00:47:01,740

We had another officer that came on at 11 p.m.

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00:47:01,740 --> 00:47:02,540

when I got on.

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00:47:02,540 --> 00:47:07,840

So, you know, 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. we had two officers.

585

00:47:07,840 --> 00:47:16,440

So I'm chilling through my shift making arrangements to go see the movies and whatnot and about 20 minutes till the end till 11.

586

00:47:16,440 --> 00:47:21,640

I go and I get dinner at McDonald's at sit at the edge of town doing my fat kid thing.

587

00:47:21,640 --> 00:47:22,540

Eating.

588

00:47:22,540 --> 00:47:26,940

I mean, if you look at the crime scene photos, you can see my McDonald's in my squad car still.

589

00:47:26,940 --> 00:47:34,840

It's funny, but but like five, I'm just sitting down getting ready to eat.

590

00:47:34,840 --> 00:47:40,940

I hear my my partner make a traffic stop and I was at the FTO and during the FTO, he would do that all the time.

591

00:47:40,940 --> 00:47:46,640

I get on his ass about making traffic stops at shift change because I didn't want to be over time.

592

00:47:46,640 --> 00:47:49,840

I had plans like I would always just give him shit about that.

593

00:47:49,840 --> 00:47:51,540

And he thought it was a joke.

594

00:47:51,540 --> 00:47:54,940

So I thought he was just fucking with me.

595

00:47:54,940 --> 00:48:02,040

So he makes a traffic stop and within two minutes, you know, I'm asking him if he needs backup and he's saying he's good.

596

00:48:02,040 --> 00:48:04,240

He doesn't need he doesn't need a back.

597

00:48:04,240 --> 00:48:06,540

So I finished my I'm sitting on the edge of town.

598

00:48:06,540 --> 00:48:07,940

I just finished my lunch.

599

00:48:07,940 --> 00:48:09,740

I hear him clear a stop.

600

00:48:09,740 --> 00:48:10,940

I'm OK. Cool.

601

00:48:10,940 --> 00:48:12,340

Send it a shift.

602

00:48:12,340 --> 00:48:19,040

So I'm headed back to the police department and as I'm headed back to the police department, I'm about I'm a block away from the police department.

603

00:48:19,040 --> 00:48:24,340

I see a car turn towards me from a road and it didn't have any headlights on.

604

00:48:24,340 --> 00:48:27,640

And I'm like, well, shit, I can't really say I didn't see that.

605

00:48:27,640 --> 00:48:30,240

Like it's coming directly at me with no headlights on.

606

00:48:30,240 --> 00:48:33,540

So I can't I can't just ignore that one.

607

00:48:33,540 --> 00:48:38,540

So I reach out to my I reach out over the radio to my partner, make sure I wasn't stopping the vehicle.

608

00:48:38,540 --> 00:48:43,440

He had just stopped if he'd already addressed it, then I don't need to address it per se if it's a mechanical.

609

00:48:43,440 --> 00:48:46,040

At any rate, he says it's not the same vehicle.

610

00:48:46,040 --> 00:48:48,640

So I flip around, I get behind it.

611

00:48:48,640 --> 00:48:55,140

And as I get behind it, it pulls in, it turns onto Vine Street and then it turns right into a parking spot.

612

00:48:55,140 --> 00:48:58,440

I'm thinking to myself, it's 10 minutes before the end of my shift.

613

00:48:58,440 --> 00:49:00,840

No harm, no foul. Dude made it home.

614

00:49:00,840 --> 00:49:07,140

I can roll down my window, do a little community policing and just tell this gentleman, hey, you know, your lights are out.

615

00:49:07,140 --> 00:49:09,540

Get it fixed. You know, maybe you just forgot to turn them on.

616

00:49:09,540 --> 00:49:12,140

Maybe you didn't pull your break down all the way.

617

00:49:12,140 --> 00:49:15,540

Whatever your home, your safe, no harm, no foul.

618

00:49:15,540 --> 00:49:21,440

As soon as I rolled down my window, I heard another individual yell.

619

00:49:21,440 --> 00:49:25,840

Sorry, I heard him yell fucking Charlo.

620

00:49:25,840 --> 00:49:35,240

And right then I was just like, like when you hear somebody screaming your name, yeah, I knew something wasn't right right away.

621

00:49:35,240 --> 00:49:41,740

I look over and I see this individual just running directly at my squad car from the house.

622

00:49:41,740 --> 00:49:47,740

So I open my car door and by the time I open the car door and have time to stand up, he is on top of me.

623

00:49:47,740 --> 00:49:51,040

And I put my arm up, my left arm up to stop him.

624

00:49:51,040 --> 00:49:56,640

And he just starts punching, just punching it fist after fist.

625

00:49:56,640 --> 00:49:58,740

This is not the guy who is driving the vehicle.

626

00:49:58,740 --> 00:50:04,040

This is a third party that was actually the person my partner had just stopped.

627

00:50:04,040 --> 00:50:09,840

So. He just starts punching me.

628

00:50:09,840 --> 00:50:13,640

I go, I try to get out over my radio like I'm blocking with one arm.

629

00:50:13,640 --> 00:50:15,240

I'm blocking these punches with one arm.

630

00:50:15,240 --> 00:50:16,540

I've closed distance.

631

00:50:16,540 --> 00:50:17,240

So he's like right.

632

00:50:17,240 --> 00:50:18,840

I'm right on top of each other.

633

00:50:18,840 --> 00:50:23,540

So his hits are kind of hitting me in the back of the head and they're not really strong.

634

00:50:23,540 --> 00:50:30,140

I guess is the best way because I close that distance so they they don't have the force.

635

00:50:30,140 --> 00:50:32,440

I try to get out of the radio, can't get out over the radio.

636

00:50:32,440 --> 00:50:35,440

My radio had changed in that little scuffle.

637

00:50:35,440 --> 00:50:41,340

The channel had changed and I was going out over some channel that wasn't even being watched.

638

00:50:41,340 --> 00:50:44,040

I go, I see my taser on my belt.

639

00:50:44,040 --> 00:50:49,940

I grab my taser and I pull the trigger and I see the probe sit him in the chest and it doesn't do shit.

640

00:50:49,940 --> 00:50:51,340

It was like nothing.

641

00:50:51,340 --> 00:50:54,140

So I'm like again, holy crap, what do I do?

642

00:50:54,140 --> 00:50:56,740

I shove the taser into his chest and it has a second mode.

643

00:50:56,740 --> 00:51:04,440

It's called a drive-stun mode and I hit him in the chest and that pain compliance was enough to push him off me.

644

00:51:04,440 --> 00:51:15,040

So as I push him off me, I clear the car because obviously I don't want to be trapped by that car anymore.

645

00:51:15,040 --> 00:51:24,940

And I start backing away from him with my arm raised and I'm yelling, please stop, please stop.

646

00:51:24,940 --> 00:51:37,140

I maybe made five, six, seven feet away and I see him reach into his pocket and pull out a pistol and start firing.

647

00:51:37,140 --> 00:51:40,940

Yeah, I see him start firing and I was hit.

648

00:51:40,940 --> 00:51:42,440

Like I knew right away I was hit.

649

00:51:42,440 --> 00:51:46,640

Like some of these people are like, oh, I didn't know I was shot.

650

00:51:46,640 --> 00:51:49,840

I fucking knew, man. It hurt like a, it didn't feel good.

651

00:51:49,840 --> 00:51:54,740

It felt like it was hit with a sledgehammer and it burned and everything was numb.

652

00:51:54,740 --> 00:51:56,240

My entire arm was numb.

653

00:51:56,240 --> 00:52:05,140

And so based on the injury, it looks like there's a little hole here in the elbow and there's a big hole here in the arm.

654

00:52:05,140 --> 00:52:07,940

So it looks like entry and exit.

655

00:52:07,940 --> 00:52:10,240

However, I never had my back to him.

656

00:52:10,240 --> 00:52:12,640

I never turned my back to this man.

657

00:52:12,640 --> 00:52:20,040

So the best I can figure is when I saw the gun, I went like that and the round went through my arm.

658

00:52:20,040 --> 00:52:21,140

I went back down.

659

00:52:21,140 --> 00:52:23,940

I drew my pistol, even though I was hit and drew my pistol.

660

00:52:23,940 --> 00:52:25,740

I returned fire.

661

00:52:25,740 --> 00:52:28,940

I hit him in the neck and the leg.

662

00:52:28,940 --> 00:52:30,040

Dropped him right there.

663

00:52:30,040 --> 00:52:31,640

He dropped there.

664

00:52:31,640 --> 00:52:34,440

I emptied my mag.

665

00:52:34,440 --> 00:52:36,040

He got up.

666

00:52:36,040 --> 00:52:45,540

He went into the house and I went to my, I started running towards my squad car to get my AR because he was still shooting at me.

667

00:52:45,540 --> 00:52:50,440

I got to the, I got, as I was running to the car, my training just kicked in.

668

00:52:50,440 --> 00:52:51,640

I'm like, that's a bullet magnet.

669

00:52:51,640 --> 00:52:53,240

Don't go back to that car.

670

00:52:53,240 --> 00:52:55,840

So instead of going to the car, there was a building right behind it.

671

00:52:55,840 --> 00:52:58,840

I went to the building that had a brick facade.

672

00:52:58,840 --> 00:53:05,840

I thought it had a brick facade, but at any rate, I went to the building and I pried the corner and kind of had eyes on.

673

00:53:05,840 --> 00:53:12,340

And that's when I was able to change the channel on my radio and finally get out to my dispatcher and call for help.

674

00:53:12,340 --> 00:53:14,740

From there, I've got this corner pried.

675

00:53:14,740 --> 00:53:15,940

You know, I'm checking my wounds.

676

00:53:15,940 --> 00:53:18,240

I'm letting dispatch know I'm hit.

677

00:53:18,240 --> 00:53:19,940

They're trying to get there.

678

00:53:19,940 --> 00:53:21,240

They didn't hear me at first.

679

00:53:21,240 --> 00:53:24,640

When I went back over the radio, you know, this was 1052 at night.

680

00:53:24,640 --> 00:53:29,640

They had no idea that even I tried to make a traffic stop because I didn't try to make a traffic stop.

681

00:53:29,640 --> 00:53:30,640

I didn't go over the radio.

682

00:53:30,640 --> 00:53:34,040

Nothing, you know, so.

683

00:53:34,040 --> 00:53:47,540

I go over the radio and met had six George to two shots fired on hit and there's silence like you can hear like there's a pregnant pause or like you can hear people like I can just picture them looking at one another and the dispatcher being like, what did he just say?

684

00:53:47,540 --> 00:53:56,040

So then I come back over the radio, make it six George to two shots fired on hit and then it starts lighten up and officers coming from everywhere to try to back.

685

00:53:56,040 --> 00:54:00,540

But the closest officer was still I mean, I had my partner there.

686

00:54:00,540 --> 00:54:02,140

He actually was in town.

687

00:54:02,140 --> 00:54:11,140

So he pulled us that direction and it just so happened that our night shift officer was coming to the police department at that same time.

688

00:54:11,140 --> 00:54:16,240

So while I'm while I was returning fire, I was also moving backwards.

689

00:54:16,240 --> 00:54:19,240

So that's where the moving and shooting with accuracy came into play.

690

00:54:19,240 --> 00:54:21,840

My SWAT training saved my life.

691

00:54:21,840 --> 00:54:28,040

My ability to move and shoot, put him down to stop him from shooting back at me has saved my life.

692

00:54:28,040 --> 00:54:31,040

But he saw all she couldn't see who I was shooting at.

693

00:54:31,040 --> 00:54:36,240

But as you this happened in the backyard of the police department, I told you it was only a block away.

694

00:54:36,240 --> 00:54:37,440

So that block was the block.

695

00:54:37,440 --> 00:54:44,040

The police department was in and she pulls into the parking lot of the police department and I'm on the road right across from from there.

696

00:54:44,040 --> 00:54:47,940

And she sees me backing up moving and shooting.

697

00:54:47,940 --> 00:54:51,140

So now so now there's three of us there.

698

00:54:51,140 --> 00:54:52,640

I tied the corner.

699

00:54:52,640 --> 00:54:55,040

She's trying to tell me to come back to her to get away.

700

00:54:55,040 --> 00:54:58,240

But I want to set up a perimeter because I want to get him.

701

00:54:58,240 --> 00:54:59,440

He got me.

702

00:54:59,440 --> 00:55:01,340

I want to get him.

703

00:55:01,340 --> 00:55:09,040

So I start trying to set up a perimeter and then I see him come out of the house with an AK-47 and I'm I looked at my pistol.

704

00:55:09,040 --> 00:55:13,940

I remember strictly looking at my pistol and looking back at his AK and being no.

705

00:55:13,940 --> 00:55:15,640

I was outgunned.

706

00:55:15,640 --> 00:55:16,340

I knew it.

707

00:55:16,340 --> 00:55:18,440

I already went through a mag.

708

00:55:18,440 --> 00:55:21,540

My extra mags were in my car.

709

00:55:21,540 --> 00:55:24,840

I believe my AR was in my car, but I later found I didn't bring it to work that day.

710

00:55:24,840 --> 00:55:28,740

I was actually sitting at home still, so that wouldn't have done good anyway.

711

00:55:28,740 --> 00:55:33,440

But I only had two mags left on me and he now had an AK-47.

712

00:55:33,440 --> 00:55:38,240

And as soon as I ducked back behind cover, he opened fire.

713

00:55:38,240 --> 00:55:42,140

He believed I was in that squad car and he just shred my squad car.

714

00:55:42,140 --> 00:55:49,640

He emptied a full 30 round mag into my car, specifically targeting the driver's area.

715

00:55:49,640 --> 00:55:54,040

Went through the steering column, the computer, the driver's seat, driver's door.

716

00:55:54,040 --> 00:55:57,640

And those rounds, the 7.62 rounds went through both sides of the car.

717

00:55:57,640 --> 00:56:01,640

Like you see in movies people hiding behind cars.

718

00:56:01,640 --> 00:56:05,240

Those rounds go through so easy.

719

00:56:05,240 --> 00:56:06,740

So he comes out of the house.

720

00:56:06,740 --> 00:56:14,440

So after he mag dumps into my squad car, my partner is still yelling to me to come back.

721

00:56:14,440 --> 00:56:16,040

I hear the gunfire stop.

722

00:56:16,040 --> 00:56:18,240

So I'm knowing he has to reload.

723

00:56:18,240 --> 00:56:22,140

I think I had a good opportunity to cross that field to get back to her.

724

00:56:22,140 --> 00:56:25,840

So she kept lethal cover down across the field to get back to her.

725

00:56:25,840 --> 00:56:29,640

So now we can get that force multiplier two on one.

726

00:56:29,640 --> 00:56:31,740

And she sees my injuries.

727

00:56:31,740 --> 00:56:33,440

She starts checking me out.

728

00:56:33,440 --> 00:56:35,440

And then we hear a wreck.

729

00:56:35,440 --> 00:56:40,640

He had ended up getting into a truck to escape and rammed my squad car.

730

00:56:40,640 --> 00:56:43,340

So hoping I was still in it, I guess.

731

00:56:43,340 --> 00:56:44,840

Rammed my squad car.

732

00:56:44,840 --> 00:56:47,940

And because of the situation, we didn't have officers.

733

00:56:47,940 --> 00:56:49,540

We didn't have a perimeter.

734

00:56:49,540 --> 00:56:54,840

He was able to escape the perimeter which started about a two week long manhunt.

735

00:56:54,840 --> 00:57:04,540

That ended when he broke into a church in southern Illinois and changed his wounds from where I had hit him in his neck.

736

00:57:04,540 --> 00:57:06,440

He dressed his wounds.

737

00:57:06,440 --> 00:57:10,040

He was a survivalist, that kind of an individual.

738

00:57:10,040 --> 00:57:18,840

And he left the bloodied rags and a garbage can inside a church and the preacher saw him, called the police.

739

00:57:18,840 --> 00:57:20,240

The police called.

740

00:57:20,240 --> 00:57:21,840

The FBI was involved.

741

00:57:21,840 --> 00:57:24,040

The FBI SWAT team came out.

742

00:57:24,040 --> 00:57:30,640

He opened fire on FBI SWAT, shot one of the FBI SWAT guys also in the arm.

743

00:57:30,640 --> 00:57:33,040

They opened fire, returning fire on him.

744

00:57:33,040 --> 00:57:39,840

And the autopsy wasn't able to determine how many rounds he was hit with.

745

00:57:39,840 --> 00:57:41,840

Meaning a lot.

746

00:57:41,840 --> 00:57:45,340

Yeah.

747

00:57:45,340 --> 00:57:46,540

What about the backstory?

748

00:57:46,540 --> 00:57:50,640

I want to obviously get into you and the hours and days and weeks after that.

749

00:57:50,640 --> 00:57:55,840

But did you ever find out motive, why he shouted, Sharlow?

750

00:57:55,840 --> 00:58:01,240

I mean, the reason he got to this point of basically kill or be killed?

751

00:58:01,240 --> 00:58:05,240

So I dealt with him a couple different times in the past.

752

00:58:05,240 --> 00:58:16,040

The first time I dealt with him, I was responding to a gas station for a domestic, I'm sorry, a disorderly conduct.

753

00:58:16,040 --> 00:58:22,040

There was an individual yelling racial slurs at a black individual at the gas station.

754

00:58:22,040 --> 00:58:27,840

So I get there and I speak with the black individual and he's telling me, he gives me a description.

755

00:58:27,840 --> 00:58:31,740

I'm able to get information from the cameras.

756

00:58:31,740 --> 00:58:35,840

I get a license plate and I go to the end of it, the suspect's house.

757

00:58:35,840 --> 00:58:40,540

I get to the suspect's house and at this point, I'm just trying to talk to him, find out what's going on.

758

00:58:40,540 --> 00:58:46,640

Because as long as it's only words, I mean, that's a very fine line of freedom of speech for disorderly conduct.

759

00:58:46,640 --> 00:58:48,540

It's a fine line. Is it right?

760

00:58:48,540 --> 00:58:50,140

No, it's never right.

761

00:58:50,140 --> 00:58:56,340

But I don't know that we can necessarily arrest somebody for just being an asshole.

762

00:58:56,340 --> 00:59:03,640

So I walk up to try to talk to him about the situation and immediately he starts yelling,

763

00:59:03,640 --> 00:59:05,540

you have a warrant, get off my property.

764

00:59:05,540 --> 00:59:08,340

He balls his fist up and he starts running at me.

765

00:59:08,340 --> 00:59:14,140

So at that point, I draw my taser and I put it on him and I held him at taser point until I got a backup officer there.

766

00:59:14,140 --> 00:59:16,340

We stood there for like 15 minutes.

767

00:59:16,340 --> 00:59:20,940

We just with my taser pointed at him because it was me, him and his wife.

768

00:59:20,940 --> 00:59:23,340

I didn't know if anybody else was in the house, but I didn't want to go.

769

00:59:23,340 --> 00:59:27,440

I didn't want to lower my taser and go hands on with this guy one on one.

770

00:59:27,440 --> 00:59:29,340

So I just sat there waiting for backup.

771

00:59:29,340 --> 00:59:36,540

And during that time, he was yelling at me, telling me how I am the problem with our society

772

00:59:36,540 --> 00:59:40,740

and that it's a police state and all this kind of other stuff.

773

00:59:40,740 --> 00:59:46,740

And then once we got him into the squad car, as I'm taking him to jail, he started yelling at me in German.

774

00:59:46,740 --> 00:59:48,840

I know it was German because I've heard German.

775

00:59:48,840 --> 00:59:52,140

I don't know what he was saying, but I can imagine it wasn't friendly,

776

00:59:52,140 --> 00:59:58,540

especially seeing he was yelling and spitting at the partition in the car.

777

00:59:58,540 --> 01:00:05,540

And then he went and told me how he started yelling at me about how I was just protecting those animals

778

01:00:05,540 --> 01:00:10,840

and that I was the reason that good white men were being put in prison.

779

01:00:10,840 --> 01:00:12,740

So that was the first interaction I had with him.

780

01:00:12,740 --> 01:00:14,940

He ended up going to jail.

781

01:00:14,940 --> 01:00:19,840

He was found guilty of disorderly conduct and aggravated assault to a police officer.

782

01:00:19,840 --> 01:00:22,040

They actually charged it. I was shot.

783

01:00:22,040 --> 01:00:28,140

Me being the assaulting, the one he assaulted.

784

01:00:28,140 --> 01:00:34,040

But he was ordered to do some anger management and whatnot.

785

01:00:34,040 --> 01:00:36,640

And we saw how well that worked.

786

01:00:36,640 --> 01:00:47,040

But so fast forward maybe a year after that, I stopped a car for speeding like 30 miles an hour over.

787

01:00:47,040 --> 01:00:51,640

It was in a 35 mile an hour zone and she was going like 65 or 70 or something like that.

788

01:00:51,640 --> 01:00:53,440

So she was flying.

789

01:00:53,440 --> 01:00:57,040

So I get her stopped and when I get her stopped, she's in tears, bawling.

790

01:00:57,040 --> 01:01:00,840

And it's clear that she's not just upset about being stopped.

791

01:01:00,840 --> 01:01:06,040

And speaking with her and investigating, I find out that her and her husband had had a domestic

792

01:01:06,040 --> 01:01:11,540

and that he was at his house and she was trying to get away to get to her parents house.

793

01:01:11,540 --> 01:01:13,240

He lived in the county.

794

01:01:13,240 --> 01:01:16,240

They lived in the county and outside my jurisdiction.

795

01:01:16,240 --> 01:01:19,940

So instead of just to make sure everybody was OK,

796

01:01:19,940 --> 01:01:22,540

we tried to call him and try to get his side of the story.

797

01:01:22,540 --> 01:01:27,740

And as soon as I call him, he goes, he tells me to fuck off and hangs up.

798

01:01:27,740 --> 01:01:30,240

I call him back and he won't pick up, etc.

799

01:01:30,240 --> 01:01:33,940

So like the man just wouldn't speak with us at all.

800

01:01:33,940 --> 01:01:36,740

The very next contact I have, he shoots me.

801

01:01:36,740 --> 01:01:40,040

So I don't do I have do I know why?

802

01:01:40,040 --> 01:01:43,140

No, I don't know what brought him there.

803

01:01:43,140 --> 01:01:49,640

I guess is the apple simply doesn't fall far from the tree because fast forward two years after that,

804

01:01:49,640 --> 01:01:55,240

my police department was notified by a confidential source that his father was making threats

805

01:01:55,240 --> 01:02:00,540

and had vowed to kill me, which prompted me to leave Illinois altogether.

806

01:02:00,540 --> 01:02:04,140

Yeah, I think this is I'm glad we got the backstory of that as well,

807

01:02:04,140 --> 01:02:07,940

because, you know, especially in twenty twenty three in the last couple of years,

808

01:02:07,940 --> 01:02:13,140

you know, any officer involved shooting a lot of times certain sides of the media will run with it

809

01:02:13,140 --> 01:02:14,340

and they'll be the slump.

810

01:02:14,340 --> 01:02:18,440

But, you know, hearing, for example, the rescue you made a few years prior

811

01:02:18,440 --> 01:02:24,640

and then the obviously sheer psychosis through mental ill health that led to this person getting to this point,

812

01:02:24,640 --> 01:02:27,040

you know, now it humanizes both sides of the story.

813

01:02:27,040 --> 01:02:32,640

And if you've got, you know, a parent who is full of hate and then their trauma was never addressed

814

01:02:32,640 --> 01:02:36,040

and they raise a child to be the same way, this is the problem that we have.

815

01:02:36,040 --> 01:02:41,440

And in the law enforcement conversation, you never hear anyone say,

816

01:02:41,440 --> 01:02:43,940

why are our streets so dangerous in America?

817

01:02:43,940 --> 01:02:45,740

And this is a perfect example.

818

01:02:45,740 --> 01:02:48,040

You know, oh, why did Jeremy shoot that poor guy?

819

01:02:48,040 --> 01:02:51,040

Well, now you learn who that fucking poor guy actually was.

820

01:02:51,040 --> 01:02:54,940

Now it adds a lot more color to the whole scenario.

821

01:02:54,940 --> 01:02:58,440

You know, and you see you see both sides and his empathy even for that man,

822

01:02:58,440 --> 01:03:04,640

because once he was a little toddler, that all he thought about was kicking a ball and drawing the crayons.

823

01:03:04,640 --> 01:03:07,040

So if we don't have both sides of the conversation,

824

01:03:07,040 --> 01:03:12,640

making sure that the bar is high and law enforcement, but also fixing the violence in our country,

825

01:03:12,640 --> 01:03:15,540

we're never going to get to the bottom of it.

826

01:03:15,540 --> 01:03:21,340

Well, unfortunately, he has last night, the person who shot me,

827

01:03:21,340 --> 01:03:24,940

he has two kids, two boys that I know of.

828

01:03:24,940 --> 01:03:29,240

You know, so how are they going to grow up?

829

01:03:29,240 --> 01:03:30,940
Are they going to grow up with that?

830
01:03:30,940 --> 01:03:35,540
Oh, my dad was killed because of a police officer is how that story is going to go.

831
01:03:35,540 --> 01:03:37,540
It's not going to go.

832
01:03:37,540 --> 01:03:44,640
They're not going to be told no dad chose to shoot a cop and the cop shot back.

833
01:03:44,640 --> 01:03:46,940
Like that's not how that's going to go.

834
01:03:46,940 --> 01:03:51,040
I'm going to be in those child's minds because of the way this family is.

835
01:03:51,040 --> 01:03:52,740
I am the bad guy.

836
01:03:52,740 --> 01:03:59,040
And even after the shooting, I was torn apart and social media and the news.

837
01:03:59,040 --> 01:04:03,740
There is rumors going around that the reason he shot me is because I was sleeping with his wife.

838
01:04:03,740 --> 01:04:06,740
Like people are just disgusting.

839
01:04:06,740 --> 01:04:10,340
And they don't understand that we are people too.

840

01:04:10,340 --> 01:04:14,540

And you know, it was horrible.

841

01:04:14,540 --> 01:04:16,440

It was just such a horrible experience.

842

01:04:16,440 --> 01:04:23,740

The vitriol afterwards, the number of people I've had people on my social media that I've arrested

843

01:04:23,740 --> 01:04:28,040

reach out and straight out say they wish he would have killed me

844

01:04:28,040 --> 01:04:31,940

and it couldn't have happened to a better guy, meaning me.

845

01:04:31,940 --> 01:04:35,040

You know, that's the type of people that we're out there dealing with.

846

01:04:35,040 --> 01:04:36,340

Yeah, that's disgusting.

847

01:04:36,340 --> 01:04:40,740

It really is, you know, and there's times where us in uniform make mistakes.

848

01:04:40,740 --> 01:04:43,140

And when that happens, we need to be held accountable.

849

01:04:43,140 --> 01:04:50,640

But we also need to support our men, women who leave their families and go and protect complete strangers.

850

01:04:50,640 --> 01:04:57,840

You know, and this this this narrative that's been created recently is just it's disgusting because yes,

851

01:04:57,840 --> 01:05:00,140

there are people that should never be wearing uniform.

852

01:05:00,140 --> 01:05:02,340

And yes, there is absolute leadership failure.

853

01:05:02,340 --> 01:05:06,740

And yes, there are low fitness standards and training standards, like for example,

854

01:05:06,740 --> 01:05:11,940

qualifying in a triangle stance with six shots once a year that contribute to this

855

01:05:11,940 --> 01:05:15,440

and mandatory overtime and sleep deprivation and all the things.

856

01:05:15,440 --> 01:05:20,140

But if you just vilify a cop because they made a wrong decision at that moment in time,

857

01:05:20,140 --> 01:05:25,440

and I'm not talking about the George Floyd's, I'm talking about the the gray area ones

858

01:05:25,440 --> 01:05:29,240

and it's immediately to them and nothing about why the person was resisting

859

01:05:29,240 --> 01:05:32,340

on their rap sheet that was a foot long.

860

01:05:32,340 --> 01:05:36,140

Then again, you're not you're not looking to even try and solve the solution.

861

01:05:36,140 --> 01:05:37,340
You're just looking for a demon.

862
01:05:37,340 --> 01:05:41,040
So you have to do fucking nothing yourself to fix it.

863
01:05:41,040 --> 01:05:42,640
I fully agree with that.

864
01:05:42,640 --> 01:05:48,340
And it's you know, do you know who hates bad cops more than anybody else?

865
01:05:48,340 --> 01:05:51,640
Good cops, because it makes it so hard.

866
01:05:51,640 --> 01:05:52,940
So do you know what happens?

867
01:05:52,940 --> 01:05:56,040
Those good cops will turn in those bad cops.

868
01:05:56,040 --> 01:06:01,040
There's a myth that, you know, that these cops are looking out for one another, blah, blah, blah.

869
01:06:01,040 --> 01:06:07,340
I've had | the internal politics of a police department are sometimes like a high school.

870
01:06:07,340 --> 01:06:10,240
There's clicks. It's not fun.

871
01:06:10,240 --> 01:06:15,440
It's by any stretch of the imagination to think that there's some huge criminal conspiracy

872

01:06:15,440 --> 01:06:19,240

where these people who can sometimes barely even stand each other are going to cover

873

01:06:19,240 --> 01:06:22,940

for one another while they're committing constitutional violations.

874

01:06:22,940 --> 01:06:23,840

Come on.

875

01:06:23,840 --> 01:06:26,140

Like it's just not you watch too much.

876

01:06:26,140 --> 01:06:27,240

They watch too much TV.

877

01:06:27,240 --> 01:06:29,140

Cops aren't the bad guys.

878

01:06:29,140 --> 01:06:32,940

Well, it's even this notion that, you know, a cop wakes up ringing their hands,

879

01:06:32,940 --> 01:06:37,940

hoping that they're going to shoot someone today when someone has to shoot another person

880

01:06:37,940 --> 01:06:41,340

that can haunt them the rest of their life, you know, say they weren't even shot,

881

01:06:41,340 --> 01:06:45,040

you know, whatever it was a situation they reached for something they ended up having to.

882

01:06:45,040 --> 01:06:47,140

It was a gun they shot first.

883

01:06:47,140 --> 01:06:49,640

You know, they weren't shot themselves, but that's going to haunt them.

884

01:06:49,640 --> 01:06:54,540

They were forced to take a life and the notion that cops want to kill, you know,

885

01:06:54,540 --> 01:06:56,740

only a complete sociopath would want to.

886

01:06:56,740 --> 01:07:00,640

So I know every every profession has them.

887

01:07:00,640 --> 01:07:04,540

There are sociopathic plumbers and accountants and lawyers and firefighters,

888

01:07:04,540 --> 01:07:09,740

but we do everything we can to try and make sure that that doesn't happen in our profession.

889

01:07:09,740 --> 01:07:15,840

But apart from those cases which need to be addressed with the full force of the law,

890

01:07:15,840 --> 01:07:20,140

the other men and women are just simply trying to do a good job, protect their community

891

01:07:20,140 --> 01:07:23,240

and make it home safely to their family.

892

01:07:23,240 --> 01:07:25,840

100% and it makes me so angry.

893

01:07:25,840 --> 01:07:28,740

All these people are like, well, most cops are good.

894

01:07:28,740 --> 01:07:34,740

If I said that about any other grouping of people, if I said most white people are good

895

01:07:34,740 --> 01:07:38,440

or most Asian people are good or most black people are good,

896

01:07:38,440 --> 01:07:41,940

they're immediately going to call me racist because I'm grouping people

897

01:07:41,940 --> 01:07:44,640

and then putting a group at blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

898

01:07:44,640 --> 01:07:48,640

But why is it okay to group police officers and say most of them are good?

899

01:07:48,640 --> 01:07:50,040

Like it's the same thing.

900

01:07:50,040 --> 01:07:51,540

It's the same mentality.

901

01:07:51,540 --> 01:07:55,540

It's just a different it's just showing in a different way.

902

01:07:55,540 --> 01:07:56,940

Absolutely.

903

01:07:56,940 --> 01:08:01,640

So you have this, you know, very, very acute shooting, this acute trauma.

904

01:08:01,640 --> 01:08:05,640

Walk me through, you know, the next few weeks,

905

01:08:05,640 --> 01:08:11,440

both physically as far as the actual injury itself, but also mentally and emotionally.

906

01:08:11,440 --> 01:08:14,340

So physically, I get to the hospital.

907

01:08:14,340 --> 01:08:15,840

I need to act quickly.

908

01:08:15,840 --> 01:08:19,040

I was supposed to get a helicopter ride, but they determined my injuries weren't bad enough

909

01:08:19,040 --> 01:08:21,240

and I still I've never been on a helicopter.

910

01:08:21,240 --> 01:08:25,740

If anybody wants to hook me up with the ride on a helicopter.

911

01:08:25,740 --> 01:08:29,540

But at any rate, I get taken to the emergency room

912

01:08:29,540 --> 01:08:36,640

and that was the only time I actually felt any support for from my local police community.

913

01:08:36,640 --> 01:08:38,340

They were lined up.

914

01:08:38,340 --> 01:08:45,140

There was 50 officers lined up at the emergency room showing support for me when I arrived.

915

01:08:45,140 --> 01:08:48,040

And that was amazing.

916

01:08:48,040 --> 01:08:49,040

I felt safe.

917

01:08:49,040 --> 01:08:50,840

You know, the guy was still out on the run.

918

01:08:50,840 --> 01:08:55,440

You know, I even questioned is he going to come try to find me again, you know?

919

01:08:55,440 --> 01:08:59,540

And at that moment, I was probably the safest I could have been.

920

01:08:59,540 --> 01:09:05,240

I had a 30 man deep detail making sure I was okay.

921

01:09:05,240 --> 01:09:06,140

But that didn't last long.

922

01:09:06,140 --> 01:09:10,140

They left the I mean, they left the hospital within a couple hours.

923

01:09:10,140 --> 01:09:12,840

I was treated and released the same day.

924

01:09:12,840 --> 01:09:16,340

My you know, my injury was it didn't strike any major arteries.

925

01:09:16,340 --> 01:09:18,840

It didn't go through even any major tendons.

926

01:09:18,840 --> 01:09:21,040

It was a straight through and through.

927

01:09:21,040 --> 01:09:22,740

It was a 380.

928

01:09:22,740 --> 01:09:25,240

So it was a smaller round, but it was a hollow point.

929

01:09:25,240 --> 01:09:28,740

I still got some of it in me.

930

01:09:28,740 --> 01:09:33,540

But no surgery was required and they packed the wound.

931

01:09:33,540 --> 01:09:35,540

That was painful, by the way.

932

01:09:35,540 --> 01:09:38,240

Especially the deep reading is that what they call it?

933

01:09:38,240 --> 01:09:43,140

Yeah, where they yeah, where I have to pull away the dying flesh and it was horrible.

934

01:09:43,140 --> 01:09:43,740

Yeah.

935

01:09:43,740 --> 01:09:51,340

So so I'm released from the hospital the same night, like three, four o'clock in the morning.

936

01:09:51,340 --> 01:09:56,140

But while I was at the hospital, the investigators came and took a statement from me.

937

01:09:56,140 --> 01:09:58,140

They took all of my clothing.

938

01:09:58,140 --> 01:10:00,140
They took my cell phone.

939
01:10:00,140 --> 01:10:01,840
They took everything from me.

940
01:10:01,840 --> 01:10:08,440
I left the hospital in a hospital gown naked underneath and nobody brought me anything else.

941
01:10:08,440 --> 01:10:09,440
They took my firearm.

942
01:10:09,440 --> 01:10:11,940
They took everything.

943
01:10:11,940 --> 01:10:14,340
Nobody in my department brought me another firearm.

944
01:10:14,340 --> 01:10:20,240
I mean, there's there's some there's some best practices that suggest after an officer is involved in a shooting.

945
01:10:20,240 --> 01:10:28,640
Yes, you have to take that firearm for a forensics, but you immediately give that officer a new firearm

946
01:10:28,640 --> 01:10:30,940
because it can wreak havoc on the officers.

947
01:10:30,940 --> 01:10:33,140
Well, did I do something wrong?

948
01:10:33,140 --> 01:10:34,540
Am I the wrong?

949

01:10:34,540 --> 01:10:36,340

It can really cause problems.

950

01:10:36,340 --> 01:10:38,140

None of that happened.

951

01:10:38,140 --> 01:10:43,040

I had my own weapons at home, so I felt safe still, but as safe as I could at that time.

952

01:10:43,040 --> 01:10:48,540

But I still had my service weapon taken from me and it did affect me.

953

01:10:48,540 --> 01:10:49,940

Like why? Why?

954

01:10:49,940 --> 01:10:57,940

Why isn't my department supporting me the way they've always been told I would be supported?

955

01:10:57,940 --> 01:11:01,240

So I get home that morning and I couldn't sleep at all.

956

01:11:01,240 --> 01:11:02,940

I mean, I was wide awake.

957

01:11:02,940 --> 01:11:05,640

I at that point I hadn't slept since Saturday.

958

01:11:05,640 --> 01:11:11,840

Like I woke up at Saturday morning at like nine o'clock, worked my entire shift, been in the hospital.

959

01:11:11,840 --> 01:11:13,440

They pumped me.

960

01:11:13,440 --> 01:11:19,440

They did give me like morphine or something, but even I like I stayed awake through the high.

961

01:11:19,440 --> 01:11:23,140

And then that morning I just felt like I was on cloud nine.

962

01:11:23,140 --> 01:11:27,940

I hadn't felt I had so much energy.

963

01:11:27,940 --> 01:11:29,540

It was shot. I was shot.

964

01:11:29,540 --> 01:11:31,940

How much energy I had.

965

01:11:31,940 --> 01:11:37,140

Fast forward another eight hours to Monday night or so that would have been Sunday night.

966

01:11:37,140 --> 01:11:45,640

I crashed. I crashed out like hard, like just done, like dead to the world.

967

01:11:45,640 --> 01:11:48,540

But then nightmares started almost straight away.

968

01:11:48,540 --> 01:11:53,240

Like and the nightmares were horrible and they were never the same.

969

01:11:53,240 --> 01:11:56,140

But they always had kind of the same gist.

970

01:11:56,140 --> 01:11:57,240

I was always dying.

971

01:11:57,240 --> 01:12:03,440

I was in and I would always wake up right before I died in every single one of them.

972

01:12:03,440 --> 01:12:07,340

And it just got to the point where and this is going on weeks now.

973

01:12:07,340 --> 01:12:10,640

It got to the point where I'm not sleeping.

974

01:12:10,640 --> 01:12:16,740

I started believing that maybe some of the dreams were actually memories rather than dreams.

975

01:12:16,740 --> 01:12:21,940

I was only sleeping maybe 30 minutes a night for to the point where I started having

976

01:12:21,940 --> 01:12:24,940

hypogallogical hallucinations.

977

01:12:24,940 --> 01:12:28,340

It got bad.

978

01:12:28,340 --> 01:12:34,440

And so I the only I didn't know how to treat it, but I was still thinking I'm Billy badass at this point.

979

01:12:34,440 --> 01:12:36,940

And I don't need no doctor and blah, blah, blah.

980

01:12:36,940 --> 01:12:38,040

Other cops can handle this.

981

01:12:38,040 --> 01:12:39,940

I should be able to handle this.

982

01:12:39,940 --> 01:12:41,640

So I did what most cops do.

983

01:12:41,640 --> 01:12:44,340

I started drinking.

984

01:12:44,340 --> 01:12:48,940

And what I found is in order to sleep if I drank enough, I could sleep.

985

01:12:48,940 --> 01:12:52,640

I mean you call asleep if you drink enough you pass out and that's what I was doing.

986

01:12:52,640 --> 01:12:58,140

I was drinking a fifth of whiskey a night just so I could sleep.

987

01:12:58,140 --> 01:13:01,840

As I continue to do that, my behavior just became erratic.

988

01:13:01,840 --> 01:13:06,640

Like I wasn't making it wasn't firing with on all synapses.

989

01:13:06,640 --> 01:13:12,140

You know, I was making poor decisions and just in general, I was jumpy.

990

01:13:12,140 --> 01:13:14,740

I was scared of my shadow.

991

01:13:14,740 --> 01:13:15,840

Somebody knocked on the door.

992

01:13:15,840 --> 01:13:18,940

I'm answering the door with a pistol in my hand type thing.

993

01:13:18,940 --> 01:13:27,840

And as the sleep continued to evade, I just started getting deeper and deeper in this

994

01:13:27,840 --> 01:13:30,440

depression where all of this was my fault.

995

01:13:30,440 --> 01:13:32,340

My department's not helping.

996

01:13:32,340 --> 01:13:36,440

Nobody, you know, I had reached I do need to step back.

997

01:13:36,440 --> 01:13:37,440

I forgot to mention this.

998

01:13:37,440 --> 01:13:40,340

So I got that on Saturday.

999

01:13:40,340 --> 01:13:42,540

I'm home on Sunday.

1000

01:13:42,540 --> 01:13:44,340

I reach out to my police department.

1001

01:13:44,340 --> 01:13:51,640

So I was told I can't talk to anybody including a doctor anybody until after I've been interviewed

1002

01:13:51,640 --> 01:13:59,540

by the state police for their their their on duty shooting team, whatever it is.

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01:13:59,540 --> 01:14:02,340

Usually that should be within, you know, 24 to 48 hours.

1004

01:14:02,340 --> 01:14:03,840

They give you a time to go home and sleep.

1005

01:14:03,840 --> 01:14:10,040

But then you're supposed to enter you're supposed to go back for this interview right away.

1006

01:14:10,040 --> 01:14:13,640

It was Wednesday and I hadn't heard anything and I'd already been dealing with nightmares

1007

01:14:13,640 --> 01:14:17,140

for two nights and I asked chief.

1008

01:14:17,140 --> 01:14:18,140

So I called my chief.

1009

01:14:18,140 --> 01:14:19,840

I'm like, look, I'm having these nightmares.

1010

01:14:19,840 --> 01:14:21,700

I need to get a debriefing or something.

1011

01:14:21,700 --> 01:14:23,240

This isn't right.

1012

01:14:23,240 --> 01:14:25,540

And he's like, you can't talk to anybody.

1013

01:14:25,540 --> 01:14:26,540

We'll see what we can do.

1014

01:14:26,540 --> 01:14:31,900

They ended up scheduling my appointment for the interview for that Friday.

1015

01:14:31,900 --> 01:14:37,340

So I got shot Saturday and I had I couldn't even talk to anybody for an entire week about

1016

01:14:37,340 --> 01:14:39,940

anything involved in it.

1017

01:14:39,940 --> 01:14:46,940

And then after after that, he scheduled a debrief, like a critical critical stress debrief,

1018

01:14:46,940 --> 01:14:50,220

which was another four or five days out, which I didn't want to go to.

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01:14:50,220 --> 01:14:51,220

I hated that thing.

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01:14:51,220 --> 01:14:56,060

It was especially because I actually find some fault with some of the other individuals

1021

01:14:56,060 --> 01:14:57,060

involved in my shooting.

1022

01:14:57,060 --> 01:15:01,100

For example, if that first police officer would have called back up like he should have

1023

01:15:01,100 --> 01:15:04,460

on the initial traffic stop, we would have been dealing with them right then and I wouldn't

1024

01:15:04,460 --> 01:15:07,900

have got shot because that's the same person who shot me.

1025

01:15:07,900 --> 01:15:13,100

So, you know, there's just.

1026

01:15:13,100 --> 01:15:17,580

So I wasn't getting the support I needed from my department that I felt I needed it.

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01:15:17,580 --> 01:15:20,660

And they were telling me I directly couldn't talk to anybody.

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01:15:20,660 --> 01:15:22,340

I started just drinking.

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01:15:22,340 --> 01:15:24,860

That's when I started just drinking to shut it off.

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01:15:24,860 --> 01:15:28,720

And then after I started drinking to shut it off, it never occurred to me to go try

1031

01:15:28,720 --> 01:15:35,900

to get help again, because I was already denied once, you know, and that's obviously means

1032

01:15:35,900 --> 01:15:38,100

I need to handle it.

1033

01:15:38,100 --> 01:15:40,340

I need to be that Billy bad ass.

1034

01:15:40,340 --> 01:15:41,780

That's what they're telling me.

1035

01:15:41,780 --> 01:15:43,100

So I try.

1036

01:15:43,100 --> 01:15:50,660

And as the depression got worse, as the drinking got heavier, I found myself one night just

1037

01:15:50,660 --> 01:15:53,900

blaming myself for everything, wanting the pain to end.

1038

01:15:53,900 --> 01:15:55,540

Just I didn't want to die.

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01:15:55,540 --> 01:16:01,820

I just only knew one way to stop this, to stop everything.

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01:16:01,820 --> 01:16:09,880

And I would continue to drink, charged my Glock, put in my mouth.

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01:16:09,880 --> 01:16:13,820

Next thing I know, I wake up the next morning.

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01:16:13,820 --> 01:16:14,820

I passed out.

1043

01:16:14,820 --> 01:16:18,740

I don't I don't remember if I took the gun out of my mouth and continue drinking.

1044

01:16:18,740 --> 01:16:24,100

My next memory is waking up the next morning with the pistol still on the bed, laying next

1045

01:16:24,100 --> 01:16:29,220

to me and bottle of whiskey empty in bed with me as well.

1046

01:16:29,220 --> 01:16:31,340

And I realized, holy shit.

1047

01:16:31,340 --> 01:16:35,100

I almost made a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

1048

01:16:35,100 --> 01:16:38,500

And right away, I went to my personal doctor.

1049

01:16:38,500 --> 01:16:44,220

I was still feared using any department resources because I feared that they would try to use

1050

01:16:44,220 --> 01:16:49,580

that to make it so I could never come back to work, which ended up happening anyway.

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01:16:49,580 --> 01:16:54,700

But I went to a my personal doctor and I said and he'd heard about my situation on the news.

1052

01:16:54,700 --> 01:16:56,420

And he's like, absolutely.

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01:16:56,420 --> 01:16:58,540

You need to get into talking to somebody.

1054

01:16:58,540 --> 01:17:00,580

He sent me up with a counselor.

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01:17:00,580 --> 01:17:06,820

They did an intake and they sent me up with a shrink and that started my actual treatment.

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01:17:06,820 --> 01:17:12,940

So up until this point, well, firstly, I want to go back before I even hit that one again

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01:17:12,940 --> 01:17:19,860

of the seemingly least discussed elements when it comes to suicide is the feeling of

1058

01:17:19,860 --> 01:17:21,060

burdensome.

1059

01:17:21,060 --> 01:17:23,140

And I want to preface this with myself.

1060

01:17:23,140 --> 01:17:27,940

And I think a lot of people out there, if you'd asked us 10, 15 years ago about suicide,

1061

01:17:27,940 --> 01:17:30,860

you'd be like, oh, it's so selfish, it's so cowardly, how could they?

1062

01:17:30,860 --> 01:17:33,180

You're leaving your family behind.

1063

01:17:33,180 --> 01:17:37,580

And then you talk to lots and lots of people like yourself who have either been there or

1064

01:17:37,580 --> 01:17:39,740

have even had people that survived their attempt.

1065

01:17:39,740 --> 01:17:42,780

They actually did jump or did pull the trigger.

1066

01:17:42,780 --> 01:17:46,980

And over and over and over again, there's, of course, the element of wanting the pain

1067

01:17:46,980 --> 01:17:48,300

to end, the suffering to end.

1068

01:17:48,300 --> 01:17:52,540

But also, you know, people say, well, how could you leave your family behind?

1069

01:17:52,540 --> 01:17:55,180

There seems to be this universal thought.

1070

01:17:55,180 --> 01:17:58,980

And I think it's through the miswiring of the brain, and here you are underlining what

1071

01:17:58,980 --> 01:18:03,100

I talk about all the time, which is sleep deprivation as well, which causes more and

1072

01:18:03,100 --> 01:18:06,940

more psychosis, alcohol, which causes more and more psychosis.

1073

01:18:06,940 --> 01:18:11,780

But now the brain is trying to convince the individual that they are a burden to the people

1074

01:18:11,780 --> 01:18:15,440

that they love and they would be better off without them.

1075

01:18:15,440 --> 01:18:17,340

Did that factor at all in your self-talk?

1076

01:18:17,340 --> 01:18:18,340

Yes.

1077

01:18:18,340 --> 01:18:19,340

Yes and no.

1078

01:18:19,340 --> 01:18:22,340

I mean, that was part of the depression.

1079

01:18:22,340 --> 01:18:29,940

I mean, that was a regular thing, but when it the memories I do have of the night that

1080

01:18:29,940 --> 01:18:38,100

night where I put the weapon in my mouth, I don't recall even caring.

1081

01:18:38,100 --> 01:18:44,260

I still look at, I believe I was selfish in my actions that night.

1082

01:18:44,260 --> 01:18:46,820

I mean, I would have robbed my daughter of a father.

1083

01:18:46,820 --> 01:18:50,780

I would have robbed my grandson of a granddad.

1084

01:18:50,780 --> 01:18:55,700

I'm getting ready to have my second grandson.

1085

01:18:55,700 --> 01:19:01,060

There's so much I've experienced that I never would have gotten to, and all of those experiences

1086

01:19:01,060 --> 01:19:08,300

involve other people and other people I care about, my daughter, my mother, my sisters,

1087

01:19:08,300 --> 01:19:10,300

my brothers.

1088

01:19:10,300 --> 01:19:14,420

And I would have been taking all of that away from them as well.

1089

01:19:14,420 --> 01:19:21,180

So I do, people, when they talk about suicide being selfish, people talk about suicide being

1090

01:19:21,180 --> 01:19:24,500

selfish, two things can be true at once.

1091

01:19:24,500 --> 01:19:26,180
It can be selfish.

1092
01:19:26,180 --> 01:19:32,740
And I do think the action itself is selfish, but that doesn't mean we can't understand

1093
01:19:32,740 --> 01:19:36,060
why somebody is making that decision.

1094
01:19:36,060 --> 01:19:42,300
And that decision is bigger than selfish.

1095
01:19:42,300 --> 01:19:43,980
That part of it isn't the selfish part.

1096
01:19:43,980 --> 01:19:45,820
The action is selfish.

1097
01:19:45,820 --> 01:19:48,540
And just by definition, it is.

1098
01:19:48,540 --> 01:19:51,100
By definition, it is.

1099
01:19:51,100 --> 01:19:55,220
That doesn't mean we can't understand what got us there.

1100
01:19:55,220 --> 01:19:56,220
People are selfish all the time.

1101
01:19:56,220 --> 01:19:59,300
We're selfish when we pick out a car that we want.

1102

01:19:59,300 --> 01:20:00,620
Why is this any different?

1103
01:20:00,620 --> 01:20:05,540
Well, also, I think, you know, the people say, oh, no one in their right mind would,

1104
01:20:05,540 --> 01:20:06,620
for example, do that.

1105
01:20:06,620 --> 01:20:08,140
And like, you're absolutely right.

1106
01:20:08,140 --> 01:20:09,700
And I think that's just it.

1107
01:20:09,700 --> 01:20:16,300
These people I'm talking to are police officers and firefighters and people that have vowed

1108
01:20:16,300 --> 01:20:18,260
to give their life to others.

1109
01:20:18,260 --> 01:20:20,840
That's how good of a human being they are.

1110
01:20:20,840 --> 01:20:25,900
So when the brain becomes miswired and I say broken, I mean it with compassion.

1111
01:20:25,900 --> 01:20:27,500
But it is, you know, it is broken.

1112
01:20:27,500 --> 01:20:31,660
The chemicals are off and, you know, synapses aren't firing the way they're supposed to.

1113

01:20:31,660 --> 01:20:35,420

In that moment, the person believes that it's selfless.

1114

01:20:35,420 --> 01:20:40,940

I believe to the core that I am a burden to my family and they will be better off.

1115

01:20:40,940 --> 01:20:42,420

And it terrifies me.

1116

01:20:42,420 --> 01:20:45,900

But I'm going to sacrifice myself so they'll be happy.

1117

01:20:45,900 --> 01:20:47,600

Makes no sense to a healthy brain.

1118

01:20:47,600 --> 01:20:51,420

But at that moment, we have to understand that that makes perfect sense to someone in

1119

01:20:51,420 --> 01:20:53,180

crisis.

1120

01:20:53,180 --> 01:20:56,380

I think that is a very accurate way to put it.

1121

01:20:56,380 --> 01:20:59,340

And that is a lot of what I remember.

1122

01:20:59,340 --> 01:21:01,340

Like I can make this all go away.

1123

01:21:01,340 --> 01:21:02,500

I am the problem.

1124

01:21:02,500 --> 01:21:06,180

I can make it so nobody else has to deal with these problems.

1125

01:21:06,180 --> 01:21:09,340

I can fix this by going away.

1126

01:21:09,340 --> 01:21:11,700

And I know how to do that.

1127

01:21:11,700 --> 01:21:12,700

That's the kind of thing.

1128

01:21:12,700 --> 01:21:17,860

So I mean, I guess in that sense, yes, it was similar.

1129

01:21:17,860 --> 01:21:26,340

But going back to me having a belief though, like you said, the way you described it, that

1130

01:21:26,340 --> 01:21:28,660

seems sane to that individual.

1131

01:21:28,660 --> 01:21:30,740

It doesn't seem selfish.

1132

01:21:30,740 --> 01:21:33,500

But they're wrong.

1133

01:21:33,500 --> 01:21:35,620

You can just be wrong.

1134

01:21:35,620 --> 01:21:37,900

And it's no fault of our own, like you'd mentioned.

1135

01:21:37,900 --> 01:21:44,540

It's the wiring, the chemicals, the injury to the actual brain that is causing it.

1136

01:21:44,540 --> 01:21:48,420

But it doesn't make it any less wrong.

1137

01:21:48,420 --> 01:21:49,420

It's still wrong.

1138

01:21:49,420 --> 01:21:50,420

Yeah, absolutely.

1139

01:21:50,420 --> 01:21:53,780

Well, what about the upswing thing?

1140

01:21:53,780 --> 01:21:59,020

I know it wasn't a perfect upswing, but what began to start helping?

1141

01:21:59,020 --> 01:22:01,300

Obviously, alcohol is not going to work.

1142

01:22:01,300 --> 01:22:03,620

Not sleeping certainly isn't going to help.

1143

01:22:03,620 --> 01:22:07,220

As you start meeting these professionals, what are some of the things that you start

1144

01:22:07,220 --> 01:22:12,980

adding into your life that allow you to start beginning to grow from the trauma that you've

1145

01:22:12,980 --> 01:22:15,020

been through?

1146

01:22:15,020 --> 01:22:19,100
So I was held up in my house.

1147
01:22:19,100 --> 01:22:21,100
I wouldn't go anywhere unless I was drinking.

1148
01:22:21,100 --> 01:22:24,460
I didn't want to go in public at all.

1149
01:22:24,460 --> 01:22:29,260
And a buddy of mine was retiring from the county corrections.

1150
01:22:29,260 --> 01:22:33,700
And a bunch of cops were getting together for his retirement party.

1151
01:22:33,700 --> 01:22:37,860
And my girlfriend at the time was like, all you do is sit in the house.

1152
01:22:37,860 --> 01:22:38,860
You don't do shit.

1153
01:22:38,860 --> 01:22:40,140
You are coming to this party.

1154
01:22:40,140 --> 01:22:41,140
You'll know people there.

1155
01:22:41,140 --> 01:22:43,420
You're in a safe place.

1156
01:22:43,420 --> 01:22:44,420
Stop being a dick.

1157

01:22:44,420 --> 01:22:45,420

You're going.

1158

01:22:45,420 --> 01:22:50,220

So I went.

1159

01:22:50,220 --> 01:22:57,860

Later I met a guy who, again, I won't name him, but he worked for another jurisdiction

1160

01:22:57,860 --> 01:22:59,740

Champaign Police Department close to me.

1161

01:22:59,740 --> 01:23:03,180

And he was really big into the workout world.

1162

01:23:03,180 --> 01:23:04,820

And he'd been involved in a couple of shootings.

1163

01:23:04,820 --> 01:23:06,460

He did a couple of tours overseas.

1164

01:23:06,460 --> 01:23:11,300

And he had expressed to me that he understood what I was going through.

1165

01:23:11,300 --> 01:23:16,500

And that he'd actually talked to my girlfriend prior, I guess, and knew what I was dealing

1166

01:23:16,500 --> 01:23:17,500

with.

1167

01:23:17,500 --> 01:23:20,100

And he's like, look, come to my gym.

1168

01:23:20,100 --> 01:23:21,100
I have this gym.

1169
01:23:21,100 --> 01:23:22,100
Come to my gym.

1170
01:23:22,100 --> 01:23:23,540
Start working out with me.

1171
01:23:23,540 --> 01:23:24,540
I was fat at the time.

1172
01:23:24,540 --> 01:23:25,540
I weighed like 220.

1173
01:23:25,540 --> 01:23:28,260
I was a big kid at the time.

1174
01:23:28,260 --> 01:23:30,460
And I was like, no, I don't want to go.

1175
01:23:30,460 --> 01:23:31,660
And he's like, it's not about the gym.

1176
01:23:31,660 --> 01:23:32,660
It's about brotherhood.

1177
01:23:32,660 --> 01:23:36,560
It's about talking, being around people with similar experiences who might know a little

1178
01:23:36,560 --> 01:23:37,560
bit that you don't know.

1179

01:23:37,560 --> 01:23:38,560
So just show up.

1180
01:23:38,560 --> 01:23:40,660
And I'm like, all right, cool.

1181
01:23:40,660 --> 01:23:41,660
I'll come.

1182
01:23:41,660 --> 01:23:43,620
So I come to this guy's house and I start.

1183
01:23:43,620 --> 01:23:47,100
I agree to start coming Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

1184
01:23:47,100 --> 01:23:51,060
And I just I get there, we're shooting the shit.

1185
01:23:51,060 --> 01:23:56,140
It felt like I was back in the locker room at a police department with the guys.

1186
01:23:56,140 --> 01:24:01,540
But at the same time, everybody there had dealt with something similar, either in wartime

1187
01:24:01,540 --> 01:24:04,420
or at a police department that I dealt with.

1188
01:24:04,420 --> 01:24:08,380
And so when I'd have a bad night, I could come in there and I could be like, man, I

1189
01:24:08,380 --> 01:24:10,160
didn't sleep through shit last night.

1190

01:24:10,160 --> 01:24:12,300

And I could explain what I was feeling.

1191

01:24:12,300 --> 01:24:16,940

And and these and they were they would talk about it while we're doing manly stuff, lifting

1192

01:24:16,940 --> 01:24:18,060

weights, you know.

1193

01:24:18,060 --> 01:24:22,140

So we're sitting here talking while we're lifting.

1194

01:24:22,140 --> 01:24:24,860

And it really I found it.

1195

01:24:24,860 --> 01:24:29,260

I found the more I worked out and the more I was doing this.

1196

01:24:29,260 --> 01:24:33,620

The less anxious I was about everything.

1197

01:24:33,620 --> 01:24:39,980

And it seemed that the more I wear my body out, the longer I would get restful periods

1198

01:24:39,980 --> 01:24:43,040

of sleep without needing alcohol.

1199

01:24:43,040 --> 01:24:49,220

So when I started so take this out a couple of months now, now I'm working out every day.

1200

01:24:49,220 --> 01:24:56,260

And I'm finding that the anxiety, I'm able to control the anxiety with medications.

1201

01:24:56,260 --> 01:24:59,740

I mean, at this point, I'm using medications that the doctors have all prescribed.

1202

01:24:59,740 --> 01:25:05,420

You know, I'm on seven different medications, including Xanax, trazodone for sleep, prazes

1203

01:25:05,420 --> 01:25:06,980

and for nightmares.

1204

01:25:06,980 --> 01:25:07,980

What?

1205

01:25:07,980 --> 01:25:10,340

There's another depression one.

1206

01:25:10,340 --> 01:25:11,900

I don't even remember all the names.

1207

01:25:11,900 --> 01:25:17,100

But between the energy I was burning off of the gym, like you mentioned earlier, like

1208

01:25:17,100 --> 01:25:21,140

a good thing from dispatchers and things, be able to just go outside between burning

1209

01:25:21,140 --> 01:25:25,940

off that energy and that physical activity and the medications, I was starting to actually

1210

01:25:25,940 --> 01:25:29,060

get real sleep, really restful sleep.

1211

01:25:29,060 --> 01:25:34,540

And I was able to interrupt the nightmares with the medication, not needing alcohol.

1212

01:25:34,540 --> 01:25:39,020
So I started cutting back alcohol big time.

1213
01:25:39,020 --> 01:25:40,580
And that helped huge.

1214
01:25:40,580 --> 01:25:41,580
It's amazing.

1215
01:25:41,580 --> 01:25:44,660
Because first of all, the sleep I was getting when I was drinking wasn't real sleep.

1216
01:25:44,660 --> 01:25:46,620
I mean, it's not restful.

1217
01:25:46,620 --> 01:25:50,420
It doesn't recharge the body the same way that the mind doesn't work the same way while

1218
01:25:50,420 --> 01:25:51,420
you're drinking.

1219
01:25:51,420 --> 01:25:52,700
It just doesn't.

1220
01:25:52,700 --> 01:25:56,420
So cutting out that alcohol, and I had to cut out the alcohol because Mark did a really

1221
01:25:56,420 --> 01:25:58,380
smart I'm sorry, I wasn't gonna say his name.

1222
01:25:58,380 --> 01:26:01,740
But he did a really smart thing.

1223

01:26:01,740 --> 01:26:06,900

But he set the gym time so early that if you were drinking the night before, you were in

1224

01:26:06,900 --> 01:26:08,860

a world of hurt that morning.

1225

01:26:08,860 --> 01:26:13,900

So it got to the point where instead of going out drinking the night before, I'd be like,

1226

01:26:13,900 --> 01:26:16,580

No, I can't drink because I have to be at the gym.

1227

01:26:16,580 --> 01:26:20,100

And if I didn't show up at the gym, my phone was getting blown up by these guys, where

1228

01:26:20,100 --> 01:26:21,100

are you at?

1229

01:26:21,100 --> 01:26:22,100

You better be here, blah, blah, blah.

1230

01:26:22,100 --> 01:26:25,940

So they were holding me accountable.

1231

01:26:25,940 --> 01:26:28,860

And over time, I learned that I didn't need the alcohol.

1232

01:26:28,860 --> 01:26:34,700

And so I went a couple years without drinking at all.

1233

01:26:34,700 --> 01:26:36,460

It took a while to get there.

1234

01:26:36,460 --> 01:26:37,860

That didn't happen overnight.

1235

01:26:37,860 --> 01:26:39,700

It took a long while to get there.

1236

01:26:39,700 --> 01:26:42,380

But I was able to cut the alcohol completely.

1237

01:26:42,380 --> 01:26:45,380

And now I'll have a drink now in the then it's not like it's a problem.

1238

01:26:45,380 --> 01:26:50,220

But I what I was using the alcohol for at the time was absolutely unhealthy.

1239

01:26:50,220 --> 01:26:51,860

It was self medicating.

1240

01:26:51,860 --> 01:26:55,740

And if I would have continued that path, that would have caused my death.

1241

01:26:55,740 --> 01:26:59,680

So you're you're finding this community this tribe.

1242

01:26:59,680 --> 01:27:05,500

If my memory serves me right, you were kind of tripped again when your department circle

1243

01:27:05,500 --> 01:27:08,100

around when you almost hit the EMR.

1244

01:27:08,100 --> 01:27:09,100

Yeah.

1245

01:27:09,100 --> 01:27:13,660

So in the state of Illinois, there's a law and I write about the need to change this

1246

01:27:13,660 --> 01:27:16,940

law.

1247

01:27:16,940 --> 01:27:22,620

The law states that an officer one injured on duty must return within one year of the

1248

01:27:22,620 --> 01:27:27,620

injury or they can be terminated.

1249

01:27:27,620 --> 01:27:31,580

So I start these processes with the strengths.

1250

01:27:31,580 --> 01:27:37,100

I'm doing everything that the psychologists and psychiatrists are telling me to do.

1251

01:27:37,100 --> 01:27:44,940

And my psychiatrist is telling me that PTSD is a long term issue and that a year's timeframe

1252

01:27:44,940 --> 01:27:50,180

is not long enough to determine if you're going to be able to make any difference that

1253

01:27:50,180 --> 01:27:52,980

you would be able to return to work type thing.

1254

01:27:52,980 --> 01:27:56,100

Well unfortunately, that doesn't line up with work time frame.

1255

01:27:56,100 --> 01:28:01,020

The doctors refusing to sign paperwork saying I can return to work because he says my mental

1256

01:28:01,020 --> 01:28:07,020

health situation is such that it would be unsafe for me and the public potentially.

1257

01:28:07,020 --> 01:28:13,740

And he's also saying that he won't sign the paperwork that says he doesn't see that I

1258

01:28:13,740 --> 01:28:18,020

can make any significant improvement, which is the standard that they need for medical

1259

01:28:18,020 --> 01:28:19,560

retirement.

1260

01:28:19,560 --> 01:28:23,620

So I'm caught in this limbo where my doctors won't sign the paperwork either way.

1261

01:28:23,620 --> 01:28:29,380

But work is yelling at me to either come back to work or start the retirement process, do

1262

01:28:29,380 --> 01:28:34,940

one of them, but I can't do any of that until the doctors do that.

1263

01:28:34,940 --> 01:28:38,780

So I'm going back and forth with them on that issue.

1264

01:28:38,780 --> 01:28:43,580

While I'm doing that, the workman's comp decides that they are going to send me because I physically

1265

01:28:43,580 --> 01:28:45,120

healed from the physical injury.

1266

01:28:45,120 --> 01:28:52,780

So physically I was cleared, mentally I was not.

1267

01:28:52,780 --> 01:28:58,700

So the workman's comp decides to send me to one of their doctors for an evaluation.

1268

01:28:58,700 --> 01:29:06,020

And that doctor, after his psychological evaluation, determines that I did in fact have PTSD, but

1269

01:29:06,020 --> 01:29:12,820

it had to have been from my childhood trauma and not from the shooting.

1270

01:29:12,820 --> 01:29:18,300

This is enough for the village insurance company to deny my workman's comp claim for the shooting

1271

01:29:18,300 --> 01:29:19,800

and the PTSD claim.

1272

01:29:19,800 --> 01:29:23,660

So they denied my PTSD claim right there.

1273

01:29:23,660 --> 01:29:27,020

Because of the way that law is written, the police department still had to keep me on

1274

01:29:27,020 --> 01:29:29,500

the payroll for that year.

1275

01:29:29,500 --> 01:29:32,780

They just didn't, the workman's comp insurance just didn't pay my wage.

1276

01:29:32,780 --> 01:29:35,440

They had to pay it directly.

1277

01:29:35,440 --> 01:29:36,440

I continued to do that.

1278

01:29:36,440 --> 01:29:40,820

I continued to talk to my doctor about trying to either get back to work or retire.

1279

01:29:40,820 --> 01:29:44,300

He won't sign the paperwork either way.

1280

01:29:44,300 --> 01:29:49,700

Finally a week before, finally I get the doctor to sign the paperwork.

1281

01:29:49,700 --> 01:29:55,000

This is one week before my year is coming up.

1282

01:29:55,000 --> 01:29:57,660

So I start the retirement process right away.

1283

01:29:57,660 --> 01:30:01,100

My chief calls me, tells me, hey, I'm expecting this phone call.

1284

01:30:01,100 --> 01:30:02,760

I knew it was coming.

1285

01:30:02,760 --> 01:30:06,860

But he calls me on my one year anniversary, says, hey, Jeremy, I need you to meet me at

1286

01:30:06,860 --> 01:30:07,860

the edge of town.

1287

01:30:07,860 --> 01:30:08,860

I'm like, okay.

1288

01:30:08,860 --> 01:30:14,980

So I meet him at the edge of town and he asks me for my badge and my credentials and says,

1289

01:30:14,980 --> 01:30:16,620

you know, we have to terminate you.

1290

01:30:16,620 --> 01:30:19,060

You've been one year, you're not able to return.

1291

01:30:19,060 --> 01:30:21,220

And I'm like, what am I supposed to do?

1292

01:30:21,220 --> 01:30:25,180

And he's put his arms up and figured out.

1293

01:30:25,180 --> 01:30:26,180

That was that.

1294

01:30:26,180 --> 01:30:33,800

See, what's so infuriating, I mean, I've heard firefighters in states that even have cancer

1295

01:30:33,800 --> 01:30:38,220

presumption where people have said, I have literally heard people in insurance companies

1296

01:30:38,220 --> 01:30:42,780

say we will just keep fighting them till they die, you know, denying their claim.

1297

01:30:42,780 --> 01:30:44,640

And the same with the workman's comp.

1298

01:30:44,640 --> 01:30:51,200

If I became a police officer and didn't really see any acute calls and six months in, I'm

1299

01:30:51,200 --> 01:30:57,940

saying PTSD, then maybe there's an argument that what I did before was the biggest part

1300

01:30:57,940 --> 01:30:59,820
of my mental health challenge.

1301

01:30:59,820 --> 01:31:05,580
But if you spend years and you have these saves from that wreck and some of the horrors

1302

01:31:05,580 --> 01:31:09,620
there and you still went back to work and you've worked for all these years and then

1303

01:31:09,620 --> 01:31:14,420
you have an acute event where someone tries to murder you and you actually get physically

1304

01:31:14,420 --> 01:31:21,180
injured and you have this gunfight with this person and then he's free somewhere for two

1305

01:31:21,180 --> 01:31:28,100
weeks and you determine that that wasn't traumatic enough to be the main reason for the PTSD

1306

01:31:28,100 --> 01:31:29,420
diagnosis.

1307

01:31:29,420 --> 01:31:31,140
That's fucking disgusting.

1308

01:31:31,140 --> 01:31:32,140
You know what I mean?

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01:31:32,140 --> 01:31:36,060
I've had people on here that were, you know, hit by a car wearing uniform, shot wearing

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01:31:36,060 --> 01:31:39,340
uniform and their department turned their back on them.

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01:31:39,340 --> 01:31:43,140

And you know, if you are going to show up every morning with that badge on your chest

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01:31:43,140 --> 01:31:47,180

and do the thing that you're paid to do and you get hurt mentally or physically doing

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01:31:47,180 --> 01:31:52,780

that thing that you're paid to do and your department betrays you, that is absolutely

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01:31:52,780 --> 01:31:56,640

behind some of the suicides that we have in this profession and a lot of the struggles

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01:31:56,640 --> 01:31:58,940

that our men and women have.

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01:31:58,940 --> 01:32:00,100

I would agree with you.

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01:32:00,100 --> 01:32:01,380

I absolutely agree.

1318

01:32:01,380 --> 01:32:06,580

And you know, it's just a shame that the other thing that I don't understand about that is

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01:32:06,580 --> 01:32:12,440

we all, at least I thought most of us got in this profession like you and I talked about

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01:32:12,440 --> 01:32:15,020

early on, kindness, compassion.

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01:32:15,020 --> 01:32:18,700

Where is our kindness and compassion for an injured brother or sister?

1322

01:32:18,700 --> 01:32:20,220

Like where did that go?

1323

01:32:20,220 --> 01:32:22,060

Why did I become the enemy?

1324

01:32:22,060 --> 01:32:23,700

I don't understand.

1325

01:32:23,700 --> 01:32:31,620

The only thing I can figure with that is I represented a fear that they had.

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01:32:31,620 --> 01:32:37,500

Like I am the worst possible scenario.

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01:32:37,500 --> 01:32:38,780

My job's taken away.

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01:32:38,780 --> 01:32:41,740

I'm struggling with this mental health stuff, et cetera, et cetera.

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01:32:41,740 --> 01:32:47,180

And so they don't want to look me in the eye because they're worried they may end up looking

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01:32:47,180 --> 01:32:50,060

in a mirror eventually.

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01:32:50,060 --> 01:32:54,620

Now for people that, as we talked about, that are in the profession, that identify with

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01:32:54,620 --> 01:33:01,140

that role, that are part of that tribe, that have purpose every day, when they leave, retire,

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01:33:01,140 --> 01:33:04,460

you know, get hurt, whatever it is, that is very, very jarring.

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01:33:04,460 --> 01:33:09,920

But when that tribe basically turns that back on them, that can be extremely detrimental.

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01:33:09,920 --> 01:33:13,220

So now you get this termination notice.

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01:33:13,220 --> 01:33:17,740

Talk to me about that, that impact of that mentally and emotionally on you.

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01:33:17,740 --> 01:33:22,580

And then again, how you were able to pull yourself back up at the depth.

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01:33:22,580 --> 01:33:26,980

So that actually, I mean, that actually led to another round of drinking and another round

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01:33:26,980 --> 01:33:31,340

of bad problems.

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01:33:31,340 --> 01:33:38,260

It ended up, I ended up mixing some whiskey and some Xanax and mixing those two things

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01:33:38,260 --> 01:33:40,860

together isn't a very good combination.

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01:33:40,860 --> 01:33:44,780

I don't recommend it.

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01:33:44,780 --> 01:33:51,740

And I ended up finding myself admitted into the hospital on an in-ball, you know, it wasn't

1344

01:33:51,740 --> 01:33:52,900

anything that was sustained.

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01:33:52,900 --> 01:33:57,180

It was just a temporary, you know, get the alcohol out of the system type thing.

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01:33:57,180 --> 01:34:03,820

But I, it threw me so hard.

1347

01:34:03,820 --> 01:34:07,260

I didn't, I wasn't me.

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01:34:07,260 --> 01:34:13,860

It was almost like I was, I didn't recognize that person.

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01:34:13,860 --> 01:34:19,060

And while I was doing that, and I was acting these ways, I said some of the, I said some

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01:34:19,060 --> 01:34:21,180

of the most vile things to other cops.

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01:34:21,180 --> 01:34:26,060

Like when I was being taken to the hospital, I accused these cops of some really bad, vile

1352

01:34:26,060 --> 01:34:34,980

shit that I never, that I don't believe, A, and that it was, at that time, I felt like

1353

01:34:34,980 --> 01:34:40,460

they had all abandoned me, so I needed to lash out and make them feel what I was feeling.

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01:34:40,460 --> 01:34:43,940

So then, and like I said, that landed me in the hospital.

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01:34:43,940 --> 01:34:52,260

But one of the hardest things I had to do after that was forgive myself because I had

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01:34:52,260 --> 01:34:57,580

to forgive myself for the feelings, because it's not something I can control.

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01:34:57,580 --> 01:35:00,740

I had to forgive myself for how I acted.

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01:35:00,740 --> 01:35:03,680

I was embarrassed, you know?

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01:35:03,680 --> 01:35:08,140

During this time, I ended up getting a DUI, you know?

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01:35:08,140 --> 01:35:11,580

And that was, talk about embarrassing.

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01:35:11,580 --> 01:35:17,420

Here I am a police officer, 13 years, SWAT, you know, alcohol enforcement officer, led

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01:35:17,420 --> 01:35:21,220

my department in DUIs for multiple years in a row, you know?

1363

01:35:21,220 --> 01:35:26,340

Like, and here I am doing the same fucking thing.

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01:35:26,340 --> 01:35:30,540

You know, I felt useless.

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01:35:30,540 --> 01:35:35,420

And as I was going through this, that, I had to find an outlet.

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01:35:35,420 --> 01:35:37,820

So that's, I turned to social media.

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01:35:37,820 --> 01:35:41,180

And essentially, I created a Facebook page.

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01:35:41,180 --> 01:35:43,140

And I just started bitching.

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01:35:43,140 --> 01:35:48,940

I create videos of the mornings when I'd wake up, and I would be hungover or I'd want to

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01:35:48,940 --> 01:35:51,580

go to the gym, or I'd need motivation to get up to the gym.

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01:35:51,580 --> 01:35:58,660

And I was just making all these videos about how hard everything was and how I felt about

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01:35:58,660 --> 01:35:59,660

everything.

1373

01:35:59,660 --> 01:36:02,140

And lo and behold, people were listening.

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01:36:02,140 --> 01:36:03,140

I was shocked.

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01:36:03,140 --> 01:36:06,540

Like, right away, people wanted to hear this stuff.

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01:36:06,540 --> 01:36:08,500

They wanted to know what was going on.

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01:36:08,500 --> 01:36:13,740

And then, lo and behold, I started getting private messages.

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01:36:13,740 --> 01:36:19,580

And nine times out of 10, it was from the spouse of a cop, either female or male, but

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01:36:19,580 --> 01:36:21,660

it was never the cop that was dealing with it.

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01:36:21,660 --> 01:36:25,260

It was always the spouse of a cop.

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01:36:25,260 --> 01:36:26,540

Can you help me with this?

1382

01:36:26,540 --> 01:36:27,540

Can you help me with this?

1383

01:36:27,540 --> 01:36:28,540

He is doing this.

1384

01:36:28,540 --> 01:36:29,540

She is doing this.

1385

01:36:29,540 --> 01:36:34,940

They want to explain the entire situation and how it was similar to my situation and

1386

01:36:34,940 --> 01:36:41,140

then ask me how I was able to still get out of bed or still go to the gym or still climb

1387

01:36:41,140 --> 01:36:44,580

XYZ mountain or do whatever I was doing.

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01:36:44,580 --> 01:36:50,420

And so I was like, okay, maybe there's something to this.

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01:36:50,420 --> 01:36:53,580

Maybe there's been sharing my story.

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01:36:53,580 --> 01:36:56,700

Maybe I'm going to be able to reach that one person.

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01:36:56,700 --> 01:36:59,380

And maybe it's not even something I know that I say.

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01:36:59,380 --> 01:37:02,740

Maybe it's some random thing that I've said in this conversation that somebody is going

1393

01:37:02,740 --> 01:37:04,140

to key in on.

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01:37:04,140 --> 01:37:09,340

And that's going to be the difference between them pulling the trigger or not.

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01:37:09,340 --> 01:37:16,980

And if that's the case, if I can reach one, if I can stop one person from having to experience

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01:37:16,980 --> 01:37:22,460

some of these things that I have, or if I can help one person to know that they're not

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01:37:22,460 --> 01:37:26,140

alone, that's what it's about.

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01:37:26,140 --> 01:37:27,140

And that's everything.

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01:37:27,140 --> 01:37:31,300

You know, it's even with this podcast, you know, you look at the metrics, oh, how many

1400

01:37:31,300 --> 01:37:36,700

people have hit download, you kind of remind yourself again, a single person, if anything

1401

01:37:36,700 --> 01:37:41,760

that you do helps one single, but even if you put your whole life's work into something,

1402

01:37:41,760 --> 01:37:45,780

if it changes one life, it was worth everything.

1403

01:37:45,780 --> 01:37:46,780

Absolutely everything.

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01:37:46,780 --> 01:37:47,780

One is enough.

1405

01:37:47,780 --> 01:37:54,620

You know, and then it has a synergistic effect as well, because I help one, maybe that person

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01:37:54,620 --> 01:37:59,980

that I help buys into that mentality, and then they help one, and then they help one,

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01:37:59,980 --> 01:38:02,300

and then they help one, and then they help one.

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01:38:02,300 --> 01:38:09,100

And then now you've built this community of like minded individuals who are struggling

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01:38:09,100 --> 01:38:12,860

and are sharing their struggle together.

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01:38:12,860 --> 01:38:15,180

So this is the story.

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01:38:15,180 --> 01:38:17,300

This is the persona I was putting out there.

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01:38:17,300 --> 01:38:19,820

This is the things I was saying.

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01:38:19,820 --> 01:38:24,900

And randomly, one day, I get a Facebook message from a guy named Chris Thorpe.

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01:38:24,900 --> 01:38:27,420

And do you know Chris Thorpe?

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01:38:27,420 --> 01:38:30,260

We actually, we've never actually crossed paths, even though I know he's part of the

1416

01:38:30,260 --> 01:38:31,260

family.

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01:38:31,260 --> 01:38:33,420

Yeah, he isn't anymore.

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01:38:33,420 --> 01:38:36,260

He used to be but Chris Jacobson and Chris Thorpe.

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01:38:36,260 --> 01:38:41,780

So Chris Thorpe at the time, he they were just starting up the Chris Thorpe calls me

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01:38:41,780 --> 01:38:45,900

and says, Hey, I'd like to I'd like to talk to you about this organization called Operation

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01:38:45,900 --> 01:38:48,500

Endurance Warrior.

1422

01:38:48,500 --> 01:38:51,740

And I'm like, Okay, what do you what do you want?

1423

01:38:51,740 --> 01:38:53,340

You know, I'm thinking it's a scam at this point.

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01:38:53,340 --> 01:38:56,460

I've gotten so many scam calls and emails from my social media.

1425

01:38:56,460 --> 01:38:59,100

I'm like, All right, here's another one.

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01:38:59,100 --> 01:39:04,220

And then he starts talking to me and he's any and he's like, this is what we do.

1427

01:39:04,220 --> 01:39:07,900

You know, we're an organization who honors and powers motivates injured law enforcement

1428

01:39:07,900 --> 01:39:14,420

officers and veterans to show them that there's no reason to struggle alone.

1429

01:39:14,420 --> 01:39:19,560

And you've been showing me your mission is the same as ours.

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01:39:19,560 --> 01:39:21,540

Why don't you come and help us?

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01:39:21,540 --> 01:39:24,060

And I'm like, Oh, wow, these guys want me to help.

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01:39:24,060 --> 01:39:25,060

You know?

1433

01:39:25,060 --> 01:39:27,100

Yeah, I would love to.

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01:39:27,100 --> 01:39:30,460

And then I'm like, and then he goes, Yeah, we'd love you to help by becoming an honoree.

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01:39:30,460 --> 01:39:33,380

I'm like, Whoa, wait a minute, you bait and switch here, buddy.

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01:39:33,380 --> 01:39:35,260

You said I was going to be helping you.

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01:39:35,260 --> 01:39:38,780

Now you want to you want to make me an honoree?

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01:39:38,780 --> 01:39:41,100

Come on, what's this about?

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01:39:41,100 --> 01:39:46,260

And then he explained that, and then he went into the asking for help sometimes and allowing

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01:39:46,260 --> 01:39:54,700

others to help you can in itself show other people that their strength and allowing that

1441

01:39:54,700 --> 01:39:56,460

to occur.

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01:39:56,460 --> 01:40:03,120

And then he also suggested that that the organization may help give me a platform where I can share

1443

01:40:03,120 --> 01:40:07,920

my story and maybe touch more and help more.

1444

01:40:07,920 --> 01:40:11,780

And so I was like, Okay, I'll give it a shot.

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01:40:11,780 --> 01:40:13,500

And they brought me on as an honoree.

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01:40:13,500 --> 01:40:21,340

I went to my first event with Operation During Warrior in October of 2018 in Kedula, Kentucky.

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01:40:21,340 --> 01:40:24,020

It was a Warriors Challenge.

1448

01:40:24,020 --> 01:40:28,180

And Adam Francis was one of the masked athletes that was there.

1449

01:40:28,180 --> 01:40:33,500

And that man, if you've never met Adam, he's a big old teddy bear is the best way to put

1450

01:40:33,500 --> 01:40:34,500

it.

1451

01:40:34,500 --> 01:40:35,500

He's a police officer in upstate New York.

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01:40:35,500 --> 01:40:43,340

He's a former field medic with the army, and just an all around amazing human being.

1453

01:40:43,340 --> 01:40:48,580

And he had actually gotten my information from whoever with the Operation During Warrior

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01:40:48,580 --> 01:40:50,320

a couple weeks ahead of time.

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01:40:50,320 --> 01:40:54,420

And this man out of the blue is texting me calling me, you know, just, you'd have thought

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01:40:54,420 --> 01:40:57,380

we were best friends and I'd never met this guy.

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01:40:57,380 --> 01:41:03,380

And he's sharing with me, you know, things that he's dealt with in wartime and, you know,

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01:41:03,380 --> 01:41:06,700

dealing with himself as a police officer.

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01:41:06,700 --> 01:41:11,220

And I'd lost that brotherhood with the police department.

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01:41:11,220 --> 01:41:15,860

And here I'm finding this group of guys and they're wanting to they're saying, hey, not

1461

01:41:15,860 --> 01:41:20,700

only are we here, but there's a bunch of us and we're all across the country.

1462

01:41:20,700 --> 01:41:23,340

Come be part of that.

1463

01:41:23,340 --> 01:41:29,380

And so at my first meeting, a masked event, I'm there, I'm doing this Warriors Challenge.

1464

01:41:29,380 --> 01:41:34,100
So three and a half miles through like crazy terrain.

1465
01:41:34,100 --> 01:41:35,100
It was hot.

1466
01:41:35,100 --> 01:41:39,500
It was like 97 degrees with 130% humidity, I think.

1467
01:41:39,500 --> 01:41:45,700
And during the course, Adam actually vomited in his mask.

1468
01:41:45,700 --> 01:41:48,540
It's a gas mask that they wear and he vomited in his mask.

1469
01:41:48,540 --> 01:41:52,460
But they have a rule, the masked athletes, that they will not remove their mask on a

1470
01:41:52,460 --> 01:41:54,780
course because it's not about them.

1471
01:41:54,780 --> 01:42:00,980
So the man broke the seal, let the vomit drip out of his mask, resealed the mask and finished

1472
01:42:00,980 --> 01:42:01,980
the race.

1473
01:42:01,980 --> 01:42:04,940
That's the dedication these guys have.

1474
01:42:04,940 --> 01:42:09,580
Right there, I was like, the SWAT guy in me kicked in and I'm like, I want to be like

1475

01:42:09,580 --> 01:42:12,860
him.

1476
01:42:12,860 --> 01:42:17,500
And so I started kicking up my training schedule, I started getting more involved in Operation

1477
01:42:17,500 --> 01:42:19,100
Enduring Warrior.

1478
01:42:19,100 --> 01:42:22,760
I started making training or workout videos to get others involved.

1479
01:42:22,760 --> 01:42:25,900
And I just continued to do what I was doing on social media.

1480
01:42:25,900 --> 01:42:33,740
And as I continued this path with OEW, I continued to speak about the issues I was having as

1481
01:42:33,740 --> 01:42:35,940
I was having them in real time.

1482
01:42:35,940 --> 01:42:38,940
If I was having a bad day, I'd go live and man, I'm having a shitty day.

1483
01:42:38,940 --> 01:42:40,100
I didn't sleep last night.

1484
01:42:40,100 --> 01:42:42,060
This is the anxiety I've been dealing with.

1485
01:42:42,060 --> 01:42:44,140
This is how I've dealt with it.

1486

01:42:44,140 --> 01:42:47,900

And then I started sharing different ways to deal with them, some of the different methods

1487

01:42:47,900 --> 01:42:53,100

like the 54321 method, the stop method for grounding and things of that nature that I

1488

01:42:53,100 --> 01:42:57,020

use on a daily basis to get me through rough times.

1489

01:42:57,020 --> 01:43:04,860

And it just kind of snowballed from there to I was able to become an active member of

1490

01:43:04,860 --> 01:43:06,940

Operation Enduring Warrior's honoree team.

1491

01:43:06,940 --> 01:43:13,100

But then I became the program manager for their Warrior's voice team.

1492

01:43:13,100 --> 01:43:14,140

And I continued to work.

1493

01:43:14,140 --> 01:43:17,860

It took me about a year and a half, but I finally was able to make their mass athlete

1494

01:43:17,860 --> 01:43:18,860

team as well.

1495

01:43:18,860 --> 01:43:19,860

Amazing.

1496

01:43:19,860 --> 01:43:24,580

Were you the very first honoree in Task Force Sentinel then?

1497

01:43:24,580 --> 01:43:27,700
No, I was the second, second or third.

1498
01:43:27,700 --> 01:43:29,380
I think the third.

1499
01:43:29,380 --> 01:43:33,660
The first two, I believe was a gentleman by the name of he goes by PJ.

1500
01:43:33,660 --> 01:43:35,980
He was a tribal police officer.

1501
01:43:35,980 --> 01:43:36,980
I had PJ on the show.

1502
01:43:36,980 --> 01:43:37,980
I'm getting confused.

1503
01:43:37,980 --> 01:43:41,220
Yeah, PJ was number one and Drew Stokes was number two, wasn't he?

1504
01:43:41,220 --> 01:43:49,580
No, I think Bones, New York City police officer was at 911 when the buildings came down.

1505
01:43:49,580 --> 01:43:52,140
He was a plainclothes officer.

1506
01:43:52,140 --> 01:43:54,740
Stephen Bones is his name.

1507
01:43:54,740 --> 01:43:55,740
He looks like a pirate.

1508

01:43:55,740 --> 01:43:57,780
He is one of the coolest guys in the world.

1509
01:43:57,780 --> 01:44:00,500
That man will tell you stories.

1510
01:44:00,500 --> 01:44:02,060
The stories that man can tell you.

1511
01:44:02,060 --> 01:44:03,060
Great guy.

1512
01:44:03,060 --> 01:44:04,620
And then I believe I was the third.

1513
01:44:04,620 --> 01:44:05,620
Yeah, definitely.

1514
01:44:05,620 --> 01:44:08,220
Drew came in, I think shortly after I did.

1515
01:44:08,220 --> 01:44:10,180
I think I was the third Task Force Sentinel.

1516
01:44:10,180 --> 01:44:16,700
I believe I am the first police officer honoree to become a mass athlete.

1517
01:44:16,700 --> 01:44:17,700
Beautiful.

1518
01:44:17,700 --> 01:44:18,700
Yeah.

1519

01:44:18,700 --> 01:44:23,900

So when I interviewed Drew in his home, and again, very powerful story and all the poor

1520

01:44:23,900 --> 01:44:28,740

guy was trying to do was buy some supplies for some evacuees they brought from Puerto

1521

01:44:28,740 --> 01:44:33,380

Rico and some psycho tries to murder him in a public's parking lot just because he's wearing

1522

01:44:33,380 --> 01:44:35,740

a uniform.

1523

01:44:35,740 --> 01:44:37,580

But I got to see it.

1524

01:44:37,580 --> 01:44:41,020

I did this interview with Drew and then he becomes an honoree.

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01:44:41,020 --> 01:44:44,660

And I think it was, I forget, it was a few months later.

1526

01:44:44,660 --> 01:44:49,420

And watching that man at the beginning, I ran, I'm not wearing a mask.

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01:44:49,420 --> 01:44:52,180

I'm doing along just kind of doing the support.

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01:44:52,180 --> 01:44:55,780

Obviously, the mask athletes are doing most of the real heavy lifting and we're there

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01:44:55,780 --> 01:44:58,060

just to kind of bring the masses over.

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01:44:58,060 --> 01:45:03,660

But at the end, Spartan actually gave us a little area and I did an interview and it

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01:45:03,660 --> 01:45:07,100

was Drew Lopez and a few others.

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01:45:07,100 --> 01:45:10,500

And hearing, I mean, so it was we're talking like real time.

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01:45:10,500 --> 01:45:11,860

He just finished the race.

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01:45:11,860 --> 01:45:19,220

We sat down and hearing just the hope, the realization that he wasn't as broken as he

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01:45:19,220 --> 01:45:24,260

thought he was, that he could do more than he realized really underlined.

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01:45:24,260 --> 01:45:25,700

This is what OEW is about.

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01:45:25,700 --> 01:45:28,820

It doesn't matter if it's first responder or if it's military.

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01:45:28,820 --> 01:45:32,620

You get this people, you know, they're broken physically, they're broken mentally.

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01:45:32,620 --> 01:45:36,580

And again, I say that term broken with compassion.

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01:45:36,580 --> 01:45:38,780

You know, it's like it's like any injury mentally.

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01:45:38,780 --> 01:45:39,780

We're very scared.

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01:45:39,780 --> 01:45:41,260

You fuck up your back deadlifting.

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01:45:41,260 --> 01:45:44,860

It's really hard to start deadlifting again, even if your back is solid.

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01:45:44,860 --> 01:45:49,700

So just watching the growth of and I've run with multiple now watching the growth of these

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01:45:49,700 --> 01:45:55,460

people from beginning to end operation during Warrior is doing incredible things.

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01:45:55,460 --> 01:45:56,460

Absolutely.

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01:45:56,460 --> 01:46:00,940

I mean, I credit them with saving my life.

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01:46:00,940 --> 01:46:06,860

If I would have been stuck in that in that cycle that I was in where I was turning to

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01:46:06,860 --> 01:46:11,100

alcohol and mixing it with the drugs, it would have been a matter of time before I was back

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01:46:11,100 --> 01:46:12,100

in that same position.

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01:46:12,100 --> 01:46:17,060

I would I found myself in, you know, prior, you know, waking up with a pistol next to

1552

01:46:17,060 --> 01:46:18,060
me.

1553
01:46:18,060 --> 01:46:22,820
It changed the organization itself.

1554
01:46:22,820 --> 01:46:29,860
The the individuals in the organization showed me that there is no reason to be alone.

1555
01:46:29,860 --> 01:46:37,220
And in addition to that, they empowered me to kind of redefine who I was.

1556
01:46:37,220 --> 01:46:41,820
They created a situation where I could get out of the organization, whatever I was willing

1557
01:46:41,820 --> 01:46:42,980
to put in.

1558
01:46:42,980 --> 01:46:48,260
So I put in the work to become a master athlete and I reap the benefits of that.

1559
01:46:48,260 --> 01:46:52,220
What they tell you is there's healing and helping others.

1560
01:46:52,220 --> 01:46:58,340
And so each one of these events that I get to go and I get I have the honor of taking

1561
01:46:58,340 --> 01:47:03,780
one of these injured police officers or injured veterans or injured firefighters.

1562
01:47:03,780 --> 01:47:10,340
And I get to sit there and see that transformation and then through the course of a weekend,

1563

01:47:10,340 --> 01:47:12,460
that's rejuvenating.

1564
01:47:12,460 --> 01:47:14,460
There's power in.

1565
01:47:14,460 --> 01:47:17,900
And so I regularly say there's healing and helping others.

1566
01:47:17,900 --> 01:47:24,700
But even further than that, when I lost my position as a police officer, I hadn't really

1567
01:47:24,700 --> 01:47:29,380
done anything other than police work in 13 years.

1568
01:47:29,380 --> 01:47:35,680
In addition to that, I chose the the side of police work, which is more militaristic

1569
01:47:35,680 --> 01:47:41,620
in terms of, you know, SWAT and those SWAT skills don't necessarily translate to the

1570
01:47:41,620 --> 01:47:45,660
the public, the private sector.

1571
01:47:45,660 --> 01:47:46,700
I'm sorry.

1572
01:47:46,700 --> 01:47:52,140
You know, kicking in and clearing a building in less than a minute doesn't really matter

1573
01:47:52,140 --> 01:47:54,860
when you have to make copies.

1574

01:47:54,860 --> 01:47:59,900

So they didn't care how accurate I was when I was shooting to press start on the copy

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01:47:59,900 --> 01:48:00,900

machine.

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01:48:00,900 --> 01:48:03,780

But so I didn't have the skill set.

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01:48:03,780 --> 01:48:04,780

You know, I did have it.

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01:48:04,780 --> 01:48:05,780

I had a couple of degrees.

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01:48:05,780 --> 01:48:08,940

I had a bachelor's in business and a master's in legal studies.

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01:48:08,940 --> 01:48:15,540

But I didn't know or couldn't articulate the skill set I had in order to even try to get

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01:48:15,540 --> 01:48:17,860

employment outside of law enforcement.

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01:48:17,860 --> 01:48:19,220

I didn't have any other passion.

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01:48:19,220 --> 01:48:20,380

That's what I wanted to do.

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01:48:20,380 --> 01:48:21,660

It was taken from me.

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01:48:21,660 --> 01:48:26,100

I felt as though I was lost.

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01:48:26,100 --> 01:48:30,940

And so the more I worked with Operation Enduring Warrior, the more fundraising I did, the more

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01:48:30,940 --> 01:48:37,420

event planning I did, the more CRM work I did, you know, customer service or customer

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01:48:37,420 --> 01:48:44,980

service stuff I did, you know, the more leadership positions I was I was putting.

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01:48:44,980 --> 01:48:52,100

And with the experience over the course of it, so I began with OEW in 2018.

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01:48:52,100 --> 01:48:54,060

Here we are in 2023.

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01:48:54,060 --> 01:49:01,500

Over the course of that five years, I gained the experience to get a position where I work

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01:49:01,500 --> 01:49:07,580

now with the Child Abuse and Neglect Council here locally as a development coordinator

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01:49:07,580 --> 01:49:11,920

raising money for child abuse victims.

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01:49:11,920 --> 01:49:18,460

So I mean, I was able to take what OEW, the tools OEW gave me and translate them into

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01:49:18,460 --> 01:49:23,380

my personal life to find a way to continue to give back to my community.

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01:49:23,380 --> 01:49:26,660

I might not be on the front line anymore as a police, like I was as a police officer,

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01:49:26,660 --> 01:49:30,620

but I'm doing everything I can with OEW to make sure those guys are okay.

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01:49:30,620 --> 01:49:32,660

And I'm helping my family there.

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01:49:32,660 --> 01:49:37,060

I'm still doing that as I'm on this podcast doing right now.

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01:49:37,060 --> 01:49:46,220

But I'm also getting to go to work every day now and raise money to stop people victimizing

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01:49:46,220 --> 01:49:47,420

our local children.

1602

01:49:47,420 --> 01:49:49,380

Like how amazing is that?

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01:49:49,380 --> 01:49:58,540

Like, so it's not just about these races that OEW teaches us skills and helps empower you

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01:49:58,540 --> 01:50:03,580

to reach any goal that you want to achieve.

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01:50:03,580 --> 01:50:06,580

It underlines what I've heard over and over and over again.

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01:50:06,580 --> 01:50:11,020

You know, I mean, firstly, it's finding that tribe and OEW is a beautiful tribe and you

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01:50:11,020 --> 01:50:13,900

and I are going to see each other again a week, sorry, a month from now when we're in

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01:50:13,900 --> 01:50:15,040

Tampa for the gala.

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01:50:15,040 --> 01:50:21,820

So anyone listening, February 17th, OEW gala, if you want to help support, there's an opportunity.

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01:50:21,820 --> 01:50:25,420

But also its purpose, as you said, you know, and this is the problem, I think, you know,

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01:50:25,420 --> 01:50:29,500

when we, when you're a firefighter and you transition out, like, oh, I'll go teach at

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01:50:29,500 --> 01:50:30,500

the academy.

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01:50:30,500 --> 01:50:31,700

When you're a cop, you transition out.

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01:50:31,700 --> 01:50:36,460

Oh, I guess I'll go do security, you know, but no, we have developed an amazing array

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01:50:36,460 --> 01:50:39,580

of skills, you know, soft skills, as they say.

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01:50:39,580 --> 01:50:44,900

And so where I think a lot of people stumble as they transition out, you know, whether

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01:50:44,900 --> 01:50:48,740

it's retirement, whether it's after injury, whether they just have had enough, you know,

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01:50:48,740 --> 01:50:55,620

halfway through a career, but you still need to have that service woven in somewhere.

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01:50:55,620 --> 01:50:57,260

Service that took you into uniform.

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01:50:57,260 --> 01:51:01,140

Now you become a realtor or, you know, whatever it is.

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01:51:01,140 --> 01:51:06,500

If it's a company that's money focused, you know, you're probably not going to feel fulfilled,

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01:51:06,500 --> 01:51:11,420

but you have an organization like OEW, we are literally in a tribe, you have that community

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01:51:11,420 --> 01:51:17,160

again, you have that purpose, all of a sudden it's taking the skills that you had and applying

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01:51:17,160 --> 01:51:22,060

them in a different way, in a different uniform, but making a positive impact on the world.

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01:51:22,060 --> 01:51:25,760

And I think that's key for a transition story.

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01:51:25,760 --> 01:51:27,060

I think you're correct.

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01:51:27,060 --> 01:51:29,540

And you said you nailed it on the head purpose.

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01:51:29,540 --> 01:51:34,820

When you find that purpose, when you find your why, the farthest distance you're ever

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01:51:34,820 --> 01:51:38,300

going to have to travel is the six inches between your ears.

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01:51:38,300 --> 01:51:40,820

That's the farthest distance you'll ever have to travel.

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01:51:40,820 --> 01:51:44,420

And if you understand your purpose and your why, that's nothing.

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01:51:44,420 --> 01:51:46,660

You can do it every time.

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01:51:46,660 --> 01:51:50,700

It's when we lose our purpose or why that we find ourselves in a bottle.

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01:51:50,700 --> 01:51:55,220

We find that anxiety is taking over, that the darkness of the depression is taking over.

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01:51:55,220 --> 01:52:01,740

And we don't have that reason to keep pushing forward, your purpose, your why.

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01:52:01,740 --> 01:52:02,740

100%.

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01:52:02,740 --> 01:52:05,480

Well, I want to get to where people can find OEW.

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01:52:05,480 --> 01:52:09,140

Before we do, you ended up writing a book, My Brother's Keeper.

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01:52:09,140 --> 01:52:11,160

So what made you write the book?

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01:52:11,160 --> 01:52:15,140

And then tell me about that process, if there was any catharsis or anything in that process

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01:52:15,140 --> 01:52:16,140

too.

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01:52:16,140 --> 01:52:24,140

So, I told you very early on, I mean, I didn't start seeing a psychologist, you know, a couple

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01:52:24,140 --> 01:52:29,660

months after my shooting, I think it was maybe two months after my shooting.

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01:52:29,660 --> 01:52:37,700

And he started telling me, one of the big things that he preached was exposure therapy.

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01:52:37,700 --> 01:52:43,700

It's a type of cognitive behavioral therapy that is very common to help people deal with

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01:52:43,700 --> 01:52:50,140

to reframe the stressors that would potentially trigger them with PTSD.

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01:52:50,140 --> 01:52:54,860

One of the methods that they can do it is obviously physically take somebody to a place

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01:52:54,860 --> 01:53:00,380

or, you know, physically do something exposing you to whatever that trigger was.

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01:53:00,380 --> 01:53:04,420

In my case, with it being a shooting and such, it's a little bit difficult to put myself

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01:53:04,420 --> 01:53:08,700

in another shooting situation to expose myself to that.

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01:53:08,700 --> 01:53:14,700

And I was exhibiting a lot of avoidance.

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01:53:14,700 --> 01:53:16,260

What's the word I'm looking for?

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01:53:16,260 --> 01:53:17,260

Avoidance behaviors.

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01:53:17,260 --> 01:53:19,020

I was avoiding talking about it.

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01:53:19,020 --> 01:53:22,500

I was avoiding anything to do with my shooting.

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01:53:22,500 --> 01:53:27,380

And so, he's told me to start writing a journal.

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01:53:27,380 --> 01:53:29,700

And that journal was twofold.

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01:53:29,700 --> 01:53:35,900

It allowed me to vent, it allowed to get that stuff off my chest so I could potentially

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01:53:35,900 --> 01:53:37,580

understand it.

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01:53:37,580 --> 01:53:39,620

And it was a form of exposure therapy.

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01:53:39,620 --> 01:53:44,760

In addition to the journal, he had me writing daily what happened.

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01:53:44,760 --> 01:53:47,220

He wanted me to write down what happened.

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01:53:47,220 --> 01:53:49,500

Not just, I feel shitty today.

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01:53:49,500 --> 01:53:56,580

No, Jeremy, write down from the moment you went to work that morning through now, I want

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01:53:56,580 --> 01:53:57,940

you to write that out.

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01:53:57,940 --> 01:53:59,700

So it brings me back.

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01:53:59,700 --> 01:54:04,100

And the intent there is to bring you back to that moment when you're in a safe environment.

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01:54:04,100 --> 01:54:10,220

And over time, it's supposed to lessen the affect on the individual.

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01:54:10,220 --> 01:54:12,740

And their emotional response will kind of diminish.

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01:54:12,740 --> 01:54:15,420

I mean, we see it when we learn how to do anything.

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01:54:15,420 --> 01:54:17,460

When you learn how to ride a bike, you're scared first.

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01:54:17,460 --> 01:54:20,180

And then you learn how to ride a bike and you never think about it again.

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01:54:20,180 --> 01:54:23,340

Same kind of concept.

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01:54:23,340 --> 01:54:24,620

Is it working?

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01:54:24,620 --> 01:54:27,860

I don't, I mean, I'm better than I was.

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01:54:27,860 --> 01:54:29,740

I don't think it'll ever go away.

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01:54:29,740 --> 01:54:35,020

And you know, there's still times, there's still times I'll go to sleep and the moment

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01:54:35,020 --> 01:54:39,540

I shut my eyes, I see the muzzle flash and I can smell the gunpowder.

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01:54:39,540 --> 01:54:40,540

Will that ever go away?

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01:54:40,540 --> 01:54:43,300

I'm told it might not.

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01:54:43,300 --> 01:54:47,440

But that's the nature of the beast, I guess.

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01:54:47,440 --> 01:54:50,340

So tell people what's actually in the covers of the books.

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01:54:50,340 --> 01:54:54,240

You have obviously, you know, you storytell the event itself, but there's some other great

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01:54:54,240 --> 01:54:55,740
information in there too.

1685

01:54:55,740 --> 01:54:56,740
Yeah.

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01:54:56,740 --> 01:54:59,900
So I spent a lot of time thinking about how I wrote it.

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01:54:59,900 --> 01:55:03,780
So the first half of the book or three quarters of the book, first of all, it's very short.

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01:55:03,780 --> 01:55:07,540
The reason it's so short is because I know you pot people don't like to read.

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01:55:07,540 --> 01:55:09,740
So that was actually an incentive.

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01:55:09,740 --> 01:55:10,740
You're tired.

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01:55:10,740 --> 01:55:11,740
That's the problem.

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01:55:11,740 --> 01:55:12,740
Right.

1693

01:55:12,740 --> 01:55:13,740
Exactly.

1694

01:55:13,740 --> 01:55:19,980
So it was actually written so short on purpose because I wanted somebody to pick it up and

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01:55:19,980 --> 01:55:21,820
actually take something from it.

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01:55:21,820 --> 01:55:25,740
If I can reach one, I thought there'd be more likelihood with it being short that that might

1697

01:55:25,740 --> 01:55:26,740
occur.

1698

01:55:26,740 --> 01:55:32,180
But the first couple chapters are due detail, the story.

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01:55:32,180 --> 01:55:40,140
And then I go into how some personal reflections about what I did wrong, what I could have

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01:55:40,140 --> 01:55:43,140
done differently.

1701

01:55:43,140 --> 01:55:48,380
And that I think was a huge turning point for me.

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01:55:48,380 --> 01:55:56,580
While I was writing the book and I was looking at my personal reflections, I took an extreme

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01:55:56,580 --> 01:56:02,540
ownership and our extreme responsibility perspective when I was writing that.

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01:56:02,540 --> 01:56:11,780
And when I did that, I kind of reframed my thinking that even if I'm triggered, even

1705

01:56:11,780 --> 01:56:21,420
if I have this emotional issue, I am still responsible for my behavior and my actions.

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01:56:21,420 --> 01:56:27,620

And that allowed me like a little break, I guess is the word.

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01:56:27,620 --> 01:56:31,860

So when I start to feel like one of these emotional things or whatnot, it allows me

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01:56:31,860 --> 01:56:35,740

this break where I can say, okay, how is this going to affect me?

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01:56:35,740 --> 01:56:38,700

So I slow everything down and that's the direction I go.

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01:56:38,700 --> 01:56:42,260

So I talk about the personal reflections.

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01:56:42,260 --> 01:56:44,300

I talk about finding OEW.

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01:56:44,300 --> 01:56:47,500

I talk about and then I go on to make some recommendations.

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01:56:47,500 --> 01:56:53,740

I make a couple different recommendations about how to help change this for police officers.

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01:56:53,740 --> 01:57:00,380

The major change I recommend would be, you know, like you mentioned the cancer, you know,

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01:57:00,380 --> 01:57:02,420

they'll just wait people out for cancer.

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01:57:02,420 --> 01:57:07,020

There's some professions in which there is an assumed responsibility.

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01:57:07,020 --> 01:57:13,020

If you're in this profession and you have this ailment, it's assumed that that ailment

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01:57:13,020 --> 01:57:16,380

is from your job just because it's so prevalent.

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01:57:16,380 --> 01:57:23,260

I think I suggest that every police officer who has been hired has given a psychological

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01:57:23,260 --> 01:57:24,540

evaluation.

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01:57:24,540 --> 01:57:25,540

That's just standard now.

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01:57:25,540 --> 01:57:30,340

If they've been given a psychological evaluation at the beginning and this will require policy,

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01:57:30,340 --> 01:57:39,380

policy change, it should be and they pass and are hired a subsequent failure of a psychological

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01:57:39,380 --> 01:57:44,580

evaluation should simply indicate that the job caused it.

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01:57:44,580 --> 01:57:51,180

Like the burden of proof should be moved to the village or the city or the municipality

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01:57:51,180 --> 01:57:56,860

to prove it wasn't work related instead of us having to prove it was.

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01:57:56,860 --> 01:57:59,260

That's the major, one of the major changes.

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01:57:59,260 --> 01:58:05,620

And I also make reference to making sure that there's policies in place for your officers

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01:58:05,620 --> 01:58:10,260

to seek mental health, making sure that you have the best practices in line before an

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01:58:10,260 --> 01:58:11,940

incident happens.

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01:58:11,940 --> 01:58:15,060

My department didn't even have a retirement plan set up for an officer.

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01:58:15,060 --> 01:58:17,100

They'd never had an officer retired.

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01:58:17,100 --> 01:58:19,860

So that prolonged my situation and made it worse.

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01:58:19,860 --> 01:58:25,380

So I make a bunch of different policy changes and then I kind of put it on anybody who's

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01:58:25,380 --> 01:58:26,380

reading it.

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01:58:26,380 --> 01:58:30,620

I'm hoping that there's active officers in the command staff who are reading this right

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01:58:30,620 --> 01:58:33,460

now, people in the position of power.

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01:58:33,460 --> 01:58:36,980

We don't have to wait for the lawmakers to make a change.

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01:58:36,980 --> 01:58:41,340

Most of these things can be done at a policy level within the command staff.

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01:58:41,340 --> 01:58:46,500

A command officer can make the decision to bring in mental health advocates to a police

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01:58:46,500 --> 01:58:52,420

department and put other policies in place to make it easier on the officers.

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01:58:52,420 --> 01:58:53,420

Absolutely.

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01:58:53,420 --> 01:58:57,900

Yeah, I think the barrier to entry is the big problem that we have now.

1744

01:58:57,900 --> 01:59:01,980

We're still stuck in the whole stigma conversation and that's not the issue anymore.

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01:59:01,980 --> 01:59:06,180

There, of course, are pockets of the country where they maybe still believe that.

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01:59:06,180 --> 01:59:12,460

But it's now the EAP Russian roulette horror stories that we hear, the counselors that

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01:59:12,460 --> 01:59:14,020

aren't culturally competent.

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01:59:14,020 --> 01:59:19,340

How do we remove the barrier between the person who might be in complete crisis, might be

1749

01:59:19,340 --> 01:59:25,700

just struggling, might be okay, but just simply want to stay okay to access the right mental

1750

01:59:25,700 --> 01:59:32,100

health tools that they need without financially ruining them or having to schedule six months

1751

01:59:32,100 --> 01:59:34,640

ahead or all these things that you hear.

1752

01:59:34,640 --> 01:59:36,200

This is what we need to be talking about now.

1753

01:59:36,200 --> 01:59:37,340

We get it.

1754

01:59:37,340 --> 01:59:40,580

Mental health is also applicable in the first responder professions.

1755

01:59:40,580 --> 01:59:43,260

How do we actually make it work?

1756

01:59:43,260 --> 01:59:45,260

Absolutely.

1757

01:59:45,260 --> 01:59:47,860

Where can people find the book?

1758

01:59:47,860 --> 01:59:50,060

The books available anywhere books are sold.

1759

01:59:50,060 --> 01:59:51,060

Most of the time it has to be ordered.

1760

01:59:51,060 --> 01:59:52,860

That's just the way everything is nowadays.

1761

01:59:52,860 --> 01:59:55,220

It's available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble.

1762

01:59:55,220 --> 02:00:00,500

It's available on my Facebook officer, Officer Jeremy Sharla, retired.

1763

02:00:00,500 --> 02:00:03,300

It's also available on my website relearningtolive.com.

1764

02:00:03,300 --> 02:00:04,300

Brilliant.

1765

02:00:04,300 --> 02:00:06,100

And what about OEW?

1766

02:00:06,100 --> 02:00:11,540

If people want to contribute, if maybe they want to join as a masked athlete or even be

1767

02:00:11,540 --> 02:00:15,620

an honoree, where are the best places to find them?

1768

02:00:15,620 --> 02:00:16,620

Facebook page.

1769

02:00:16,620 --> 02:00:21,660

They have a Facebook page with a probably a hundred thousand plus following.

1770

02:00:21,660 --> 02:00:23,540

Their logo is a mask.

1771

02:00:23,540 --> 02:00:25,260

So it's pretty gas mask.

1772

02:00:25,260 --> 02:00:26,900

It's an Avon gas mask.

1773

02:00:26,900 --> 02:00:31,740

For those who know the difference between them, but go ahead and check them out on Facebook.

1774

02:00:31,740 --> 02:00:33,660

They have Instagram as well.

1775

02:00:33,660 --> 02:00:34,660

And they do have a website.

1776

02:00:34,660 --> 02:00:40,900

I'm trying to remember if it's operation enduringwarrior.org or enduringwarrior.org.

1777

02:00:40,900 --> 02:00:42,940

But I can't recall off the top of my head.

1778

02:00:42,940 --> 02:00:46,780

Brilliant, I'll put the link on the show notes for this episode.

1779

02:00:46,780 --> 02:00:49,260

Well, Jeremy, I want to say thank you so much.

1780

02:00:49,260 --> 02:00:52,380

I mean, we've been chatting now for basically two hours.

1781

02:00:52,380 --> 02:00:57,380

As I said before, it's been a long time coming, but you've got a very powerful story, but

1782

02:00:57,380 --> 02:01:02,700

it's not just, this is what happened to me and I'm kind of coping ish.

1783

02:01:02,700 --> 02:01:06,180

It is infused with what people need to hear, which is hope.

1784

02:01:06,180 --> 02:01:10,740

Are we going to be the same person prior to a traumatic event than we are after?

1785

02:01:10,740 --> 02:01:11,740

No, of course.

1786

02:01:11,740 --> 02:01:15,700

There's going to be a change, but it's a new version of you and the fact that you found

1787

02:01:15,700 --> 02:01:17,660

this new tribe and this new purpose.

1788

02:01:17,660 --> 02:01:23,020

And I've saved, I'm sure, way more than one, but at least one.

1789

02:01:23,020 --> 02:01:24,020

It's empowering.

1790

02:01:24,020 --> 02:01:25,740

And like I said, it really infuses hope.

1791

02:01:25,740 --> 02:01:29,140

So I want to thank you so much for being so generous with your time today and coming on

1792

02:01:29,140 --> 02:01:30,140

the Behind the Shield podcast.

1793

02:01:30,140 --> 02:01:41,780

Thank you, James.

