

# Kelsi Sheren - Episode 772

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## SPEAKERS


Kelsi Sheren, James Geering

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James Geering 00:00

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 Kelsi Sheren 03:25

Oh, thanks for having me. I've known of your show for a very long time. And a lot of our community members have had the privilege of being on it. So getting a chance to sit with you is an honor. So thanks so much for having me.

 James Geering 03:36

Well, likewise. And so the cross pollination, even the people that kind of, you know, lend their names and their feedback to your book, Jesse gold is coming on, I think next week, so there's a lot of a lot of similar guests that we have, you know, so yeah, you're,

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you're gonna love him, you're gonna love him so much that you're gonna want to be friends with him and be around him and have his essence rub off on you. Because he's such a positive, influential in terms of healing, you know, the healing side of things. And he's such a great human being to be exposed to. So I know that'll be a great conversation. And honestly, he's a great conversationalist as well. So it's going to be an awesome interview for you. I'm excited to listen.

 James Geering 04:13

Beautiful. All right, well, then very first question, where on planet earth are we finding you today?

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The communist country of Canada, in Vancouver.

 James Geering 04:24

A beautiful, beautiful country. It's it's a shame that sometimes we define our nations by the few shitbags that tend to ruin it for everyone else.

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Well, you know, the sad part is I think for Canada in particular for me, it's it's less of a few ship pegs, as it is an entire administration and has been since 2013. So I try not to cherry pick politically by the base off of the individual but based off of the the actions that have been really put into place or the inactions if you will of current administration and the saddest, truest part about Canada is Even though we are a beautiful country with a ton of very passive, awesome human beings, we are in a state right now where Canada truly is not my words intelligence

words, it's, it's in a bit of a fall right now it's in a freefall, and those that don't like that have never experienced what it's like to live somewhere where you can't leave if you choose not to do a medical, you know, medical experiment. And for me, in Canada, I love this country deeply. And that's why I continue to still live here. That being said, that doesn't mean that I'm accepting or okay with the way that the school systems are the way that we are bringing people in and ignoring our veteran population, the way that we are forced vaccinating children and individuals if they want to have the rights to leave the province or the country. I don't believe in a lot of the things that have been implemented since 2013. In this country. But that being said, I still choose to live here because of my family. But there are lines that if they do get crossed, I will ultimately up leave this country.

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James Geering 05:59

Well, what's crazy is if you talk about the US, we have the same problems you look at the UK or originally from we have the same problems, New Zealand, which I admired incredibly, and they did a complete 180 or not, they their administration did a complete one eight when it came to this issue. And even the environment what I learned recently, again, some of the guests from there, I went there in almost 2000 I think it was absolutely gorgeous country, amazing people. And but there's this projection of you know, environmental greenness for lack of a better word, but then apparently they don't even recycle. So you know, there's, there's, there's the facade of the country. And I think the problem with the US is that there's this chess be in greatest country in the world. But as you said, if you take a step back, and you look with the kindness and compassion eyes, how happier the people of that country, how healthy are they? How well are they educated? How safe are they in their schools? Are you really the greatest country and it's not a criticism that you just criticize and leave? It's bringing it to the forefront and saying, Look, we are a nation of incredible human beings. But there's a few people that are ready fucking it up for us right now. And we as a community need to get together and demand that we have the right leaders in our country that will actually move us forward and unify us not divide us.

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And in the truest sense to everything that you said is applicable to Canada and multiple other countries that you just listed. The problem is, you've got places like the United States, like you said, this chess beating, we are the best country in the world. And don't get me wrong, they've had that forever. America has always had that they've always been, you know, 1776, we've defeated the British way or pop up and you know what nots, okay? They have a long lineage of warriors and fighters within their culture. So that is baked in. And that's understood as to why but when you look at places like Canada, Canada has a huge rich military history of being heavily involved in serious serious things in World War Two and Vietnam, you name it, Canada has been involved, and yet it's overlooked for that. But we still hold the longest kill shots in the world, we still have some of the best snipers in the world, we still have some of the baddest students that exist in the world. But the thing that others are finally just starting to listen to when it's being spoken about when people like Jordan Peterson and other individuals from Canada have spoken about is, you know, Canada, for the past couple years has been trying to push through a bill called Bill C 11. And I have been screaming about this for a long time. I spoke about it last time I was on Jocko two years ago, and a lot of people were like that doesn't exist. That's not real, that would never happen. And in Canada, now we have a bill as of a

couple of weeks ago, it's an Iron Curtain. We literally have an internet iron curtain in Canada. And so now the government can control what is seen what is shared what goes out of Canada, what comes into Canada, not in terms, it affects everything, especially if you're a content creator, like myself, I think, you know, by no means am I making millions of dollars off of YouTube every single month. But what I can tell you as we are growing and when you stifle that, because you don't want it to leave the country, you don't like what someone's saying, because it's not toeing the party line. That's a problem. To me, that's a slip into a type of lifestyle culture that I want nothing to do with. and Canada is a beautiful place. The people are incredible. But for some reason. Well, the reason is actually let's be honest, it's a slow drip that happened over COVID. Right? You know, the beautiful thing about Elon Musk buying Twitter and so grateful that he did was his willingness to call out the true hypocrisy and things like government funded media. And when he started slapping our new like our radio, in our news with government funded media tabs. They didn't like that. But that's the reality. People don't understand in Canada and the United States, the stuff you're being fed is being fed to you by people that are paying and being paid by the government to do so. So when Canada gets slapped with Bill C 11, and all of these other bills, where if you don't call somebody by their pronoun, it's a hate crime. We have lost touch with free Reality and society has lost touch with what really goes on. And that's because we haven't been tested in a long, long time. And that goes with the United States. Basically North America, we wallow in our bullshit and we wallow in our problems and in our issues in the world. You know, we look at the world like it's this tragic, horrible place where it's really not that bad. There are terrible things going on in it, but we perceive it to be this horrific place because we allow the media to force ourselves to think that and then ultimately, we fall into this downward spiral where we, we all hate each other. We don't talk to each other. But it's really just a beautiful ploy by plenty of these other countries that want to see North America fall, to come in and disrupt and really divide. And that's what's happened. And it's been incredibly successful. I mean, Canada is one of the only countries in the world that has Chinese police stations on its soil. You know, America has one in New York, we have one Vancouver, we have one in Toronto. And the fact of the matter is, you know, your show my show a lot of shows in our space Jocko. You name it. We talked to military individuals, we talked to veterans to talk to first responders. And why is it that only US are seeing it? Why are we the only ones with our eyes open? Well, it's because we've been exposed to really horrific things in the world. And we understand that this isn't all that bad. But when government gets a hold of things, they can start making things look a lot worse and get a lot truly worse really quickly if we're not careful. So I love living where I live. And that's why I'm still here. But there is a line in the sand. Do not get it twisted before you know, my family and I have to leave this place.

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James Geering 11:31

Well, you just touched on something that I've discussed quite a few times. And I'm not saying that I'm the person that needs to fill this space. But when you think of Navy SEALs, you think of Jocko and there's there's there's a bunch of names that you could think about you think of Green Berets, you think about a lot of these communities. But when you think about the first responder profession, this the voice of you know, whether it's the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Canada, whether it's you know, the police force here in America, or the UK, or the fire service, or EMS, these are the men and women that actually get to see how a country is really doing because we live behind that curtain. So we know if if a sack full of pharmaceuticals is actually going to make you live longer. We know if the prohibition of drugs is an epic failure or an epic success. You know, we see the gangster prostitution surprise that night, you said that's, that's a sliver, most people get to enjoy the beautiful country, no country with almost no

problems whatsoever. But we get to see the raw horrible side. But we also get to see the beautiful side, and we get to see what works and what doesn't. So I think it's so important for these podcasts, you know, the books, documentaries that these voices of these men and women in uniform are being heard. Because what we're seeing on the television doesn't match the reality and a perfect example when COVID hit and don't get me wrong COVID My middle of the road come in a perspective on COVID as a real disease, but it is an opportunity, opportunistic disease. And we had a very vulnerable population. Therefore, we lost a lot of people who are already dying, let's be honest, they were already dying, VC and all these other things. But you also see the proactive side, you are like, Look, if we get our country healthier, these viruses will be less dangerous. If we get our country healthier, we will have a larger pool to pull our first responders and our military from we will have a greater deterrent for people coming in. If we unify this nation, we won't be duped as easily. So I think this is it. It's not like you know, talking heads political conversation. It's now when you've worn a uniform, you have a unique perspective, and you can see the bullshit. And you can see the people that are hurting and dying. And you can you know, damn well what the solutions are. I think that's what's so heartbreaking is, as people keep getting divided, this country, in theory is getting weaker. And as people have told me, there are countries outside of ours that are wringing their hands go and this is perfect. Keep sending that, that divisive stuff through the screens, because it's working.



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It's not only working, it's like accurate, it's pinpoint, it's it's dialed in, it's done intentionally now at this point, it's it's a little more than working, I would say it's successful now at this point. And they've seen that and they now have leaned into it, these other countries have leaned into it. And I'm no, I'm not sitting here trying to become, you know, a cyber analyst by any means. But when you talk to enough people in that space, and you're getting a kind of an overview of what the you know, the grounds look like and what's really happening, you can't help but look at that and go Yeah, I can see how that's happening. I can see why. And when you look at things like take that back to a complete first responder standpoint, if you look at things like the east side of Vancouver, but we have the worst overdose population in the world. Canada is being wiped out on the east side of Vancouver like well, it's just the east side of Vancouver. It's like you do not understand the amount of people that are dying every single day and the firefighters that are there that are constantly having to do this the EMS and the fact that British Columbia is down. It's an astronomical amount of ambulances, the amount of people I know who have left BC ambulance because there are not enough ambulances, there's not enough good pay it's overdriving people into mental health crises. And then you send them down to a place in Vancouver, which is understaffed. And not only is it understaffed, it is one of the only places in Canada that has open drug laws, where it has safe injection sites where these are apparently, you know, and decriminalization of heavy drugs. Well, these are apparently supposed to help. But somehow it's getting worse, it's getting worse at a pace that they can't control. And then that mental health issue, the mental health issues that come from that are being sprung and put on to all of these young paramedics and firefighters and they're burning out at a pace that we can't sustain as a society. And we're losing firefighters and paramedics and police officers to stabbings in Canada that are going out of style. For God's sakes, a couple of weeks ago, we had a father, a mother and his young daughter, the father got stabbed in the jugular at a Starbucks because he asked another guy to stop vaping on his daughter. The fact of the matter is, is my country has taken all of its guns, it has shoved mass amounts of pharmaceutical drugs down individuals throats, during a huge mental health pandemic. I don't even consider COVID A pandemic, I consider what COVID did was the goal, it wasn't what COVID is, it's what COVID did.

That was the goal. And it was the tool to get people to do what they wanted us to do, which was have our mental health crash, have our immune systems crash, have the idea that we sit in front of TVs and eat a bunch of bullshit and lose communication with others because our physical beings need to be outside, we know that, you know, the way that we work, that whole grounding, that whole being the hippie take your shoes off stand on the grass is the reason it works. You know, we need sunlight, we need human connection. And when you start to take that away from people, people become sad, weak and depressed very, very quickly. And then you can start medicating which then you can start getting that numb society to then just follow along and do what you say, so that they just don't have to live through that trauma and that pain again. And now Canada, like I think it was as of a couple weeks ago, just said that we don't have to wear masks in all settings. This is 2023. And it is April 27. So when I see other individuals go and be told that to put a mask on there is a trauma response there is this this moment where you see their blood pressure rise, they get anxious, and they're gonna I don't want to put it back on because it puts them back into that state. And so when people are like, well, it's just a mask. That's how bad Canada was, though. Right? That shows you that a little piece of cloth that doesn't protect anyone from anything, how fearful that can be for some people to put back on their face, that shows you how bad that country felt during that time and how mismanaged it was but the leadership or lack of leadership was better, that's the better way to put it.

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James Geering 17:57

Well, that was the, again, the middle of the road perspective, during the whole thing was the messaging was about saving lives. And again, I had friends who worked in ICUs that were seeing person after person after person succumbing to this disease, because of you know, most of the time underlying conditions as well. But those people still watch someone die, those families still be kept away from their loved one while they basically suffocated a death through you know, the immune response that they got from the virus. So what an amazing time in history with a captive audience to say, All right, we're actually going to improve the health of the nation, the physical health and mental health. And yet, what was given to people was the polar opposite of as you said, what you would do to make a human being more resilient. Don't be around your friends, don't be around your family. Don't go outside, don't exercise. But stay at home, we'll send fast food and alcohol, you'll be good just turn on Tiger king. And the thing is, it's kind of you could joke about it. But it's not funny, because two years later that that opportunity was completely blown. And even with the prohibition side, I'm a huge fan of the decriminalization of drugs not doesn't mean you go to the grocery store and buy crack, you still arrest the smugglers and the dealers, but you take funding and you address the mental health crisis that you just talked about, and give these people access to all these facilities. But if you just decriminalize with almost no facilities, that's the same as Obama care, you haven't fucking fixed anything. You've just you know, checked a box. So most of us and then there's some countries out there that things incredibly well they have very, very healthy people, even

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Sweden, Finland, they decriminalize they have no homeless population when I was in college for this, they they use them as the highlight they use them as the as the people to highlight why we should have safe injection sites why we should have decriminalization of drugs. But when you only do one and the the left arm doesn't talk to the right arm and now you've

emptied Riverview, you've emptied all of the psych wards you've emptied out Everybody onto the streets. And then you decriminalize. I mean, for God's sakes, most of the people that are homeless are not people who are addicted to drugs, they're mentally ill, who then get hooked on drugs because of the opportunity and amount that is accessible to them. And that's because of the decriminalization, so you can do decriminalization accurately, because I think ultimately, once you hit a certain age, you should have the right to put whatever you want in your body. It's like what Joe Rogan says, you can have a hammer, you can choose to build a house with it, or you can pit yourself in the deck with it, it's totally your choice. You're a grown ass adult. But the problem comes in when you do one and not the other, if you don't have the support, or the mental health support, of course. And then when you have things like, like you said, like where people are dying in the ICU, and you're seeing all that, well, we had a lot of drugs that would help prevent that and stop that. But then you have your own individuals who are above you going, we're going to decriminalize, we're not going to give mental health support, we have something that can stop COVID and help fix it. We know that it prevents people from going from point A to ICU, but we're not going to give it to them because it doesn't benefit us financially. And then like you said on top of that the comorbidities how many people do you know, personally who had COVID? And we're fine. And then how many people do you know who were overweight, didn't move ate junk food, and were not fine. And they were the ones that made it bad for everyone else. You can't medicate and hold the population hostage because of your couple percent that choose to not look after themselves that choose not to move or choose the McDonald's every day. I don't accept the way it was handled. And so people are like, Yeah, well, there's a vulnerable population, there's all that the then stay inside, because the rest of the world does not. And when you choose to crash and economy, based on individuals who cannot stop eating, and people like Lizzo, you put on the front of cover of magazines, and you tell young girls, who are an impressionable that that is the beauty standard. No, that is called diabetes, overweight, unhealthy. And not only that out of touch, when you do stuff like that to a population, you're asking for it to crumble, and I don't I don't think it was intention I here's the thing. Part of me goes, of course, it was intentional. I'm not stupid enough to sit around and believe that people are this dumb. But then I've also sat down and I've worked in government before and gone, could see how this wasn't done intentionally and just completely overlooked. Because it's, I give people too much of the benefit of the doubt in terms of intelligence. And the reality is this probably wasn't done intentionally. And this was just an oversight and terrible leadership and people not knowing how to manage situations and really large grand situations that that the fact of the matter is, it was an opportunity for people to get well. But more often than not, people use it to drink themselves into a stupor and eat themselves into what's that saying is like, Oh, I gained to like, it was the COVID 40, who gains 40 pounds, and not notice is I gained three and go home? Oh, okay, take it down a notch. They're callous. Like, maybe I'm raised different. Maybe I perceive things different. And that is not everyone's experience. But we can do better, we have the opportunity to do better. And instead, we chose to do the complete opposite and expect a good results. I mean, what do we think was gonna happen when you do this type of stuff to people, you lock them down, you tanked their bank accounts. And when you protest against it, you literally lose your house and your mortgage. And you you get you get docked by GoFundMe. I mean, the stuff that was happening in this country in my country was insane. And the fact that people sit around was like, Well was it wasn't that bad. Okay, what do you ask Dr. Deborah, so who can't leave the country because she's not vaccinated? She can't go do press. Why don't you talk to any other person who's from Canada who couldn't leave the country to go do their work? It wasn't as simple as like, wear a mask and like get vaccinated. It was a lot bigger than that. It was a lot bigger than not people just chose not to see it that way.




 James Geering 24:04

Well, two things out of that. Firstly, what breaks my heart is the people that are having the comorbidities are still dying, but their lives don't matter. Now, there's no ticker counter on the bottom of CNN or Fox anymore. You know, so and how I was dying of strokes and cancers and heart disease and all the other things that are killing people every day that we as paramedics still have crowded hallways and hospitals waiting for a bed. But secondly, I mean, you talk about the choices. The problem I have with this whole thing is we had two years to change the environment. I you know, being being compassionate. It's all well and good for me to say why don't people exercise? Well, I grew up on a farm in England. We had you know, we had meat that we raised we had a vegetable garden and orchard. So, you know, I don't have the right to say how does that person in you know, Brooklyn not understand about food. But we had an amazing opportunity to change that. We feed our kids in schools to take the soda machines out to put real food back in, which sounds like unicorn fight and rainbows. But that's what we did until a few fucking decades ago. And that way changed the environment. Because I think that people make decisions based on their environment, you're always going to have that few that are going to work out. Regardless, you're going to have that few that don't give a shit, they're not going to work out. But that middle large portion, you can influence extremely heavily. And we could have educated people on how to eat how to move, we could have, you know, put incentives to put local organic farms back rather than these mega mono cropping farms. But it wasn't. And so that was the thing is that no one can say it was about the health of their nation. If they didn't do anything to improve their health of the nation. Certainly that doesn't carry on forward. So this is the problem that I have is that people are still dying, and no one gives a shit anymore.

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Not only just no one gives a shit, nobody gives a shit about the people and the children that are having their lives damaged and broken because of an untested vaccine. The you know, the fact of the matter is, the stuff that is coming out I think it was the was the CDC or the FDA are now saying don't vaccinate children. I mean, there is a there is a massive amount of risk that we took within this whole pandemic, whether it was what we chose to see what we chose to eat what we chose to put into our bodies, the risks that we took, we were a guinea pig population. That's what this was. This was a grand scale guinea pig population where we go, let's try this out. Let's see how this works. Because if you listen to anybody who talks about any anything, whether they're a scientist or a doctor, like a virologist, and Epstein was an

 James Geering 26:39  
epidemiologist, thank you.

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If you're, if you're an individual who was brilliant enough to be that guy, or that girl, so many, I must say you never vaccinate during an active pandemic. And so now you've created so many other issues because of this. And we're seeing long term effects for God's sake, the amount of children I personally know who now their young sons have myocarditis, who were athletes, who



were military members, who had no reason were completely healthy their entire lives, they took that now they are done, they're cooked, and they are done. So when you act as if this was the Save All cure all, I refuse to accept that, when people say you are the product of your environment, I couldn't agree more with you on that. Like you said, you grew up in a farm, I grew up as a as a competitive fighter, since I've been four years old diet, nutrition, and everything was focused around that. So understanding how to live and how to eat better, is something that was baked into me, but it wasn't my entire family, it was just me, the rest of my family is overweight, the rest of my family is fairly unhealthy. And quite a few of them have diabetes. But when we sit around and we say that it's a product of the environment, and not everybody has, could have learned well, they could, because everybody has a phone. Everybody has Google, everybody has the Internet nowadays, and to sit around and say that they couldn't have done something better know that they could have they chose not to a lot of these things we put back on our systems and say, well, the system wasn't in place. But you know, what was in place the internet you to Google? So the excuse that they couldn't have done better? I don't buy?

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James Geering 28:16

I think yes, what I'm saying is the problem is, argue one or the other? And the answer is both. Yes, ownership is a part of the conversation.

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Right. And I think we live in a victim mentality type of population, where everything is wrong, everything hurts us, you know, where the government touch you those types of conversations. And I think that we live and we've been taught that this, you know, this is happening to us, you know, not for us, it's it will start making things happen for you that and you have to take those steps individually. And obviously, I understand, you know, when you make a salad at McDonald's be more expensive than a hamburger. I mean, there's a problem here. When you shop in the grocery store. If you're going down the middle of the aisles, you're shopping in the wrong spot. You know, it's small things like teaching people to shop on the outside of the grocery store, which is your meat, your produce your vegetables and your fruits. It's small things that could have been changed, but instead, you saw death tools. You saw fear mongering, and you saw a new food pyramid come in from America, which was one of the most die like just disgusting things I've ever witnessed, which had things like orange juice and cereal above red meat and boneless, skinless chicken breasts, for God's sakes, they want the population to be sick because if the population is sick, then you can over medicate. If you can over medicate, you can make a shit ton of money. And so why would you want a healthy population? That's a sad reality for people with like, well, that's a bit much Kelsey, you're being a bit dramatic. Am I when what is the population in America? How much obese? I mean, for God's sakes, why do I have to go to America or even places in Canada and see children who weigh double the amount of meat that are half the age who are struggling to walk because their parents can't seem put anything in their mouths, but copious amounts of orange juice, muffins and bullshit for breakfast, give your kid a piece of toast and a glass of fucking water. For God's sakes, this is not rocket science, you don't need to have a, I barely graduated high school.



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So what's my excuse?



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I just choose not to live this way, because there are better ways to do it. And if you choose to influence yourself and sit in front of CNN and sit in front of Fox News instead of front of global and CBC, and you sit there and you take what they say, as the Bible, of course, you're gonna be sick. Of course, it's common sense.



James Geering 30:35

Absolutely, absolutely. I mean, we're, you know, you're preaching to the choir. And I think this is the this is the thing is that getting people that have this awakening, understanding that environment plays into it, but understanding there's an ownership element, and like you said, we do live in an information age. But as we also know, working against people, if you are looking at workouts and foods and farming, your Instagram is going to be curated to wellness. If you're looking at some of the, you know, the clickbait stuff, your Instagram is going to be full of, you know, probably really shitty foods and really shitty people. So again, you know, there are forces working against you. And this is why I'm hoping there's going to be a kind of an awakening where we start using the Internet age for our good to empower us as a community, and take control of our own physical mental health as well.



31:20

I'm optimistic, I think that we are on the path to that, I think you're always gonna have a subset of individuals who are going to lean towards the healthier lifestyle. You know, the Instagram is definitely way more curated towards wellness and mental health, I think you're going to have that. I think it takes a long time to get there. Because we've allowed a lot of things to change in our schooling systems in North America, where more people know about what Kim Kardashian ate for breakfast and what her new sink looks like they understand who was in World War Two who won World War Two what communism is and why socialism is a prot, like, I think it's a terrifying thing. When I, when I see individuals go to universities and interview other students there, and they don't know what 911 was, they don't care, like, these are things that you have to know in order to not allow history to repeat itself. And that goes down. And same with alcohol. And that goes with food. And that goes with news and media. So if we can change if we can start to slowly and do exactly what the government's did to us during COVID, a slow drip, if we can slow drip, mental health, wellness, physical fitness, healthy eating into people's social medias and into their lives, slow drip, not a huge flood gates because that's when it overwhelms people and pushes them away. If we can slow drip them just like they did to us. Next thing, you know, we'll have a healthier population and with that healthier population grows into a more aware population. I'm optimistic again. That being said, there are a lot of forces that are pushing against us. So that doesn't happen. But that's why you have to have more people like you and these other shows, and so that you can show that there's another side to things there's a different side to life. And if we can find those people have those hard

conversations, and use the tools that they've learned and really just push those out to others. Hopefully, like I said, it'll be a slow drip of education and people will slowly start to change and the tide will turn.

J

James Geering 33:14

I agree. 100% Well, you talked about being an athlete when you were four years old. So let's get to the beginning of your timeline. So tell me where you were born. And tell me a little bit about your family dynamic what your parents did, and how many siblings so

i

33:29

I was born technically I was born in Belleville, Ontario, and I grew up in Coburg and then we move to Campbellford where I was before I went to college. Both you know really small towns, kind of smaller communities. When I was younger my dad was he's my both my parents are now but my dad when I was younger, my mom was a stay at home mom with my brother and I only have one sibling. He's two years younger than me. My father is a long haul truck driver so my dad would be gone week to three weeks at a time and that was his life. He had driven you know, most more before since I was born. I think he was driving at least a handful years before I was born. So my dad had been doing that his whole life and I have photos of me when I was barely you know barely a mosh sitting on top of a huge Peterbilt steering wheel you know, with my dad was going down the freeway like I you know, true, the truest sense of a hard working you know, blue collar family is where I come from and where my parents live now is you know, in the middle of the woods, I grew up on 17 acres of forest and trees and you know, the deer and the bear and the all the animals and we had two turkeys that used to walk down the driveway, no joke, two of us walked out of the driveway at the end and come back at night all the time. So I was around a lot of nature. I was around a lot of outdoors. And so my mom being stay at home mom she was she was amazing because my brother had different sports than I had and so she was carting us around left right and center and she was so distracted with all of our activities. I think it made it easier keeping us busy, you know, having dad away. So it was it was definitely an interesting way to grow up. I started fighting when I was four years old. I started soccer when I was four as well. But ultimately, Taekwondo took over. And my mom saw someone at a, at a mall, and they were doing one of those cool demonstrations. And she called me on the payphone and called home and was like, Hey, do you want to do this, I want to sign you up. And I said, Sure. And the whole rule was, if you sign up for something, you finish it. So you know whether it's you sign it for a month, and you have to do that whole month sort of deal. So I did that. And I stuck with that for most of my life. And my brother spun off into motocross. And that's where his path went down. So when dad was home, dad was with him. And when I was gone, Mom was with me. And so we, you know, my parents are still married to this day. But it was a very, almost like a divorced household, if you will, where dad was gone, and mom was home. And then you would see dad when he saw. And it wasn't intentional. But that's just the profession my dad chose, right? They never, they never said no to us, they were always able to provide everything we wanted, and more. So I know, my dad worked really hard and sacrificed a lot of time away to be able to give us that. So I started there. And then, you know, in high school, I moved from the Catholic school, I was out in Coburg to Campbellford. And I did my last couple years where we were living. And I went to my first public school, which was an interesting situation, especially in a really small farm town where everyone knows everyone grew up together, was born together, plays hockey together,

farms together. And then I dropped myself into this weird, dystopian, out of place bodied kind of feeling. And it was, it was an interesting last couple years of high school for sure. That's when I was I played rugby. From, I think it was, how old was I 14 Until I was done went into college. And so after Taekwondo, I took some time off from that, due to a coach destroying everything, and we moved into a different sport for a while. And for me, sport is everything. And sports, I believe are number one, and should be taught across the board and should be implemented into everything that children do. The amount of opportunity to learn and to have small doses of adversity come at you because of sport is something that one of the reason why I think I'm thriving or doing better than I've ever done in my life is because I've I've been shit kicked so much in so many different ways by so many different things that when I look back at when things were difficult, I can often look back at something that was really hard and in sport and know that I could be worse, it could always be worse. It can always always be more difficult. I could always try harder. And so I did a lot of sports. And then after that I went to college and then ultimately joined the army after that.

 James Geering 37:40

Well, going back first to taekwondo. I did taekwondo for my childhood, but it was kind of I say my childhood probably, I think it was mid teens, when I started my progress through till adulthood. I did IETF originally, which is the tippy tappy one and then did WTF which was the you can knock them out with your feet one, which was the style that you did, and what level did you get to?

 37:59

I was always WTS. I never did anything else. I didn't know that there even was one when I was younger. I did WTF I did that. My last last nationals, I thought I was 13. So I was just moving up to the big leagues. And I ended up winning that. And so I mean, I the one of the things I love about taekwondo was the amount of effort that needed to be put into place to actually be successful at it. And then once you started getting into weight categories, and you know, it got real really fast, you know, having to be 12 years old and 11 years old, and tell your teachers that you can't have the Timbits that they're handing out, because you have to lose weight. You know, that's a problem. For a lot of school systems, I found out the hard way, you know, ultimately that that garnered a phone call to the principal, which then garnered a phone call to the police, which then was to a doctor to make sure that I was being fed well, and you know, the whole the whole system came crashing down where they you know, why? Why does she have to lose weight? Why would she say that at that age? It's well, I was really competitive in the sport that required weight classes. That's just the reality. And so, you know, skipping in the sauna, when you're young with a sauna suit on it's just all things that I never thought I would ever do. But I did because I wanted to be successful at something so I thought WTF my whole life I've never found another system. And then I I really did not enjoy it when they started to bring in the the new electronic systems and that's when I didn't I lost like hope and faith and and didn't want to keep fighting anymore. But I always like I said I love sport and I love taekwondo. The only thing I would say though, I wished was, you know, striking sports like that now understanding hand injuries and understanding how little it takes to give someone a concussion is something I wish I would have understood a little bit more before. You know, the amount of times that I've been kicked in the face alone just from that and hard to you know, and so you think you look back and go oh, yeah, I could see how that's uh oh, yeah, it was a

problem. That's probably a problem. But you know, for me taekwondo was it was my life. And it was such a big part of me for so long that when I look back at my childhood, everything I did was to make sure that I was a better fighter. Everything what I ate was my activities, my lack of activities, my lack of fret, you know, being going to birthday parties and friendships. Well, no, I had to train that weekend, I had to train that morning, or I couldn't eat that. Or, you know, I, my parents wouldn't say, oh, we can't do this, because you have to travel that next week. So we have to save the money for gas or, you know, just there was so many different things when I look back how much my life surrounded around taekwondo.

 James Geering 40:34

Now, even though you're doing a sport that back, certainly when I was younger, it was, it was funny, that was still that kind of, you know, you should, you should register your hands as deadly weapons kind of mentality, that kind of ignorance. And I remember there was a guy who was the boyfriend of a girl, I was dating the ex boyfriend. And he and his mates, they were talking about teens now, you know, we would basically kind of circle me in the club and you're, you're going you want to go, I don't know, you're so tough. I could never fight you. You're the best and then they'd walk off and I'm like, wow, that was fucking easy. But anyway, I actually actually won the tournament in my hometown. That was I think it was a regionals and was in the paper. And they did a full one A and now they're like, Paddy Power. I'm dude, I am the same person. And that was the IETF. So it was really point fighting. It wasn't that great. But there was a facade that you, you know, could take care of yourself. Correct me if I'm wrong, but if I remember the, the interview with Jocko and then in the book, you talked about some bullying in your in your childhood. So talk to me about access interesting that someone who is known as a martial artist was still being preyed upon.

 41:37

Well, I got to understand, I think when I was still fighting, I was like four foot nine. I'm five foot now. Like, I mean, I haven't grown much. I'm not much bigger than I was when I was fighting. I'm probably 20 pounds heavier. So, you know, I was always I was always really small. The other thing about me too, though, is when you are in the schools that I was in I was in Catholic schools, right. And I was in like real Catholic schools, and I didn't conform Well, you know, I used to have really long blonde hair, I cut it off to be a couple inches short, I dyed it all crazy colors I listened to I wore a bandana and tearaway snap pants and slides and listen to Eminem religiously. That's it. I did not fit in. I did not want to fit in. I didn't. I didn't find my tribe, if you well. And that stood out to people. Not only did it stand out is when you you know when you're when you're known for something else, or that's it people becoming acquisitive about you because of a different reason that drives others in others nuts, right? Well, well, no, this is the pretty girl over here. Why aren't you paying attention to her? Why would you want to play with a tomboy? It's because I would be around only males. I mean, I joke about this now. But when I had Dr. Deborah, so on her and I both joke, she's this first degree black, but we were both like, man, if we were teenagers, now we would be encouraged to transition. Because I'm genuinely serious the way I was, how I walked, how I acted, how I talked, how I dressed, who I hung out with, we're all male. And there were male, because that was who I was training with a lot. And that's where I was comfortable with. And so, for me, I was more bullied, I think only because I didn't accept that I was being bullied. I didn't just roll and be like, oh, like you said, like, oh, yeah, you guys are the best. So I was the opposite. Like, if you want to fight, let's go to town.

I've got no issue with this. I'm not allowed to do this. But if you hit me first, then it's game on. And when I look back at Taekwondo, I mean, my God, I wish that was jujitsu. I wish I spent decades of my life doing something that seems more applicable to real life. I mean, when I think about striking sports, I go, yeah, if you're really good. I mean, you could do some damage. But Taekwondo in general, is not one that I wish I, you know, in terms of a martial art, I mean, practice practicality. You know, in real life, it's just not, it doesn't seem as applicable. But for me, I just think bullying was natural. I think it was natural for how different I was how much I didn't want to conform to everyone else. How much I didn't want to include myself in the girl groups or the little cliques. And I just didn't care. And so that just stood out. And you know, when something's different people pry it what's the different thing? That's just how it works?

**J** James Geering 44:15

Now, what was behind your identity at that point? Whether there? Was there anything earlier on that you were subconsciously rebelling against? Or was it just a simple, innocent expression of who you were?

**i** 44:28

I don't think I was ever trying at that time trying to rebel against anything. I think that's all I cared about was fighting. Period. Like there was nothing else to it. So the way I cut my hair was because it'd be easier when I'm training. I don't have to wash it all the time. The way I dress was because of course, I wear tearaway pants every other day where I'm overtop of my like, you know, my dobok. Of course, I'm going to wear those like, it was always about comfort. It was never about standing out. It was always about what's going to benefit my fighting capacity and what's going to benefit me at the club and what's going to benefit. It was never I never thought about anything else. It was like get the grades you need to get do the stuff you're supposed to do. And then you were always allowed to train. If you didn't mess up in school, you could go train, right? So I never, I never messed with studies I never messed with, you know, never handing in paperwork, because I always knew that my coach would kick my ass like, that was my mom's threat, right? That's okay, we'll just tell your coach. That's all she would need to say. And every bone in my body would shake, head to toe. Because I knew what that meant. That meant that I would have to spar with him. And that he was going to make a point about, hey, we don't hit people, or hey, we do what we're told or that was my discipline. And so, you know, I remember very, very vividly when one of our masters came down from Toronto, something had happened in school actually got in a fight that week, and I did not fight often. But this girl Ashley, Ashley Lawrence, yep. walked up to me and sucker punched me in the stomach. When I was standing up against the wall. It's like it's one of those weird vivid moments you remember, as a child where you go, why do I remember that? But it's like the school doors were here, there was a brick wall right behind me I was leaning up against this just walked up into a pot right in the stomach. And I remember just sliding down the wall, just like oh, like, you know, like, can't catch my breath. And then we end up getting in a fight. I went up there and lost my shit. And we got in a big fight. And I remember my mom saying to my coach, like, hey, this happened at school. She's like, Okay, well, masters in town. So, you know, she'll spar with him. He put me through a wall. He back kicked me through one of the walls. So

**J** James Geering 46:25

what's your perception of that form of discipline now being an adult?



46:30

I don't think of it as I still think of it as discipline. I think about it. As you know, my coaches were this is how they were raised. This is the way they were taught. My parents never laid a hand on me. I mean, I remember very one time my dad slapped me upside the head. And I was a teenager, though I had said something pretty heinous. And I came out of the bathroom. And I didn't know my dad was in the other room. And he came out at home walk right upside the head. But you know, my parents didn't, you know, they the threat of the belt was there, but they never hit me. So when my coaches would come in, I just thought of that as like, well, someone's always gonna be bigger and better than you. So get better. It was never like, Oh, I did something wrong. I'm such a bad person. I shouldn't go on that fight. No, she deserved it. She deserved that. She hit me first. That's what happens. It was never, never like, Oh, I just got beat up because I did something worse. It was like, hey, that well, you sucked there. So don't do that. Again, you will get kicked that way. Again, you will get put the wall again. I mean, for me, it was always about what do I just do better. So that that doesn't happen again.



James Geering 47:30

I had the man behind McDo Joe on a pro about a year ago now. And you know, we know him as showing some a lot of the CI videos and all that kind of stuff, the pressure point videos. But I would say the most admirable stuff he does is reveal a lot of the predatory actions of some of these martial arts schools. I was very, very fortunate in my journey. I think there were some great people in the TA GB in the UK. And then I fought WTF when I was in college. So that was again, you know, some some great people. But you hear these horror stories. And I know that there was a kind of sour end to your kind of Taekwondo journey as well. So let's talk about that for a moment. I mean, you have so much trust in these these organizations, these people are mentors. What was what was the dark side that you also got to witness?



48:15

So they weren't even just mentors. I mean, I lived with my coaches for a period of time, right? These people were my caregivers, on some level, you know, they were different than the coaches I had, the coaches that I had, I had the same ones until I started fighting in the military. So I had them from four years old to roughly around 13 When I think 1213 when this all started to happen, you know, and I had heard, and this is not to defame any martial art, or say this is happening all over. But I am saying it's happened and not only just happened to me, it happened to clubs in Toronto, where Masters would wait until their students were of 18 and then marry them and they were in their 40s and 50s. Like this was an ongoing issue and people don't like to talk about it because like what gives martial arts a bad name? Like no bad people give martial arts a bad name. Martial arts are incredible. They are one of the best things you can ever do for your child, especially young girls putting them into jujitsu, it is one of the best things you can do for your competence and your discipline. And your self worth. I think it was the reason why I am as strong as I am now. I had a base. Now. This started happening. I had no idea it was happening. My coach, the male coach because I was a husband and wife. The wife was a world champion. He was a world champion. They were both very well renowned.



Basically what started happening was my coach started a relationship with my teammate, who was underage by a longshot was like 1314 like young and started a relationship that went over two years. And ultimately, once it was found out, you know, I everything shut down, my mom pulled me from the club, we, you know, the whole thing kind of went off. And he ended up getting charged with statutory rape. And he went to, he went to prison for some time. And for me, because this was the person in the family that I had trusted, I would never fight for anyone else. Again, like a lot of the way I dedicated myself was because I knew I was also showing up as a representation to somebody else. And to me, that was everything. If I wanted to go show up to a tournament, I better come ready. Because if I didn't, that was a bad representation on my club and on my masters who taught me. And that is not something I ever wanted to be that person who didn't show up. If I had given it was given a black belt it was given because I knew what I was doing. And I got myself to that point, not because of a lot of clubs, because we had this issue in Ontario clubs. Were just like, I knew people who were like, sixth, seventh, eighth ninth degree black belt, and I would wax their ass with a red belt. I mean, with sorry, with. Yeah, with a red. Was it red? Blue, red, black. Yeah, because we had red. Sorry, I had to think of this has been a hot minute since I've like gone through the belt system there. Green, blue, red, black. Yeah. So I you know, and that's not to say I was better it was to say that that person was given a belt that they did not earn, you know, and so we were seeing some of that in other clubs in the local area. And ultimately, when he went to prison and the decision for me to obviously leave the club and everything to happen, I was given the opportunity to go fight at some of these clubs and to go start training at there. And I went to a couple of them, I went to a couple nights I didn't train I just watched, because a lot of other individuals that were coming from my club felt the same way about going to a different club, they train there their whole life, they were nervous, they were uncomfortable. So we would go and I would watch. And then I would start training some of the kids from the club privately at their homes, or parents would bring me in to help train them with patterns and things like that before belt testing because they weren't comfortable with those other people yet. And I remember going to watch and I just sat there and was like, I can't do it. I can't I can't fight for anyone else. I can't do it. I just can't do it. And that begun the spiral of mistrust and hate and anger and loss and grief. But I didn't have the tools or the ability to handle cope or know how to move through. And so for me, that was a that's when high school got nasty. For me. That's when I had to find another sport and start to put my aggression into something else because it was tearing me apart without even realizing how damaging it was to me.

 James Geering 52:28

And that was when rugby came in. That's when rugby came in.

 52:31

And that's when you know somebody my girlfriend, Lisa Gali. She said, Hey, I, you know, I play rugby now. And Lisa was always very quiet girl. we known each other since grade five. And she's like, Yeah, I play rugby now. And I was like, you played rugby. She's like, Yeah, it's so much fun. And I'm like, you don't hit people what? And so she's like, just come try. So I went and I tried out. And I loved it, I absolutely idea that I could straight arm somebody in the face while running at full speed and with no repercussions felt fantastic. The idea that I was a part of a team, again, a unit of something, something that people were counting on me to be good at, in that position. I love that. And the idea that I had to learn something new. The idea that I

could show up again, as myself, learn a different skill, get good at it, and then be useful to someone else. Right? The idea of being useful, again, is where rugby really stepped in and kind of filled that void for a temporary amount of time.

 James Geering 53:30

Beautiful. So during your time in high school, were you already thinking about the military? Was there another profession on your mind at that point?

 53:39

I didn't have any professional my mind. That's the scary fact. I didn't have any profession at all. I didn't have a clue in what I wanted to do. It just I was so driven towards sport, to this point where when I was in taekwondo, I wanted to be in the Olympics. I want to be in a professional athlete. I wanted to be an Olympian. And that was it. So for me the idea of actually thinking about long term never ever came into play. Even when I was in high school. It was okay, well, I'm getting on in school, but it was never like, let's prepare to become a doctor and you need to take AP and science and like it was like get through high school because school was hard for me. School was really difficult for me. I'd struggle with memorization in terms of like digesting information. Now I actually realized it's not a struggle with memorization, it's I didn't care or was interested in what I was being taught, because I can learn just fine now. You know, so for me, yeah, it was. I didn't have a plan and the military was never in my repertoire or even back of mind because I didn't come from a military family. I don't come from hunters. I don't come from people who own guns. I only when I started writing the book learned about my grandfather who served in World War Two and even now I still know very, very little about it. My father comes from a I think he's seven or eight children. He's the baby you know my My dad, my uncle was, you know, passed away a handful years ago. And he was in his mid to late 70s. So that, you know, that should tell you the age gap and the way that my family my dad was raised. So I didn't actually learn very much about my grandfather, he passed away when I think I was right when I was born, right, right after I was born.

 James Geering 55:20

So walk me through then graduation from high school, to your decision to join the Canadian Armed Forces and why you chose the army specifically.

 55:29

So for me, I joined you know, I left high school at 17, I was done just where my birthday worked. I was done a little bit early. So I went, had a bad breakup, had one of those high school, bad breakups where you're like, This is the love of my life, and everything is amazing. And then, you know, we broke up and he left me at prom, and it was like, the whole drama of everything. And I was like I need out of this town and blah, blah, don't fit in here. It was the whole, you know, big fish in a small pond kind of feeling. And I really did feel that way. So I found, you know, I applied to college last minute like last late super late. I applied to a couple colleges and a couple universities that I wanted to play rugby at. But I didn't have the grades to

get into the universities. So I got into Algonquin College in Ottawa, and I went there for travel and tourism, whatever the fuck that means. So they accepted me, I went, I got a, I was in an apartment with two other guys from my town that I had known that we're hockey players, and went to college for a couple months before I went before November, I went down. Sorry, I went to college for a little bit. And then on Remembrance Day, which is your Veterans Day, or if you're in the UK, it's Remembrance Day, but it's November 11th. And, you know, we were the Canadians and Brits were the poppies on the left side and Americans that you guys say Happy Veterans Day on those days, that's a day of remembrance for us. So I always go to those ceremonies, even if I didn't have a ton of military necessarily in my family, my family made it a point. This is what we do. Our schools in Canada, they do Remembrance Day ceremonies every year, they they do less and less, they take it less and less seriously than they used to, but they definitely still do them. And so I went to Remembrance Day ceremony down in Ottawa, which is our capitol. And so it's a large ceremony, the Prime Minister's at that one. And on my way back from there, I took the city bus back. And I was actually just in Ottawa two weeks ago, for the first time since I left the military. So it was like 1213 years ago. And it was a very weird feeling, seeing the old buses walking by the old recruiting office that I got, you know, signed up in and all of these things. So, you know, Ottawa has a special spot for me. And coming home, I met this lady on the bus, just this really cool, old veteran female, I didn't know much better, I just knew she was in the Air Force uniform. And she had a whole row of metals on and that's because she was coming back from the ceremony. And, you know, we just talked a little bit and something clicked. For whatever reason, something clicked something. It was like, it's funny, I just said this recently, it was kind of that like, movie moment, where now when you can look back at your life, and you can plot points, you can go, that's where the main character was, like, oh, the fork in the road, you know, that was the were which way she gonna go left or she gonna go right. It was like, that was the path. That was the moment that was the catalyst for me. And ultimately, I knew after that, like, you know, this isn't college isn't for me, this place isn't for me. And I went to a recruiters office and decided I was going to join the military, if they were going to take me and they took me right away. So I chose army, because I always wanted to be doing something I felt that was making a difference. And let me preface that with I am constantly and very, very, very aware that it takes everyone to make the military work. You know, it takes the the clerks, the service people, the cooks, cleaners, it takes everyone anyone who's pushing papers, doing anything, it takes everyone to make sure that those roles in the front lines can be given the right ammo, the right equipment, you know, letters, the the food that you name it, it takes everyone. So it's not that I didn't want to do one of those professions. It's that I wanted to make sure that I was doing something where I was on the frontlines in action doing something and being really present that way. So for me, I wanted to join infantry. And in Canada, the women, you can always you can join a combat arms trade. We've had that for quite a long time. And so I knew I could if I wanted to join, I could technically join infantry or any of the combat or morals. And so I told them that and they said I was too small for that. Which then they gave me the other options of armored, which is in a tank or artillery, which is big guns, and I wanted something big. I loved the big guns, but I didn't like the idea of being in a sardine can when it went off. So in which it was ironic, because I'm perfect. You know, I was the remote weapon system gunner for the T Labs. So Oh, I'm perfect and utter it, I don't have to take my plates or my kid off, I fit right in it all in. So technically, that should have been a better spot for me. But excuse me, that being said, I also knew what was happening. And I also knew that you roll over that thing with an ID, and it's going to be a problem. So I'd rather be outside of the tin cans and inside of it, so I went artillery. And at the time, they said, No problem, things are dead red, we need people. So that just meant, you know, we'll we'll take you if we, if we think we can use you, we'll take you you go through intake, we'll find out. So I

did everything I got sworn in, like a month later. So I started technically, my service started when you SWAT you swearin so that was the very end of 2007. And I started basic training at the very, very beginning of 2008. And then I deployed in 2009.

J

James Geering 1:00:50

So firstly, that you said, you have a very small stature, but you've been an athlete doing some pretty, you know, rough sports up to this point, what served you well and getting through boot camp and the training.

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1:01:01

I started off it. I didn't go in on on, you know, I went in pretty blind in terms of like, what is the military going to be like and the screaming and the sleep DAP and like all of that I am really like, you know, naive about that. But I did not go in blind when it came to fitness. Because I was fit. And the one of the reasons I chose Algonquin to was I got accepted to go try out for their soccer team. Right. So my grandfather played soccer when he came from Hungary. You know, my mom was my coach my whole life for that, too. So I was like, Oh, I'll go play soccer, at least I can, you know, be on a college team somewhere. And so I was fit. I mean, I think that was the biggest tool at my disposal was being in shape enough that I could handle what was going to be thrown at us. And not that anything was particularly difficult, like let's be honest with ourselves. Basic Training is basic training. The part that's difficult is the sleep deprivation, the change in how your life is going to work. And now the reprogramming it's not always the physical fitness. But for us because we lived in the mega so in St. John Quebec, there's this thing called the Mega. And it's this massive concrete building. And it's what whole it houses all of the when you come in to do your basic training. And when houses officers when they come and do their officer course and even our border security, I believe go through there as well. And so, for me, you did not like for us, there was no elevators, you weren't allowed to use them. They were there, they were there for staff staff only. So we were on the ninth floor, and everything was on the main floor except for where you slept. So you had to run those stairs every day, constantly, multiple multiple, multiple times a day. And a lot of people that's where they struggled, it wasn't even push ups It wasn't even running it was getting themselves up and down those stairs that many times a day after the 10k runs a four in the morning after the breakfast after the showers after you know XY and Z in all the kit doing all of that. So it was funny to see how much just stairs fucked people up. And the ability to run them consistently. The reason I was able to shower first is because I was fastest up the stairs. You know when the pod The reason I was able to get ready for inspection versus because I was fastest up the stairs, it didn't matter as long as you could be quick and you were fit enough you were gonna be fine. But that would be a struggle. If you were not in shape, man, people would have to go up to the 13th floor and it's called the Canadian military do not call it this. But everyone who's in it does. It's called fat camp. And it's where you go if you're out of shape. And they just train you until you can pass the PT tests right now since I've been in, they've made the standards a little bit lower in terms of your push ups and your situps and what staff can do to you, they can't hit you anymore with the walker, you know, with the pacing stick, they can't do certain things anymore. They can't make you hold push up positions for X amount of time. And so going in now is going to be very different than when I went in, right. I sound like a 92 year old World War Two veteran and back in my time, but it's it's true. It was different. It was a different time. Just a very different time.

**J** James Geering 1:03:56

So there you are, you've grown up in a forest in Canada. And now you find yourself in Afghanistan. So talk to me about the initial culture shock or ban.

 1:04:05

The Culture Shock was heavy. It was it was a lot. You know, Canada does their best job. We all do our best job to do workup, training, right? And in the UK, the thing that you guys do that's absolutely brilliant that we don't do is you send people to Africa to train in the heat and in the sun. And you find out a lot of things about people when you start putting them in heat exposure like that. In Canada, we go to Wainwright, Alberta in the winter and minus 40 to prepare for Afghanistan. So you know that was a The reason it was a shock to the system was we did a whole one week in Texas just a whole one week and heat. You know, so the the exposure to the country itself was wild because we were not trained on what to expect culturally, languages community how they work there, and then we knew it was hot. But goddamn Afghanistan in the summer is A different type of places a different type of heat. And for a lot of people who grow up and you know, California, Texas, Arizona, they're like, oh, it's not that much worse. It's like, well, if you grow up in, you know, Ontario, where you get minus 40 degrees in the winter, it's gonna be a shock to the system. But the thing that I think I noticed the most was the cultural, like the cultural differences right off the bat. We were not given enough education on that. And I had someone on my show recently named Travis Peterson, who runs the oh, he runs a Federation, the moral compass, moral compass Federation, good job brain. And basically, it's a conglomerate of nonprofits. Right. And he had worked in and out of Afghanistan for a lot of years. And that was one of the conversations we had was, he's like, what kind of training like culturally did you get? I have the booklet that's in French in the language. I did not speak that talk very briefly about a couple of the dialects. And we started talking about when you asked an Afghani, how's your day going, how's your family, you better be able to sit there for an hour now to hear the response, where we weren't taught things like that. We weren't taught about cultures. We were I knew men didn't like women. I knew women had to wear Berceuse. I knew women couldn't vote, I knew women couldn't like, I knew some of the basic cultures. But that was not because the military taught me it was because I went on the internet, you know, so we were not given a lot of support. And in that sense, so honestly, I would think culturally, and the heat, those two things were the biggest smash to the face. Once we landed on the ground, it was literally couldn't like, it was that kind of heat, where it took your breath away when you step into a really hot sauna, and you acclimate, and don't get me wrong, you're acclimate, and everything becomes fine. But culturally, it was a very big shock to the system for me.

**J** James Geering 1:06:53

I just interviewed Paul Harris yesterday who was is a Royal Marine. And after he transitioned out, he had his own mental health struggles, too, and ended up walking around the entire mainland, Great Britain, and just finished four days ago. And it was interesting, because so many of the military guests on here are from the US. Some are Canadian, but most of them are us. And so it occurred to me that okay, well, I know why almost every service member in the States signed up post 911, they saw this thing happen on their own soil, and then off they went to serve to try and you know, find some justice for what had happened here. But when you

think about it, what's the driving force for someone from England or Scotland or Wales? What's the driving force from someone from Canada? So what was the messaging? You didn't have that kind of home attack element? What was the messaging in the Canadian military?



1:07:46

You know, the overall messaging was were part of NATO, I think I mean, that's how it was, I perceived that maybe that wasn't the messaging they were trying to convey, and maybe others will say something different. How I was perceiving it was that we were part of NATO. And time after time, when the US goes, and fuck somewhere, so do we. That's just how it works. You know, and that's how we were taught in school, we are a part of the United Nations and the United Nations stands up for those that are suffering and impoverished and struggling. And, you know, when, when America went into Iraq, it was because of XY and Z. And now we all know a lot of that to be lies. And, you know, that's the saddest part, looking back is becoming an adult now and understanding what we were doing. You know, on some level, that's the saddest thing for for me at the time. I was hearing on the news about people being killed, and in 2000. And maybe so if someone hears this and I'm wrong, I apologize. But I don't know if it was 2007 or 2006. We had our first female and Captain Nicola Godard, die in the white schoolhouse attack. And she was the first female she was an artillery. And she was a foo, and she was in a tank when it happened. And you know, something about that struck a chord for me, you know, a powerful female over there doing something on the front lines showing up in a different way, because the United States didn't allow women on the front lines at the time and either did the UK. So when you were seeing these type of women, it was like, I can go and do that, too. I can go and show up and do that, too. So when I was seeing that we were we Yes, we were part of NATO, but we were not. We were not fighting as a party United Nations anymore. Canada was there to you know, to fuck around. And I wanted to do that I wanted



1:09:33

those people who



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are killing individuals who were making it so that women didn't have rights so that girls who grew up were being sold by their fathers to other people. At the ages of what 789 You see, some of these videos are horrific. You see the father performing the marriage for the you know, the seven year old daughter who's covered in a book Go and the 5060 year old man who grabs her and takes her away like that is horrific. You know, they were selling girls, they were stoning women to death. If they looked at a male soldier, that, to me is why I went, I didn't go because 911 happened. 911 Just put it on the map and on my radar, you know, 911 was tragic. I remember, I know exactly where it was, I remember my dad calling in because my dad was trucking close to New York, my mom was freaking out. I remember being in the basement watching it on the news, watching the towers fall like I know what it was. But I didn't know about you know, Iraq was happening. I was still like fairly young teenager, I was a teenager when that was happening. When Afghanistan started happening. That's when you know, when Canada got involved in Afghanistan and Afghanistan is sort of pop off. That's when it became part of the radar. It was on the news in Canada, people were aware of it Canadians were



leaving now. And the conversation with Stephen Harper was, we are at war. You know, I remember we are at war. And it wasn't that it was happening here. But it was happening there. And Canadians were going and we were giving them the guns to go and do it. And so when I started hearing, you know, rhetoric like that, like you hear it on the news, and you just hear it slowly, and you hear it slowly, and you hear it slowly. And then I'm gonna go I'm gonna go go join the army. You know, so what really, why did I join why I think I joined was because I truly believe that I could go and help women and kids. What really probably happened was I overheard and listened to enough things that drove me in a direction that I was told by the media would be the right thing to do.

 James Geering 1:11:36

So interesting perspective, and that's kind of ties in with a two part question. I always ask anyone who's actually been deployed into a combat zone, regardless of the politics. And the reason I asked him, we preface this quickly. In the US, especially and I don't know if it's the same in Canada, we get a very polarized view on a lot of things, but also war, and you get the one side kind of kill them all that God saw them out stack bodies, bullshit, you get the other side, they're all baby killers, you know. And then you have the men and women, the children that we send to these countries with our flag on their shoulder, to do the things that we asked them to do. And rarely do you ever get to hear those voices. So regardless of the politics, regardless of you know, one would argue the propaganda that sent you to, you know, Afghanistan in this case, was there a moment where you realize boots on the ground? You've seen videos when you were back home, but boots on the ground that there were some atrocities? There were some horrible people that did need to be, you know, address while you were over there, regardless of the initial reason that you were sent? I like the

 1:12:35

word addressed. They need to be addressed. Yeah, they need to be eradicated. Of course. Of course. Course. Absolutely. There is more. There was, you know, here's the thing about artillery, you, you're far enough away, but you know what you're doing, you know, you're far enough away that you know, when you pull a lanyard or you load that round, it's not landing on nothing. And you also know that what you're about to do is level wherever you're dropping that. So, you know, naively I'm like, you know, I'm an artillery gunner. It's, you know, I'm sending rounds downrange, I'm sending rounds downrange, people need help. I don't think of it as I was landing on bad people, I think of it as if you were shooting at our people, and you got close enough that you got caught, we got called. That means the people that are wearing flags that I respect that are a part of my coalition, they need our help. And that didn't matter to me what was on the other side, as long as I was helping those people, I'm down with it. Now, here's where things change, though. Things change when you are close enough to see the enemy with your own eyes. That's different. Or when you go into a compound and you see what the oppression because of that enemy looks like and done to women and children. That's when things change. When you see the direct result of somebody stepping on an ad that was made by someone while they filmed it, so that they could use it as propaganda for killing UK members or Canadian members or British or American members. That's when flips like that switch flips in a real real dark, heavy, truest sense of like, I will wipe you off the face of the earth and smile while I do it. And that sounds harsh, and it is harsh, and it is aggressive and people will say and I fucking love this ever since I started doing podcasts she's just aggressive



and verbose because you know, that little yappy ego of hers I have no ego. I just know what it looks like to see my friends wiped off the face of the earth while standing in front of me. And you don't get to tell me what I should feel after that happens. Because most people who listen to this oh never experienced that and I pray to God they never have to. That's the whole point of soldiers going there so that you don't have to see it when it comes here. But you keep fuck Hang around, and that shit will come here. So when you're there, of course, 1,050%, there are people who need to be eradicated off the face of the earth. Now, there can be an argument made for it, those children were indoctrinated at one point in their lives when the Russians were there. And all of that happened, and they saw their parents killed. And you created another angry generation that hated Westerners because of what was happening. So don't get me wrong, I'm not saying any of us are innocent in any of this. And they felt that way about us, you know, when I would take, and people again, they would never do it through, okay, when I would take eight to 10 women and kids by myself into a room and sit them down.



1:15:45

When I, before things went sideways,



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when I will, how I would handle that situation would be very different than how I handled it after I witnessed some things. I would be very calm, you know, I would take my helmet off, I would sit down to their level and try to tickle the kids while I searched them, so that it will be less horrifying. Because people cannot imagine unless this has happened to you, somebody kicking in your door at four in the morning, right after you've prayed a whole bunch of soldiers with guns and these crazy things on their heads that glow green, screaming and language you don't understand. And then a stranger, grabbing your children and moving them to another room without you and shutting the door. Now, if you came into my house and tried to take my child to another room without me, no wonder they reacted the way they react. That is horrifying. And that is the thing of my nightmares happening to me. So from perspective, when I look back at the way that I had handled situations, I'm not stoked on myself. But I understand why I was the way I was. Because ultimately, anywhere we were in the areas I was on foot.



1:17:11

They all wanted us dead.



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And I say all because yeah, maybe not the children because they weren't quite indoctrinated yet. But we were in rural enough areas where you know, the elders Word was God. And if the elder was a Taliban member, or the elder was tied in with the Taliban, you can bet your ass the propaganda that came down from that was not great. It wasn't like the Americans and Canadians are saviors. It was like, if you see a soldier, you tell us so that we can hopefully eradicate those people from coming into our town. Like, that was a real reality. So now looking back at when I think of Afghanistan, and I think of the children that I was involved with, or the

women that I had to search or be around or the firefights, or any of those things. You know, it saddens me because to know that some of those children are old enough to remember that a person who looked different with hair that they had never seen a color they had never seen, got to put their hands all over them and children. And I'm now the thing that they think about when they're afraid. That's sad. That's sad to realize that I'm part of people's nightmares. That makes me sad.

 James Geering 1:18:24

Well as a powerful, powerful perspective, and I think this is what's so enlightening. Is these nuanced perspectives of war. It's not a two dimensional chess being John Rambo experience. You know, there's so many people that have said exactly the same thing. Yes, there were dangerous people. But you know, reverse engineer that What did what did the UK is involvement due to where Iraq is today? You know, what did, as was telling them poor, what did the overfishing of Somalian oceans do to the piracy element? You know, I mean, we it's very easy to create the Boogeyman. Now, I want to walk through your your journey and some of the the traumatic events that you ended up carrying with you for a long, long time. But before we do, the other side that we don't hear about is kindness and compassion in some of these combat zones. And the thing that again, we talked a lot about the media today. But the thing that politicians and the media are still doing now in Russia is if if there's an enemy, within a country, the whole country is the enemy. And yet, you know, I've had people on here from Iraq, from Afghanistan, that were allies to us that were working side by side, to free their country to stop the oppression. So talk to me about some events that really kind of resonate with you as far as kindness or compassion. It might be within your own your own armed units or with the people that you served to protect.

 1:19:42

For me, I served I was so privileged to have exposure to the Americans, the British and the Canadians. And so, being a female doing the job I was doing, that's why I had the exposure it had nothing to do with Oh, you're some special No, no, no, no, I was just the only vagina in the room. And America didn't allow those two be near the front lines and even in the UK.

 James Geering 1:20:02

That should be a t shirt by the way.

 1:20:04

I know. I know. I you know, now it is I don't know if I'd be allowed to have.

 James Geering 1:20:08

Well, maybe you can also nowadays. Oh, right here.



1:20:11

See? I like Yeah, I like it. I like it. Um, yeah, for me, you know, again, I was really fortunate in that. When I look at some of the times with the Americans that I was with, you know, they were very compassionate people, they did the best that they could in the situations that they were put in. There was a situation inside of our FOB actually, that was looking back now was a moment where I, I did my best to have compassion. But ultimately, it hint, it was more of nothing bad had happened to me yet. So the compassion was already there. And but it was at a time where it was blind compassion, and blind kindness and blind. The idea that they were being that they were trying to help. So what had happened was, we were inside the fob. And because we were in an American FOB, we had a corner that the gun sat at, and in order for us to be able to use their showers and their washing machines at the fob, we had to send one of our gunners up there every week to do GD duty. And that meant cleaning the showers doing whatever or immense managing the Afghans that we had coming into the fall that were building concrete plant pads for us, and stuff for the mechanics and things to work on. So one day, we were there, and it was my turn to go up and I was up with another French guy. And we were all the Afghans got brought in and everyone was doing their work everyone was fine. Cut to when you're doing that you have your rifle, you have a couple mags on you, but you don't have plates on you don't have anything else on you're just in your camis and your floppy hat. And you're just kind of standing there watching. At that point, I look even smaller, right when I don't have all my kid on. And an Afghani came over to me. And he had really great English though, like on the concerning level of good English for a rural area in the May one district and he seemed like he was above everyone else. He never really got hands and feet dirty. He never really got in there was doing anything with the concrete kind of just like watched everyone. And I remember looking at my buddy and I was like Kisa like who's this? And he was like, oh, you know, it's it's one of the Afghani he's just he's just don't like we didn't we weren't hard on them like they they're no they're there to work with just leave them be. And so he comes over to me and he starts asking me like, Oh, I miss miss, like, whereas you have new guns or you guys are new Hmm. Because we had just rotated in we had just ripped out another unit reservist unit. And we had rotated in. And I guess the same Afghans had been coming in and out and working for us. And they would sleep outside the fob. Right? So that they weren't picked off. And they'd send the money off to their families and that kind of thing. So this guy keeps coming over to me and I was okay, go back to work, go back to work. And then they come back over again. And you'd like all but your new way. You see you have a big gun. So they should fire. Yeah, they can shoot far. And now I am going like you can't Don't ask those questions, you know, you know, you're not supposed to you know, and I let this go on, though probably 20 minutes longer than anybody else would have let it go on because I was naive to the idea that this person if could get, if he could get a hold of my gun would shoot the entire fall if he could, like I was naive to that we had been told, you know, people were being overrun, the fobs were getting overrun that people are getting engaged. So like this, the wiring this HESCO gave me this false sense of security, you know, this tiny fob with these guns and these Americans, I had this false sense of safety with the HESCO. I don't know why, but I did. And again, this goes down to the reality of what was going on in that country, the how uneducated, we were, when we were being brought into that country. I just couldn't believe somebody would want to hurt me, like directly like that. And you know what I mean? I'm like, he's a human being. He's just asking me a question. It's not a big deal. Nor did I ever answer any of those questions, though, right? I knew that you shouldn't be asking me. So this went on. And this went on, and it kept coming over next it was Hey, where's the where's the where's the cooler? He wanted to get a water and I'm like, it's right beside like, you know, he was just trying to attempt to get conversation out of me. And then he would go, where's the ammunition? I can't see it. It's not in the same

spot. It was like he was starting to ask now questions about movements and how far we shoot. Where do we keep our ammo, things he should not be asking. And he knows that too. That's the kicker. And are standing there and it just started to get to the point where, yes, I was naive. And that was in the compassion was there. But now it was all the red flags were flipping off in my head. But the last thing I wanted to do was cause a problem for the Americans. I didn't want to be the girl at the gun that made an issue or something that wasn't an issue. So I let it go a little bit longer. And then finally he came back over and I think one of the last things he had asked me was how many Hey, are you here? If you're new, how many how many Canadians are with you? Kind of thing, right? And then I went, Nope, we're not doing this anymore. And I went over to one of the American Sergeant's. And I said, Hey, look, you know, this guy is asking a lot of questions. He knows he shouldn't be asking. I don't know what you want me to do here. And it goes, What's he asking? And we ran through it. I got to like, this is how you knew I was more compassionate and empathetic than this, America. And he goes, I got to point to on probably a list of 10 questions. And he looked at me, his demeanor changed, everything changed. The switch flipped, and his face went straight. And he looked at me and he goes, put around in the chamber make ready, and I went, What the fuck? Did I just do? Like, what did I just cause? And because of how naive I was, I wasn't thinking, Oh, we're about to stop a guy that potentially is going to do something shady, but Oh, no, I caused a problem. I don't want to cause a problem. And sure enough, he took off and got on comms quick and he took off and within five minutes a gator all Blackadder pulled up. And I mean, this thing is blacked out. And big dudes in regular clothes with beards showed up. And you got to understand something. I was a gunner. I'm a grunt. I didn't know any special operators until I got out of the military. I'm more connected now with special operators than I was when I was in.



1:26:27

So I knew of these guys, but I didn't.



1:26:32

I've never seen them. They're like the ghosts that don't exist, right? Because Canada with the special operations we don't the hill guys are like very quiet. They're not like the seals and the Rangers where you were hearing stuff. It was like JTF to exists, but you don't know who they are. And you don't see them. So for us, I was never exposed to the Rangers, the seals, the MAR sock, like I didn't have that exposure. So when these guys rolled up, I was like, oh, no, I fucked up bad. Like I did something really wrong. And next thing you know, they jump out. One comes over to me goes which one is it? And I was I just like kind of nodded and did a head tilt. And it goes, got around. And I said yes. And this was the first time I had ever put around, you know, besides flying in the Chinooks, where they make you make ready before you're leaving calf to go to the fob, to have an arena round. And this is the first time I'd actually wrapped around in the country. And they went over to the guy, and they grabbed them. And he starts running towards me and just puts his hands and like the prepositions. They Miss Miss Miss, what did I do? What? What did I do? What did I say? What did I do? And this is where the compassion side of me that was still an empathy was still part of my being was like, oh, no, like, oh, no, this is gonna be bad like, and he starts crying and starts weeping. And he gets downs on his hands on his knees. And he's like, miss, I didn't do anything. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. Tell them I didn't tell them. And he's telling me like, Tell these guys tell these guys. And then they zapped strap them. And they put a bag over his head firstly, like blindfolded desires. And then they took him

and he's just screaming to me, and I'm just watching and now all the Afghani workers are getting concerned. So now I'm this the first time I'm pointing face to face my rifle with around in it at other human beings, you know, within the distance of my rifle. And I'm just like, you know, get back, get back, you know, do the same sort of thing you would hear and I had never dealt with this before. And this guy is getting bagged and tagged and put in a gator. And these guys are like, freaking out because one of the guys is getting taken away and they don't know what's happening. And I'm like, get the fuck back. It's a funk back. And they're kind of backing up. And I'm like, get back to work get back to work kind of thing. And people are translating. And these guys are just throwing their arms up because I'm a girl. I'm a young looking female, who now just made someone get taken away. Where, again, this goes into culture. Women don't get those type of rights in that country. And so being taken seriously enough by them, that shock the shit out of them. I'm pointing our gun at you. I'm now taking someone and making them go away because it's something they were talking to me about. So that scared the shit out of enough people where they kind of went back and they were just kind of standing around and they backed up and everything kind of calmed down. But while this is happening the guys get back in the gator. They don't say too fucking words to me. This guy's in the back just like you can hear him like, like, I'm sorry. Like you could hear him like my life is about to end and I know that and they take off and we never see that guy again. And so now looking back. And I was never really told, all I was told was his paperwork didn't line up. Meaning he got into the fob and we're not sure 100% How. And now looking back, I'm like, okay, cool. Well, that was good. I caught something. Maybe I caught something. Maybe I didn't. Maybe his paperwork really did line up. And that was the excuse whatever it was, he was taken for a reason. And that was my first moment where I realized that the things I say and did in that country were going to happen impact in Iran, like a ripple effect on people's lives for the rest of their existence, whether that was a family member, whether he was Taliban or not, he was known enough that he should never have been inside that FOB, or he would have been allowed back in. He was never I've never no one saw him again. And I was never talked to you about it either. So that was a moment where compassion, I believe, if I had been a little more naive, or a little more soft, that could have got me killed, and everyone else killed if I didn't catch it, or it was innocent, and he truly was just asking questions. But the other side of me goes, you know, we briefed them before they come in on what they can ask what they can't what they can say what they can't you know what I mean? So there wasn't, there wasn't understanding. So I was definitely a lot more compassionate than, and I still think, regardless of how that situation went, it did show empathy and compassion from me in a place that I didn't expect for that to show up. Now looking outside the wire, I was compassionate until I wasn't. Yeah.

 James Geering 1:31:07

So let's kind of walk through that I know, you know, you had some pretty acute events in and ultimately transitioned out. So yeah, walk me through, you get there. Now. I mean, I would say that was a huge success as a civilian, someone who's never worn a military uniform. Those sound like giant red flags. So even sitting here in Ocala, Florida, I think you did, you did great things with that. But you know, obviously, then then there's, there's these these, these losses that you start suffering, so kind of walk me through the most acute events of your, your time in combat, and then we'll work towards the transition.

 1:31:41

So I'll talk over them the same way. I talked over them before. And the reason I stayed that

way is because there are there were a couple individuals. And by couple, I mean, there was one specific individual who was said in an email that it's not, she shouldn't be talking about this, but here's the thing.



1:31:59

I wasn't the only one involved.



1:32:01

And when someone dies in a tragic way, in the way that they did,



1:32:06

there was a lot of us there.



1:32:08

And a lot of us suffered because of and that does not give the right for someone else to say that I don't get to feel explicit experience or talk about what happened. Because it's still part of that's a part of my life. That's a part of my story, too, even though it happened to another individual. And I say that because terrible things happen in war that affect a lot of people that are around not just the person who gets shot or blown up or whatever. Terrible things happen in war that is war. And the gravity of that does not fall on deaf ears with me. You know, it's not a story I tell and, and I'm like, Oh my God, it was so awesome. Like, this shit fucked me up for the most of my life. And it's still something I'll remember until I am 90 years old on a rocking chair miserably. I will still remember those moments, I will still smell those smells, I will still hear those things. I will still feel what happened. Because I was there and it fucking was horrific. It was stuff that I wish no one ever should ever see. And so ultimately, what happened was I was taken by the British in a very kind way I was asked to go the British was not to kidnap. This is not Liam Neeson I was asked to go with the British as their female searcher for the cultural support team, meaning my job was to go and search women and children and go into the compounds with the infantry units. You know, let them kick the door bomb and on goes in. I go in behind bomb dog. I take women and children he searches area. That's how this thing works. We were told there's not going to be a lot of women and kids around. That's what the rule was, you know, we've been they've been going in and out of these places recently. And they weren't seeing a lot of women and children sticking around. That's indicative of the fact that there's about to be a lot of fighting. What started to happen was women and children started to stick around. And that throws things, the wrench into things. Now you've got civilians in an act of you know, firefighter warzone. And women and children can be used as patsies. You know, they can be sacrificed pretty much quite easily. You know, the Taliban were known for strapping children with IEDs and giving them grenades they were known for, you know, wearing burkas and putting AKs underneath them. We they were known for hiding tons of money and radios and phones that they shouldn't have within women's hair and under their breasts and hiding them in their burkas because they didn't have the American British did not have women on the front lines that were going and searching these women because they couldn't write

religious reasons. There's a cultural thing again, right? And so when I went with the British, we went out on on foot operation onto the pendulum district and I was told I was gonna be shuffled between a lot of different groups of human beings just because there was me and one other female and she was with on the other side of the operation with another unit. And so She was Canadian as well. And so we went and ultimately within the very first compound we kicked in, like we landed at night, we waited till morning prayer out in the field, Morning Prayer kicked off first door kicked in, just started everything. And they're like, Yeah, we're not going to use you're just going to hang out with the bomb dog. Sure, shit, first house, boom, collar up. And so I would get brought up, and everything had already calmed down inside until I walked inside. Because I immediately throw my gloves on, sling my weapon and start growing into the room, the kids and the women. And the Afghan fathers start losing their mind because my hairs tucked in at the time. I'm blonde, and I have a braid. So it's tucked in so I don't stand out. And they all thought I was a man going into this room by myself with all of their women. So it there was a bit of a not a tussle. But if you will, there was some moments there was some British people had to grab a hold of some people and they're like, they think you're a man, they think you're a man, like take your helmet off, take your helmet off. But at this point, we had been taught to never take our helmets off. Because we had an individual, Captain green, Trevor Green, who I think it was an O seven, or six or seven was in a prayer circle from Canada sat down, and a Taliban member came up and put an X through his head, because he had a helmet off. Now Trevor lived Trevor is alive. He lives on Victoria Island. And he's the reason why on our house in Canada, the organization exists. So Trevor is an accredited this guy is he's still an inventory captain. He's still a bad dude. But, you know, he is. Obviously his injuries had had life, you know, changing repercussion. So we were taught don't take your helmets off. So when they're like, take your helmet off, take your helmet off, I was very hesitant, take my helmet off. That being said, I was also told like you're on your own, there's no superior with you. Now I'm a no hook gunner, who has had an maybe a year in the service at that point. And when I don't have anyone telling me what to do, I'm so used to being told what to do. I had to then lean on, okay, I, I'm being told where to run and done and do this. But ultimately, this part of my job is on me, this, I can rely on me for this. So I took my helmet off, and I showed them and the dad looked at me and kind of like was taken aback put my helmet back on. And I went in the room. And that's when it was my first exposure to crying and screaming children who were shaking so much, because they were so fucking terrified. They were like peeing their pants. Of course, they were, you know, and that's when the compassion was still there. The Empathy was still there. And I searched everyone and at this point, we're in the rural area. So girls, and people were chewing on this stuff that was like a, like an opioid. It's, I don't remember exactly what it's called. But a lot of the Afghanis would eat it. And it's like a drug and basically just makes them fucking loopy and all this. So a lot of the girls, teenagers were on that. And they were just moving around, and you tried to put someone in a duck position at that point. And they're just grabbing it, whatever you've got, and things like this. And so I tried to be patient and compassionate, less forceful at that point. Now, we did that for a whole day. And at that point, that's when the firefight started, where we would go from compound to compound from small village to next village. And that's when we would get hit. That's when like, that was my first experience of like rounds downrange the pop up a pop over your own head. Again, I knew that was happening. But this was something I wasn't trained for. So it was started to become a little bit of a shock to the system. So once we hit the second day, that is when I believe the cause that whole week, was really molded into one now at this point. And that's when that morning, that's when we had our first loss via Nid. And so we were on foot, we were pushing forward, there was a gray puck to the left hand side just up ahead, a row to the right of it down maybe a couple 100 meters to the other right hand side, there was another compound with a second story on it, we slapped a sniper up there. And then I was across from that directly leaning up against a compound with a couple other guys with my back to a wall. And it was in the



morning. And one of the interpreters was with us and the Icom radio, which is a radio that we can hear the Taliban speaking on. And when the icon is clear, they're close. When the icons chatter. And like spotty, they're not as close. And so the icon was super clear. And it was fairly quiet. You know, we weren't hearing much but it was really clear. So we knew we were in the area, we knew stuff was gonna go and we had already been getting attacked all the time. So, we knew there was you know, this is going to be a sketchy kind of operation. Now, we were all sitting there waiting for the two individuals that had pushed forward one with a metal detector the bricks use this handheld kind of like metal detector. And again, let me just state this for the people who are listening that I know you are listening, you do use those. So stop pretending that you don't you do and one of the individuals had The metal detector another guy went behind them to, as he had his head down detecting to provide cover fire if necessary. He went inside of the gray puck to the left hand side. And this gray part is like a huge, I'm terrible with like size references. So it looked like it could have been a two story, but it was a one story and I had like rectangular squares kind of cut out of it. Oh, and to aerate through. And there was a pile of sticks at the back of the grape pot. So we're all sitting there kind of waiting. And then I feel the ground under me shake, unlike anything I've ever experienced in my life. And I whipped my head to the left. And I didn't have comms on. I didn't have a radio, but I could hear the Brits radios just popping off. And as I whipped my head, the individual with a metal detector had stepped or disturbed. Not sure if he fully stepped on the metal detector hit the sticks. But ultimately, there was a massive ID underneath that. And just sent him in what was left of him into the air. And I witnessed that. And the blast of that. And the other individual that was at the door down on one knee providing cover took a brunt of that blast and blew his kit off. He was so it blew plates helmet rifle was twisted. And just just fucking disseminated everything off of the guy. Like I don't even understand how it happened. And he was bleeding. And he he came running, like adrenaline kicked in, and he came coming down that pathway that they had just cleared. And you know, at that point, you know, some stuff had happened and a medical was brought over and things got nasty really, really fast. The IUD was



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basically the the trigger point for the Taliban to start filming and to start the secondary attack. You know, it was the moment where they knew we would all rush in and that's when you get more soldiers right that's like with a like a terrifying the Boston bombing right? Forget me, you know, forgive me if I'm incorrect on this, you know, the first ID then the second kind of blast Those are always brought into to hurt the people that are trying to help that's how you make more mass cash. Right. So the Taliban are known for doing this because then they use that moment to film you know, they're filming it. And right over the icon radio before myself and a couple other guys get told to go run towards the grey pot. You can hear the icon haha like well, you can hear them praising God, they got one of us right? There Brett's radios are going off and one of the staff members tells me and a couple other guys go, go run Go. Now that's where things got harder for me. Because the realization of what I was in and the fact that people wanted us dead that badly hit. And when I started running, we came down off the compound jumped down off the off of the road and jumped down onto the left hand side, there was a bit of a ditch and was a really thick Bush really tall looks like cannabis plants. But they're not they look like it. And we start running through that, because the road hadn't been fully cleared. So we started running through that to get to the, to the road, that then we had to cross to jump into the into the great pipe. And when that happened, I was having that. If you've seen it in movies, it's where everything slows down. And the slow motion starts happening. And you can hear your breathing and you cannot move fast enough. And that's what had happened to me. I was already at that point disassociating what was going on from my physical body. Now I

understand because I know what that looks like some walks like but at the time, this was just what survival mode kicked in and Real Fight or Flight looks like. So we got to the edge counted to three and we all took off into the grave. At this point, small arms fire had just started. And that's when collection began. So there were other people inside. And we had to start doing body collection because we leave nothing behind we leave no one behind ever no matter what. So we go we start collecting putting things whatever we had into the bags, and then one of the guys brings the stretcher over and that's when mortars start coming down range and now they're getting really really close and we're taking small arms fire and it's getting sketchy super super fast. And they called into Pedro flights which are the flights to come and grab the injured or the dead. And from what I'm told because I've learned about them since is they don't fly alone they always fly in a packet to like to to guide like two pilots go to Blackhawks and one had landed and was taking the the injured individual and was waiting for us to come with the rest. So we took off I slung my rifle, carried two helmets, my gear and then the rifle of the individual that had just been hit at the blast that was sitting out the door. So that's why when I say I knew that thing was twisted it was because I had it in my hands. And I had two rifle helmets slung over my one arm. And then right in front of me was the we were carrying his body on a stretcher, what was left of his body and all of the kit was on a stretcher. So a guy had the back end and then had the and then the stretcher was there and then another guy was in front of the stretcher carrying the back of the stretcher and I was right behind them when we were running right now as we're running rounds are coming down range and that's the first time I've heard them ever come that close. They are whizzing and popping, and I could hear them but it didn't matter. And then as we start running one of the guys trips a bit and drops one of the sides of the stretcher. So then we grab everything again and we're kind of sitting ducks and then we take off again and then we get everything onto the stretch back on the stretcher we take off we get them into the compound and you hear one of the Blackhawks common just unleashed living hell just out of you hear those those many guys are just the rounds going down and the only time I'd ever heard that was when we were doing workup training in in Wainwright when we were doing our first live fire exercise with everyone. It was the first time I had heard many like like the set like door gunners like popping off. I've never heard that before. I heard it over top of my head. And you can hear the rounds thinking thinking the brass coming down. And so this was the first time I had heard it in combat. And at that point, it all just sounded like muffled noise. And we got back into the compound. And everything had kind of calmed down once the flights took off, and everything kind of got quiet. And that's when I guys were sitting off in a circle on the right hand side. And they were all you know, chain smoking and just kind of talking and shooting the shit. And this was my first death. So for me, at that point I didn't have gloves on and everything I was carrying and grabbing was with my bare hands. And that's when I had blood on my hands. And that's the point where my buddy who's a medic, Greg Hardy, who was the medic that responded, Craig had done other deployments. And he, he was a seasoned medic, this guy was really good at what he does, he's still really good. He's a fucking amazing dude. And I just kept rubbing my hands like really, really like obsessively and really aggressively. And I just like I can't get it off, I can't get it off, I can't get it off. And I just kept saying I can't get it off, I can't get it off, I can't get it off. And I was having a fucking breakdown. I was truly having a fucking breakdown. And my brain and my body and everything went into this survival mode that I didn't leave until only a handful of years ago. So after that, that's when I really learned how the damage is done to the psyche. It's done. Because once you lose someone like that, it's not like, oh, everyone stopped the war. We're all going back to decompress. 15 minutes less than that we were pushing on to the next compound. We move into the next compound, that's when we start getting rocked again, every time we left compound, we were getting shot out and we were pushing forward again. And I honestly don't know if that was the same day or the day after. But we were getting shot at you know all through the night and things like that we were in and we would take over these

people's compounds. Kick out the people stay in the compounds set up the OP guys would jump on top. And then that day we were we were pushing forward and what had happened was I was with a different group of guys now at this point, right? So this is what had happened is I had been shuffled between all these Alpha Bravo, Charlie, tu Tu, Tu, Tu, Tu, Tu, Tu front back moving forward, I have no idea who I am and where I am or who I'm with or why everyone looks different. I just know I see the British patch. Those are the right people follow those people. And at this point, the sergeant so Sergeant Steven noble, who's still in he also reviewed the book. He said, Because I said how did how did I end up getting on the roof? I don't remember what the situation was. And he goes because what was happening was we were pushing forward and and one of the compounds ahead we heard screaming. We heard screaming really loud and we needed to get on the roof. And you were the closest So myself and a couple other guys went into this compound and jumped up onto the roof, bomb dogs, medics and any of like CST or anything, don't go on roofs because there's normally only one of us per unit. So I went up on the roof. And we just started you know, laying down rounds. Like I think I went the amount of mags I went through for that alone were ridiculous. And it was something about I didn't really care what I was shooting at. I was so angry. I was so detached. I was so hurt by what had just transpired. And then to hear people cheering on the other side of a radio because of it. It the rage built in me was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. And so We started laying rounds downrange, and the sharp shooter from South Africa jumps down off the roof because he is out of ammunition. And as he jumps down off the roof, I am his rifle as though I have a photo with it, I'm the length of the rifle height wise when I lie down, and maybe off by like, you know, just tiny amount but like if you stretch me like and you stretch that rifle like I'm not far off the length of that rifle. So I'm on my, I'm in the prone rounds downrange doc doc doc doc doc guy jumps down a left hand side, and I just feel this rifle just kick over onto my hip. And I looked to the left of me and he's not there. And I looked down at the rifle and go Holy fuck, three rounds from the left, like they were flanking us on the left hand side. And we had no idea. Three rounds come from the left and miss my hip only because that rifle, the buttstock lined up with where my hip was. So I have a photo of that round, that they pulled the the one round, they pulled out of it, I put it on my pants and I took a photo of it because the Sharpshooter was like, That's my round. And I was like, well, technically, it was meant for my hip. But I guess it's your gun. So you get to keep the round. And so I took a picture of it. And then I tattooed that onto my body as a reminder of how close you can come to, to losing everything. And he jumps back on the roof and we keep laying down fire. Ultimately, we get called back down and then we push forward to the compound.



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And then we you know, there was constant after that. So after that it was, you know, other IEDs were going off. We were losing we lost some ama guys up ahead. And then one of the Canadians she was supposed to go in right behind them. And then she ended up getting I don't think she was physically hurt. But it damaged her psychologically. And there was a lot of issues but that that week alone, the amount of firefights, I went through every mega I had. And to put that in perspective, that weapon probably would never have been fired. Unless our FOB was overrun. We were going outside the wire with the triple sevens, which we very rarely do, unless it's absolutely necessary, because those guns are worth so much money, and they're slow to move. Or if we were zeroing in on a range. So the fact that I had just laid down the amount of rounds and the mags that were given to me were all extra mags that were given to me. So I had my issued mags. But then right before I left, Sergeant Mark LeBlanc, who's now an officer and Gagetown, he was my staff and he empty he gave me all his mags before I left the fob he kept his mandatory for and then he gave me every other Megi he said, You're going to need

them. So just take them. And if you don't need them fucking fantastic. Right? I'd rather you have them than need them. And so I ended up using everything I had that that operation. And it was something I you know, I glossed over it now. Like it's no big deal. But it was the moment we I stepped foot into the grape pot was the moment I talk about where my light switch turned off, and it never turned back on. And it took



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till 2016 17 to start feeling again, and to stop



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that wall to really break that wall down. Now I understand neurologically what had happened in that moment. And the damage that it did. And the saddest part is that was just one day on a six month deployment, that people do rotations of year after year after year after year after year. And it fucked me up.



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So



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you can't look back at your tours and your deployments or your deployment or whatever and go, you know, often pinpoint the moment. But because of that operation, I got so fucked up so fast that I ended up being sent home to the hospital early three weeks earlier than the rest of my unit and taken off of the guns. And then I actually got diagnosed in country and was heavily medicated in country for the remaining of my deployment.



James Geering 1:54:28

Well, firstly, I mean, as you said that that's a moment in a combat deployment, you know, an absolute minut percentage of an entire military career during the 20 years that we were deployed. Well, you talked about that moment where the switch went off and we've been talking about the compassion prior and I think compassion fatigue is something that I've seen not so much in myself hand on my heart really. I was very very aware of it, but I saw it in so many of my Friends in the fire service who were beautiful souls, through what they've seen through sleep deprivation, through unaddressed trauma, you know, you saw that compassion just gone, just they were just burned out. So talk to me about that pivotal point, and then walk me through how that ended up creating a transition out of the military for you.



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So for me, the, you know, the, the lack of compassion was not something like I said, I'd never

experienced that before. But after that loss and seeing the way that it was being handled, and how, you know, it was it was seen as a win. When some when someone just lost their life like that was, obviously we feel the same way, right? When you're taking out a bad dude, you feel good about it, you know, it's one less bad person in the world, but in to them, you know, we were the bad people. So I can see how that is perceived with them. For me. It made me hateful, and angry. And it made me want to become more and more violent. And I had no empathy left, for even the women and children. Because I started to find things on women and kids that shouldn't be there. Right? Why do you have that kind of money? Why do you have that phone? Why do you have that? Why do you have this radio, and I just started to see it. And then there was a woman who came at me with a big pair of shears, scissors like, like material type cutting scissors. Ultimately, and that's when you know, just hit her in the face, like I felt nothing about it, like you're coming at me, and you're not going to take me off the face of the earth if I can help it. But that, again, is a naive idea that you think you can control everything. And you can't. And so for me, the only way I felt like I had control is if I was the aggressor. In those situations, I you know, there was no more compassion, I couldn't see that people were struggling, I couldn't see that they were impoverished and illiterate and didn't have running water. I couldn't, that didn't matter to me. You were there you were the enemy. And if you stuck around, that meant that you supported what those men who were shooting at us were doing. And so now I lost all compassion and empathy. When I searched the kids, I didn't feel anything about it, I would zap strap you instead, I didn't care before I would sit you down and try to be calm with you. And we'd be searching the compounds. And you know, one of the things is like, you never disrespect the Koran, you never disrespect their property. If you have to take something out of the room, you set it down, you show them that you're setting it down, I just went right out the window. right out the window, I started throwing things, I didn't give a shit about how you felt about anything, I tossed your place. And that was because I was looking for things right. At this point, I knew we were in an area where it was, they were empathetic enough to the Taliban to allow what just happened happened. So that meant to me that you're the enemy. All of you look the same now, and all of you will get the same response from me now. And that's what sad is. That's when you realize that you became the I became someone of someone's nightmares that I never thought I would be. And, of course, people lose compassion and empathy for others when it's constant. You know, mine wasn't even constant mine was enough of a traumatic situation during one operation where I was like, Well, I don't feel anything anymore. And I can't sleep. And I'm angry, beyond anything I've ever experienced in my wildest dreams. And if you look at me the wrong way, you're going to get a reaction out of me, whether you're a superior officer or not. And that's just not how I was, I was really lucky don't get me wrong, like I was very, you know, I've talked back or I did you know, whatever, you learned the hard way, you get slapped with like a you know, insubordination and then you move on. But this was different. This didn't matter. I didn't care about repercussions. I didn't care who you are, I didn't care, your stature, your rank, I would give you a fucking handful, if you said something to me that I felt was wrong. And, you know, for me when I came back from that operation based off of everything and how it went, you know, it spread pretty fast around my fob and stuff would have happened and that I was coming back. And I did come back to the fob. And at this point.



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You know,



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they had seen that some stuff had gone on and they had sent me to the doctors on I think it was rule three and I was having conversations with one of the I think they're either psychologists or psychiatrists, but they're a military member. And that's when they diagnosed me with acute PTSD. And they put me on a laundry list of pharmaceutical medication and gave me no knowledge of contraindications gave me no knowledge of how to take these other than what the bottle says. And no real acknowledgement of how they were going to make me feel. So once I went back into the fall by went back out to the fob without my leadership or staff having any inclination that I was on a laundry list of drugs, so I went back to normal duty. I went back to running the triple sevens. I won Back to the Opie tower, it went back to the GED duty, I went back to everything that we were doing. And there was a, I remember very distinctly we were, we were at the fob. And we were getting we got a fire mission, fire mission went, came through, everyone ran to the guns and rounds started cracking down range. And normally we would do like we would do a handful at a time both guns fire, you know, fire perfect, boom, boom, boom, then it would kind of lay low for a while. But this was different. We were fucking crack and boom, boom, boom, as quick as we could get them down. We were putting them downrange. But it didn't stop for a bit. And I was like, Oh, shit, but I had done sort of taking the sleeping pill, right. And so I'm inside of my tent. And I'm in my on my cot. And my staff is looking for me because like you hear a fire mission you run to the gun, not as your job is when you're one job. You hear the fire mission Miss Elsa, it's you're on the guns, middle of the night in the shower, whatever. If you're on GD you run to the guns, like unless you're, you're doing certain things up there, you run to the guns. But I didn't move. I could just feel the vibration, but my body wouldn't get up and go. I just lived there. And then afterwards, I kind of sauntered out of the tent when the fire mission was done. And my staff ripped me apart, ripped me apart. Where the fuck do you think you are? Bah, bah, bah, bah, bah, bah, just just mouthful. And I said I was in my tent. Because we checked I said, I just walked out of there. And then we were doing a fire mission that night where we're shooting loom on there was you know, guys were going out, the Americans were going out. And we knew they were going to need loom at a certain point. So it was like, it wasn't like, wake up in the middle of the night, pick a guy it was like, hey, this time we're gonna shoot this many loom rounds. We're going to do this, this and this. And we only needed three people to run the gun at that time, right? Because it's not a fast pace. So I was already on the Opie tower that night. And my, my sergeant was like, Hey, will you come? There's two of us on a tower at a time you come down when it's fire mission time, calm down at this time, you'll run around. So that was one other guy can sleep like cool. No problem. So we do that. But after we're done rounds down range, we start cleaning up. And I remember so this is the one thing I remember really clearly is search looked at me and he goes, because I barns and so we search and he goes, let's call her heck, you good. And I looked at my mind. Just very like just you could tell I was medicated. You could tell I wasn't all with it. You could tell I was lethargic and slower moving. And he looked at me as Mr. Mack burns, what's wrong with you? Like what the fuck is wrong with you? And I said, No, it's correct. It's correct. Like, I'm good. I'm good. Because like, No, you're not. No, you're not. So he brings me back over and we start talking. And this is when I showed him the list of pills that I was given. And he went I steep by list like, fuck, like he's like, What the fuck, you know? And he had no idea. They didn't tell anyone. I was on all these drugs. So I'm running a machine gun on the tower. I'm shooting the triple Chevron's and I'm doing GD duty and I'm on heavy amount of like different meds, man sleep meds and anxiety and psychotic, you name it, they put me on it. And they're like, Yeah, we can't fucking have you. Well, you can't be doing this man. And so long and short. One of the officers said something to me, I turned around and told them off, like, like, should have been, like, kicked out of the military level told them off. And then once they understood was kind of going on. They're like, Yeah, we got to send her back to the she needs to be near a doctor, right. And my sergeant had remastered so he had done deployments as infantry before. And this is one of the reasons why he did not want me to go in



the first place. He tried really, like really, really hard when staff came down that they needed a female to go. And my name was put forward. He was like, like, fuck, she's going No way. No way. No way. No way. No, no, no. That's why he stripped his weapon and tact my entire, you know, see seven out. That's why I was given all the mags. He knew what I was going into. And I was not prepared to go into. So he knew this could go one way or the other. And we know I got quiet. And if you can't tell, I can talk. So I got quiet when I got fired. There's a problem there. And he kind of caught on to that. So then they ended up getting me on a Chinook back to the fall. But like yeah, we'll see you again. We'll be back then I don't even I didn't even bring all my stuff. Just bring you know, small pack with the stuff. Long and short. I met calf and they decide I'm done. And that I have not gone back out to the fob. And that I was going back to Ottawa and that was going to be my marching orders. And then they put me in the quartermasters and had me count pens until it was time to go. Which was the most that was the worst leadership move looking back that I've ever seen besides a couple of the other things, but they were they handled that so poorly. And you know, I give Canadian military a lot of shit. We're lucky Back, they did not know how to handle mental health at that time in the war, they didn't have a clue. You know, the amount of people that were coming back with PTSD and other ailments and issues, they didn't have a clue on how to handle people like us. And I know that now, that being said, you know, common sense should have prevailed, and it didn't a lot of the time. And that was the tragic part is, if somebody like Jocko asked me this, and it was one of the questions, I appreciate him asking me so much. Do you think that if somebody sat you down and explain to you what you're going through how you're feeling what you're experiencing is all normal? Do you think it would have been okay? I said, Absolutely. But instead of doing that, they pulled me away from the Support Unit, they pulled me away from the British, they put me on a heavy dose of medication, and then had me count pens. Right, and then I got written up twice at that point for insubordination. And I remember showing one of the Americans like the paper, excuse me, I'm be getting charged with an insubordination charge. And then one of the shitty French soldiers that I know his name to this day, I'll never forget him ratted me out to one of my superiors saying that I was showing intelligence to others, because it was a good class be protected be. And all I was trying to do was get someone to see what was going on. And said, I got more shit for that. Right. And so it was not that I didn't do anything wrong. I was really mentally fucking unwell period. And that just was not being seen for that.

## J James Geering 2:06:38

We talked earlier about the impact of the pandemic and all the the true improvement of health elements that were ignored. And this is a thing like you said, Really, people should know, because we were, you know, the the war started 20 plus years ago, we're not talking about the 1800s, you know, so there were a lot of people that have been in this field working with these areas for a long time. But again, the leadership element for some reason, the true leaders in certain fields don't get heard. And you know, I think people are almost threatened by it. But we now know that when you remove someone who had a tribe, and a sense of purpose, and camaraderie, and you put them in isolation, that is the worst thing you can do, then you sprinkle in some organizational betrayal. And even though as you said, most of the people you serve with were phenomenal. If there's an element where you're being discarded, now you've added another layer of trauma, you know, then you sprinkle in some childhood trauma as well. And you know, some sleep deprivation. And now you've got the perfect storm for an let's not forget pharmaceuticals, the very psych meds that have all these side effects. It's how you might get anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts with this pill you're taking. And now you



have this perfect storm. So you find yourself taken from that tribe walk me through to the darkest place that you found yourself. And then what was your particular set of tools that finally started you being able to swing up again.



2:08:05

So for me, that was 2009, I was sent home the beginning of September, I think I left like the last day of August, close to I got home to Quebec to an empty airport at two in the morning, and had to find a phone number of someone that could come pick me up. So I found an officer that I'd known briefly and he came and picked me up and had coffee with me and my place where I was staying was being. So I was on the base. I was just in like the housing on the base. They had been redoing the whole thing. So I know where to go, rather than just sit at the regimen and wait. So I sat at the regimen and waited in my kit. And basically was walked in, walked up to the RSM office handed an envelope said you're going to Ottawa See you later. You're being reposted, you're being moved. So gather my stuff, I drove to Ottawa and drove home. And I was I was I was told that I'll be contacted. And at that point, I had been given a ton of medication. And I was waiting for a call. And I, you know, I reported to the hospital to see some civilian doctors that were there. And yeah, they just kept giving me pharmaceutical meds and making me come in for all these appointments multiple days a week and all of these things. So I didn't have to do inpatient. I was close enough where I could just go back and forth. And ultimately, the military and no one from my unit, and no one from Canada called me for six months. So I just did what anybody who was completely out of their mind completely unwell would do. I fucked off. I just completely started. I went to Cuba, I went to all these places. So technically, I was AWOL. But I was AWOL because I didn't have a goddamn clue what was going on with my own self. You know, when when I look back now when I released because recently my paper my paperwork was they just said that my hearing loss and my traumatic brain injury are not service related. When I look back at My paperwork and stuff and they go, Well, you never complained about it on your medical release. I go, the amount of drugs you had me on for the extended period of time that you had me on them. No wonder I didn't know what was going on with my body. How could I? They were at the height I was on 11. So, at 100 pounds, I was on every different anti psychotic antidepressant you can imagine plus sleep meds. And I got incredibly suicidal, incredibly suicidal. The only reason I didn't go through how I'd had a plans I had knew what I was going to do. And the only reason I didn't go through it was because I started dating somebody when I got home, and I met him prior to my deployment. My home, he's my husband now Brady, Sharon. He's a retired professional Supercross racer, and he had dealt with trauma in his life before. So he had an idea of how to kind of talk to me. And he will just keep answering the phone every time I call, it didn't matter when I called you to answer the phone if I called. And so I made a decision one day, and it's very cliché, and people can Laugh all you want. I know exactly what's on the TV. It was the movie The Kingdom with Jamie Foxx. I was watching that on repeat. And I made a call to him. And I decided he wasn't gonna answer the phone that was just going to be enough for me,



2:11:15

and answered the phone.



2:11:17

So, you know, that began the walking back of that, and the struggle of the literally the suicidal every day, and people were like, holy, you were still traveling, we're still doing thing I fucking don't remember a lot of my very early 20s. If I'm being completely honest with you, and transparent with you, I don't have a lot of memory of it. And if I do, it's very foggy and sporadic. It's not, I don't really remember actions or the way I was or I don't remember a lot. I mean, that's the saddest part is it feels like a block is there still on some level. And I think that's just because of the pharmaceutical intervention, like it wasn't like I was on one half, you know, antidepressant like 25 milligrams a day, I was like, the one antidepressant I was on was on 150 milligrams every day. And then take another 10 of those with similar level of dosages of meds like that as well. So I really wasn't I was a walking person, but no one was home. And I was at a Walmart with my mom and I moved into military housing I had to because I was living with a roommate at the time. And she was having too many people there. And I ultimately threatened throw her off the balcony if she kept having people in the house. And that got to a point where I realized I couldn't be I can't I wasn't ready to be around people. Yeah. So I got moved into military housing. And we were in a Walmart and we were just getting like toilet paper and paper towel and all the basic stuff and my mom was there. And I was walking up to the cache and I saw Middle Eastern family. The woman had a not a full burqa, but she was had a headscarf and stuff. And I was in shorts and a T shirt. And he looked at me and all he had to do was look at me the wrong way. And I was gone. I started grabbing things off the shelf and like, I'm gonna fucking kill you. Like I was saying horrific things to these strangers. My mom grabbed me and pulled me out of the Walmart as quick as she could. And it was like that for a while man. Like I would go anywhere. And if you looked like a threat to me, my flip like my switch was flipped. Like I was angry all the time. And so I you know, I got at that point because I had raised Moto and when I was younger, I got back into motocross. So I started to try and put myself into a sport again and involve myself in other things. And at this point, the military was trying to retrain me two half days a week I cannot range and I would go and I would clear the ranges and you know, drive around to the trucks and do those types of things. And it just wasn't working. It just wasn't working. And I would be doing all my doctor's appointments and all the it's just nothing was fucking working. And they tried like hypnotism. They tried medication, they tried EMDR they tried CBT they tried to talk therapy outside this, you name it, they tried, it just wasn't working. And then finally they brought me in the JPS do and was like, hey, yeah, they've deemed that you're done like so now you're going to be medically released on a 3d med release for due to post traumatic stress. And so I, you know, begged and pleaded to stay in the military at this point. This was 2011 at the beginning of 2011. And I still hadn't been given my metal. My, my base in my unit was withholding it from me. So now they had to start fighting for me to get it and that was a problem which should never have been an issue. Finally, I was given that and I was given that the day before my release. And they released me May 23 2011. And on May 24 2011, I was on a plane from Ontario to the British Columbia and I ultimately never went back to Ontario. I had never been back to Ottawa until a couple weeks ago. So, you know, I moved out to British Columbia and from 2011 to 2000. And, you know, I'd say 15 is when it started to, to see a little bit of light is when it was, it was a bad time. I was in bed, I was suicidal, I was angry, I was violent. I was irrational. I was hair trigger. I was everything you would expect a human to be. And I stayed in that because the medication kept me in that. And all through that I was going to the operational stress injury clinic, I was working with doctors. And then finally I was given a doctor that made the change. I was given to Dr. Marcus cueta. And then Dr. Greg PASI Marcus Gretta. And I stopped working together. We were doing a lot of exposure therapy, and it wasn't helping me. And then that's when I went full time to Dr. Greg PASI and Dr. Pasi. I had a different level of respect for not because he was a doctor, but because he was a psychiatrist who had served a very, very, very long time. And he was retired lieutenant Leftenant Colonel. And he was a medic in Bosnia and Rwanda. And I thought, if this guy can get through what he did, and then go to school, and be a psychiatrist, and work


with that, and still be good, I can, you know, I trust this man. And he was hard on me. So that was the other thing. He helped me learn about what was going on with me in a way that I could understand. So he didn't say you have PTSD. And this is your life. He said, This is a result. PTSD is a result of the situation that you were put in. And this is what is happening in your brain chemically. This is why you are feeling the way you are feeling. This is why your dopamine and serotonin aren't working. This is how we fix this. And we started working together twice a week, once a week, and I'm still working with him now. But in about 2001, was it 2015. My husband and I got married in 2014. And we got pregnant right after. In 2015, we lost the baby. And that then spiraled me out even more. And at this point, I'd started to get off of some of the medication because I couldn't be pregnant. And then my doctor suggested cannabis. At this point, he was he's the doctor who got all the research done for Canadian veterans to get access to cannabis through Veterans Affairs. So he, he's like, Hey, I think this will help with your sleep, that we can get you off some of these meds we can win your way through it. So I started using cannabis as a way to get off of the pharmaceutical meds. And I became successful within that. At that point, I got pregnant again, almost to the day a year later that we got pregnant the first time. And that's also when I started doing art therapy, because Dr. Pasi was like, Look, you're a busy person, and you're task oriented. So the least that we can do is try to get you into something that's non traditional. So why don't we start looking at art therapy. And I thought that was the stupidest thing I've ever heard. And so I reluctantly started our therapy, it didn't matter what it was. So I went and bought a bunch of crystals and a bunch of wire and beads and all of these things. And then my husband was like, why don't you just use some brass, I mean, you have access to it, that would be kind of cool. And so we called up some friends that were in the RCR. And people I'd known and they had shipped me a big box of like Lupu around 50 cows, seven, six twos 556, all the shit I'm not supposed to have. And they sent it all to me. And I started playing around on the kitchen table. And at this point, it got me out of bed, I started getting out of bed, and a sort of brushing my teeth. And I started thinking about something else besides suicide. And you know, to be honest with you, I had a great life then I live couple hours from Whistler, I go mountain biking, you know, I in between that time, I had a bunch of really nasty crashes and surgeries for you know, body damage to shoulders and knees and stuff. But you know, I have everything. I had a great person, a great house, living with the best countries in the world, you know, all of these things. And but yet suicide was still everything to me. And so when we found success with our therapy, we leaned in, and I wasn't trying to create anything from the art therapy, it was just for me. But then friends started liking it and buying it and people started seeing something in it. And that's when my husband was like, Hey, I think you have something here if you want to do something with this. So at that point, you know, I was pregnant and we had my son. And I had started building this kind of jewelry brand on the kitchen table. And now I had a new baby and then postpartum kicked. Right and so that was a different animal. You know, stack that on top of the other labels that I was being given. It was just not ideal. And we started getting me off more and more pharmaceutical meds and I got to the point where I was on a couple and I still felt horrible with them and I didn't want to be on them any longer. But nothing was working and somehow even though the art therapy had spun into this company, this was literally like from 15. From when I started designing, we were on Ellen by 17. We were on Kevin Hart by 17. We were on Julianne Hough and boob Leigh and Jesse Tyler Ferguson and all these people by 2017, from the kitchen table that, that art therapy turned into a real thing really fast.



2:20:24

I still was getting worse, though. Things were getting worse, and I couldn't figure it out. We rock all the way to 19. You know, now I've got a child who's a couple years older, we've got the

stresses of being a parent and a wife and all those things still weaning off a pharmaceutical meds. But still, at this point, having no tribe, having no community having, helping, like helping the community through what I was doing, but it was not connected within the community. I was in the fashion world now. And I was trying to explain to civilians why they should wear a bullet casing on the wrist to help people with mental health. And that was a hard transition. But it was one that I was willing to do. And by that point 2019 rolled around, you know, I had gone over to my factories, and we were expanding, and we were doing everything that you know, successful business, and you know, great wife, and blah, blah, blah, blah, but it was still spiraling. And things were getting out of control again, where Mommy was having more hard days crying on the stairs, and Mommy was having good days. That's a problem. And so what had happened at that point was, again, I was spiraling out of control. The meds weren't working. And then the suicide started to come into my mind again, and I was talking to Dr. Pasi about this 20 rolls around. And I'm just not doing well. And then COVID Pops right, everything just goes haywire. And we go from this thriving company that had saved my life and was helping a lot of people through the charities we worked with, to I lost my entire thing that I just felt in my purpose for living besides my child. I lost it all overnight. We were a retail business, we had over 200 retailers in North America, and they were gone in the blink of an eye. And most of them have never come back. And so I was now losing the thing that was saving me against. And I got this opportunity, while struggling to be interviewed by Carson Daly. And Carson Daly had this new show on today's show called Mind Matters. And it was about mental health. And he had just interviewed logic, but my PR said, like, Hey, I'm gonna put you forward for this. I don't think you're going to get x they only interview celebrities, but we'll put you forward. And Carson picked me. And so we I did his show. And we had a huge conversation him and I and we were talking about all these things. And at this point, I just started the podcast. I'd started it in October 2020. And the idea was, I talk a lot. We were going to do one a year before. What else did I have to lose? Right? I didn't want to be here anymore anyway. So I might as well do something to hopefully distract myself while still being on some of these meds still doing therapy every week, still doing the art therapy portion of it still having good movement, still eating healthy, still exposing myself to good things, but missing the community missing the purpose missing the aspect of, of what I just created. And and again, now having the government tell me that I couldn't do any more what was what was making me healthy. It felt like a repeat of what was happening again.

 2:23:32  
And so

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I did the podcast and I one of my first guests was grabbed from combat flip flops, and he's a former Ranger. And he saw that I was struggling at the end of the episode and kind of really leaned into me and was like, Hey, are you good? And I was like, Yeah, I'm solid. I'm good. And he was like, Yeah, okay, cool. Let's try again. You good. And I just fucking broke into pieces I had shattered in front of him. It was sad because what I realized now is it would take somebody in the military who had seen real things to be able to see that I wasn't okay. My doctors knew I wasn't okay, but we were working on it. Right. We were all optimistic. My husband saw that I was trying so it's like optimistic, but Griff saw that I really was not. Okay. Get a fresh. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So, he had offered me Hey, in 30 days, there's this retreat with heroic Hearts project. I can get you on the phone with Jesse. I think you should take it and it's called

ayahuasca, and I was like, I know of it. But I don't know much about it. And I was nervous. I was like, Okay, I'll do it. And then I called my husband I said there's this thing I want to go do I don't really know much about it, but I know I need to go do it. Something is telling me I need to go do it. And he was like, okay, so Jesse called, I did the intake but he goes Hey, you can't be on any SSRIs and I was on an SSRI still. So I made the call to my doctor and told them I'm going off of the SSRI that I just been on for 10 years straight. Now And he was like, No, you're not. And I was like, Sure I am. And he was like, Okay, well, I know I can't tell you what to do, you're going to do it anyway. But try to do it safe as safely as possible. So I did it as much as I could, as safe as I could. And again, I don't recommend anybody ever do that, regardless of your doctor saying it's a good idea or not, I don't recommend anybody to do it the way I did it, because it was very unhealthy, very dangerous. That being said, I ended up getting off of it and went down and did ayahuasca for the first time and I sat, Jesse was in my very first group, actually, I sat with Jesse and my very first ceremony and some guys from Blackwater, and Rangers, and you know, active dudes and all of these people. And I was brought in again as the only female. And so I slipped right back into that role that I was in before where I felt comfortable. The difference was, this is the first time I had felt a community around me and yours in a very, very, very, very long time. So as much as Griff opened and saw, he saw that someone was struggling, and he saw it in me, he also saw what I was missing, he could see where I was struggling. And not only did Jesse and them bring me into a ceremony that would ultimately be the catalyst point for my healing. They brought me into a community and gave me a purpose within that space again. And that community after that just continued to grow at a pace that is, I mean, it's most people I spend every day, every waking moment on my phone, because I'm just catching up with the amount of friends and fortunate individuals I have that I can be in touch with and phone numbers I have, if you would have asked me five years ago, do you know so? And so? Or do you think you will ever talk to so and so? Or do you ever think that you will ever be friends with so and so I would have said your your fucking mind. Now I look at my phone. And it's the most dangerous thing I have on me besides my Montana knife, it is it's it's vicious and it's effective. And it it really just goes down to the point of checking on people and holding yourself accountable to that, because the government's not going to check on you. It's going to be the people in the community around you that's going to need to do the checking. And yes, that's difficult. And we all have lives. And we all have friends, we all have families, we all have stuff going on. But if you can hold yourself for 10 or 20 minutes a day, where you just are checking on a couple people and seeing how they're doing and doing it authentically. You can be the change maker in a lot of people's lives. And that's ultimately what my podcast spun off of was. I wanted to be friends with people and talk to people about their lives. I wanted to share their stories, and I wanted their stories to not go unheard, like mine was right, because there's a million people who have same story as me that have way gnarlier and it's not a competition trauma is trauma is trauma, the worst thing that's ever happened to us the worst thing that's ever happened to you, but I'm very, very consciously aware of the amount of friends I have that have decades downrange, you know, and so I thought the least that I could do is provide a platform for people to tell their worst darkest, deepest things and how they pulled themselves out of it. So that those stories are never forgotten, like they are from World War Two and Vietnam and Korea. And I didn't want that for this generation. We had done things so wrong for so long, and how we treated people after wars. I didn't want to be a part of that. I want to be a part of the solution, not the problem. And so ultimately, the podcast is what brought me to the point of such a deep level of healing and exposure to healing a community that would be the moment that I was able to, to genuinely turn the tides in a big way.

J

James Geering 2:28:38

Firstly, it's so great to hear yet another psychedelic success story because not that that's the magic bullet the magic pill. But there are I think the most power to the stories is that look, right you've got this toolbox, you've got, you know, psychiatric meds, which there's a small amount of people that might be the bridge to you getting to the next level of getting off those meds and moving forward. You've got EMDR you've got talk therapy, you've got exposure therapy got all these other kind of pseudo traditional as well. But then now you've got this entire CBD, THC, psychedelics and all these things. MDMA led counseling. That book ironically, circles back to our discussion earlier about the prohibition of drugs and the fact that the people that fought and died for this country will never the moment can't have access to the very things that will heal their trauma. But it's amazing to hear yet another one that's funny that I mentioned Jesse at the front and here we are talking about how it factors in another area though, people say to me, do you have a counselor and I'm like, I don't and the reason being genuinely is firstly, I was so fortunate in my childhood I had some things happen. I almost died in the house fire when I was four and had a wall collapse and almost killed me and my family when I think I was like 10 or something pretty my parents divorce is pretty fucking horrible. But I grew up in a farm. I grew up around animals. I grew up on a kitchen table. We're a family and no matter who walk through the door. Some of them are lords and ladies, and some of them were literally homeless. We had two types of people, good people and bad people, you know. And so there was kindness and compassion. So I was so fortunate. But the other thing recently is I've had this, you know, this is probably like 770 conversations now. So there's so much therapy in these conversations. But again, people say, Oh, does it take something from you? And it's like, also, yes, as healing as they are, you got to be careful. If you listen to, you know, too many of the real deep, traumatic stories, you do have to have some self care, otherwise, you end up always talking about Michael Clark, green's got that right. Anyway, the guy for the big massive guy from The Green Mile, Michael Clarke, Duncan, there you go, you know, he's taken on a trauma eventually, technically, it kills him. So you've got to be able to offload that to. So that's a huge kind of, you know, prequel to what I'm going to say. Talk to me about what the the podcast has done for your own healing? And do you also find that sometimes you have to kind of hit pause, step away and do some self care. And you don't do too many interviews back to back?



2:31:12

Yeah, you're about 500 ahead of me, man. So I mean, I have only the experience I can speak to, and I mean, we're around I think, got in the bank 175 episodes. And you know, these things aren't short. I mean, you sit for hours, and hours and hours, and you listen to some of people's most horrific experiences, you know, stuff that you the stuff that literally is nightmares, but, you know, tear, my buddy said to me a while ago, he goes, I think I know why you like podcasting so much. And I said, Why do you think that is he goes, because it's the professional version of putting your phone down at the dinner table. You know, very rarely in my life. Now, when I look at all of the things and hats I wear stuff that I do very rarely do actually get to sit down and have a long form conversation with someone unless it's doing podcasting. And it is something so special to me, and something that I'm so privileged, and I'm very aware of how privileged I am to have a show like I have, and to have people who come on the show that trust me with their stories, the level of that they are, it takes a lot to be able to get into a certain community. And it takes a lot to be greenlit, if you will by a lot of these people. And so to me, that I hold I hold that so near and dear to my heart. And it's so special to me. And it's something that does not go overlooked ever when I have someone on the show, the podcast for me really has changed my life because it has given me something more than just what I was doing before and what I was doing before, you know, running a company, a jewelry company, it may sound silly to some but because of what I did, I was so heavily involved in the fashion



space, but also in consumerism, and I was also super involved in donating money, but not with the actual people that were doing the work, you'd write the check. But you know, you're just a number, I wanted to do more, I wanted to be more involved. And I wanted to come at it from a space of I've gone through this, I don't have all the answers, but I know what worked for me, and maybe it'll work for you. So it's always been about not telling people what to do. But just showing them the different, the different tools in your disposal, the different options, the different, the different stories, and when you listen to all these different types of stories, because they're not all traumatic, they're not all horrible. There's lessons in every single thing that I hear on the show. And so for me, the podcast has been a huge cup filler, if you will, meaning, you know, we all have these different size cups in our bodies, and you know, six foot, you know, tall guy could have a shot glass, and I could have a full golf, you know, those big gulps from America doesn't matter your size, it can be what your your capacity to handle is and you know, you have to fill that cup. And if that cup is always empty, because you're always holding space for others, and you're not letting go or not holding on to these things and moving through those emotions, it's going to cause trauma on the back end. So for me, I'm very, very careful to when I do this podcast, I do record sometimes up to seven times a week. And I do record sometimes for not a month at all. It just depends on my schedule, and what I feel like I can handle. And if I feel like I can't handle it all the time, I just don't do it. It's that simple. I try to bank myself enough so that I'm never without an episode a week to allow if I'm having those types of weeks where it's like I can't you know, I know I can't have that conversation right now. Like I you know, I can't. And so I'm super conscious of that. But this show has also given me a platform in a different way where I have a responsibility and what I say and how I say it now. And I think that comes with growth. And I think if I would have had this show years ago, it would have been a nightmare. But I think as I've gone through these processes of healing and growing and finding my community and finding the space that I'm happy And I've also then because of psychedelics and the supports, and the integration that I've been given because of heroic Hearts project, I've been able to sit down with myself and look at what my beliefs are, look at where my lines are, look at where my heart nose are, and look at where I'm willing to be open minded. And I think I'm open minded for pretty much everything, unless you're talking about things like transgender and women's sports, or you're talking about child mutilation, or you're talking about, you know, assault in some way, I'm pretty fucking open book on a lot of those things. But I now know who I am, right. And I'm not saying I know all of who I am. But I'm saying the deeper I go into medicine work and the deeper I go in integration, because right now I'm doing integration schooling so that I can volunteer with railcards project as a as a coach. So I take the medicine seriously. And I take the lessons I've learned seriously and the tools that they have given me, and I do my best now to show up and be the person that Griff was for me, for others. And it's not about giving people you know, having them on the show, and then convincing them to go do Ayahuasca that's not what this is about. It's about holding space for somebody else, when they're going through something while they're sharing something. It's about active listening, it's about being present, and making somebody else feel heard, when you might be the only person who has ever made them feel heard. And so that's what the show is about for me. And within that all of the tools and lessons that come with all the situations in the stories, they get peppered in, right. So if somebody is bringing up something, and they bring up Oh, I did this, this psychedelic, because I was working on this. Okay, well, now I can pull that apart, because I know what you're talking about, I know the experience you had. But what were the tools? And what did you garner from it? And what were the things that you did to prepare for it? It's not saying hey, everyone go to psychedelics, I don't think they're safe for everyone. They're not we know that. And the amount of organizations that are out there that are doing the hard work, but some are lacking on integration post and pre. And that's why you're seeing issues come out. If you do very, very rarely do you see issues come out? But when you do, you can often look back and go, what did they do for pre integration? What do



they do for the diet? What do they do for this? What do they do for that, then you can see afterwards, did they do the integration counseling? Did they do what they're supposed to be doing, because it's not a magic. It's not a magic pill. It's not a magic bullet. psychedelics are the mayor that gets held up to you, and shows you what you need to see. And now it's up to you once they give you those tools to do the work on that. So the work only starts afterwards, right? You know, there's a preparation in the beginning where it can be worked for others who have to cut out caffeine and certain food and you know, diet stuff. So that is hard work, for sure. And then your intention is necessary, right? You need to know what you're trying to achieve from this. And so for me, because of the show, I was able to find healing, but because of the healing, I was able to find a new way of communicating my thoughts and my feelings and holding space for others that I think ultimately, if I didn't start the show at number one wouldn't have or wouldn't be here. And number two, I wouldn't have learned to be the person that I am. And I'm actually super happy with who I am now.

J

James Geering 2:38:19

Beautiful. Well, I mean, it's it's been such an amazing journey, you know, leading youth from the four year old taekwondo athletes into the military to back out the other side. And I think this is what's so important is these don't conclude with and I'm fine. Now, you know, this is still an ongoing thing. But, you know, I heard you talking about Jocko and some of the, the kind of ripple effects of some of the things that were said and people calling out the book and again, he you are back in a deep place again. So this is an ongoing story. But like I said, when you hear success with these tools in this vast toolbox, and people are empowered, that is what they need to hear. And then you still doing the art therapy as well. I just want to make sure we because we get this in before I gotta let you go in 15 minutes. I know you got another call. You actually were extremely kindly one of my lowest times recently I lost my beloved German shepherd had over 10 and a half years she went through most of my fire service career she went through my divorce poor dogs. And again, you know, you look at the animation of the dog absorbing the trauma she was she was full of that shit. But you know, I lost her and you are so kind you sent a card, you sent some of the jewelry as well. So I got to see it firsthand. I got to see your kindness and compassion. So for people listening work, firstly, can they find bras and unity jewelry and how can they help with the social business side to contribute to helping veterans?

i

2:39:41

Yeah, well, thank you for that. I mean, listen, I think I think that's the thing too, you know, when all it takes really often for me, and that's where I would say my, you know, I curse Griff often, and I thank him often, you know, because if I didn't, if he didn't notice it You know, I wouldn't have gotten the treatment. But you know, when Grif calls I answers. So because of people like that, and people talking to me and being open, we were able to help with some people in Afghanistan during the pullout. And that was only because of like I said, one person who heard somebody or heard something, who did something. And all it takes very often for me now is to hear that somebody struggling, and it doesn't have to be a big struggle. And so when you told me what was going on, the least I could do was reach out and send you a buddy check. Because I needed I know that you needed that. And you may not have felt like you needed it at the time. But that's my way of being supportive. Like that's my way. And so, for brass in Unity, we, you know, we've evolved into something really crazy this, you know, we started as a

jewelry company. And when I say jewelry, I mean, we, we used to take all the old casings, and then recycle them and turn them into pieces. Now we produce our own casings. And we're working on something with nausea right now for the US. But we take these casings, and we put them into pieces. And they're gold, and they're silver in the rose gold, and we have diamonds in some and then we have regular ones, which, frankly, are my favorite parts of the company. And they're the Buddy Check packs. And what they are is just a small like 38 round on a paracord rope. And they come in a pack of two, and they prompt you to call someone and check on them. And it's that simple. Nothing more than that, nothing more difficult than that. And so that's really where my company is evolving into, I'm getting out of the more fashion side of jewelry and getting into the more. I've always been a socially conscious company and aware, but we donate 20% of the net proceeds to the organizations that are listed on my website. And I say net, because during COVID, we didn't have anything to give. So what would we give us we would give product, I would go and speak somewhere for free, we would go and we would be a part of the charity events, and we would show up and given a different way. So even if we aren't giving money, we are doing our best to give in any other way that we possibly can, and really have tried to weave ourselves into the fabric of this community. And that's where the buddy check. And suicide prevention is the number one forefront of what I do now. So you can just get that at brass and unity.com. But on there, you know, our podcast is on there. We're on. We're on YouTube, and Spotify and Apple and all of that. And the podcast is you know, it's it's similar like yours. I mean, we listened to hard stories, we talked to people about a lot of different things. And very often they're actors, Rangers seals, Delta. I mean, I'm just looking at the stack of books, a lot of authors. A lot of charity heads, like we try really hard to talk to first responders. And it's not about this. It's not a military show at all. The show is about talking about real world issues, real world things that are going on. And then it has an undertone of mental health always. And so that's what the podcast is. That's been going now for two and a half years, and I love it. And we put an episode out every week, sometimes twice a week, the goal is to be doing three times a week. I think it's the greatest thing I'm ever going to do besides raise a child if I'm being completely honest with you, and then this year, we have my first book out my memoirs out it's been almost five years in the making. And it's finally coming out July 11. But it's available on presale for Amazon everywhere else Barnes and Noble Simon Schuster anywhere you get books you can you can grab a copy of that. And that just illustrates my life and everything we went through with a way better writing and way way nitty gritty. And then at the end of it, we actually have the transcribed voice notes of us moving the Afghan family to America and Canada during the fall of Kaboul. So it is got reviews from some of the biggest seals and Rangers. Some of the Afghan family, the British soldiers, I served with doctors, actors. I've been really, really lucky with it. And it recently just got optioned for a mini series by the McDonough company, Neal McDonough from Band of Brothers and Yellowstone and a million other things season. So I've been unbelievably fortunate. Coming out of the service the way I did, I've been unbelievably fortunate and the amount of respect I've been given and trust more than anything else that I've been given from this community. And I promise to never take that for granted. Because I understand how rare it is when people sit in front of you and tell stuff to you that they've never told anybody else. And it is a privilege and an honor to do what I do for a living and to get to sit in front of people like you and have conversations the way that you do. So I'm really grateful for the opportunity man and I'm really grateful for what you're doing for our community because I've known of you for a very long time for a reason.