

JP: [00:09](#) Hey everybody. This is the legal disclaimer where we tell you the views, thoughts, and opinions shared on this podcast belong solely to us, the people talking, and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing.

JJ: [00:28](#) It's okay. We find it pretty disturbing too.

JJ: [00:47](#) Hey y'all, you're back with Red, Blue and Brady. We're so glad you're with us, but so sorry you have to keep learning about this epidemic of gun violence that has been sweeping the U.S. Today we're talking to a very important friend and ally, Ivy Schamis, who is an amazing educator, advocate, and survivor. We'll be talking about what happened to make her a survivor, as well as what happens when a person owns over a thousand guns. We're also calling out one very tech savvy GVP hero.

JP: [01:15](#) Ivy, could you introduce yourself?

Ivy Schamis: [01:17](#) My name is Ivy Schamis and I was teaching at Marjory Stoneman Douglas for the past 18 years, um, that's in Parkland, Florida where the mass shooting took place on February 14th, 2018.

JJ: [01:30](#) The worst thing about, I think JP and I have a hard time trying to explain our job sometimes, because I'm so glad to have met you, but I'm so sad that I have to have this job and that we had to meet in this way.

Ivy Schamis: [01:40](#) Absolutely. It's not a fun club to be in, but if we're here we might as well make a difference.

JP: [01:45](#) Thank you so much for joining us and all your advocacy. We really appreciate it.

Ivy Schamis: [01:49](#) Of course. Thank you.

JJ: [01:50](#) And thank you to your husband for sitting in today. He's here. We're not letting him talk.

Ivy Schamis: [01:56](#) Jeffrey Schamis, yes.

JJ: [01:56](#) So I guess I'm going to ask the question that, like as a podcast producer, I have to ask, to set up your appearance, but that I feel really awkward and uncomfortable asking.

Ivy Schamis: [02:06](#) Ask.

|              |                       |  |
|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| JJ:          | <a href="#">02:06</a> | which is, can you - you're such a good teacher, like.  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">02:10</a> | Aw!  |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">02:10</a> | such a good educator, like "just be inquisitive!"  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">02:11</a> | Please, no, no question is a bad question.   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">02:13</a> | But you know, can you tell us about that day? Like, can you walk our listeners through?  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">02:18</a> | Sure.  |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">02:18</a> | That day.  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">02:19</a> | <p>Sure. It was Valentine's day. Um, and it was a beautiful day. It was great, cause the winter is great in Florida. So, um, it was a beautiful day, Valentine's Day, and students were walking around with, um, stuffed animals and candy and flowers, it was just super fun. And um, it was the last class of the day, we're on a block schedule, so there's 90 minute classes and it was, and class had begun. I was teaching a History of the Holocaust class. I- that- I'm a social studies teacher, but that wasn't the only, that's not the only subject that I teach, but just happened to be that last class of the day was the History of the Holocaust. They were seniors and juniors in that class. And, um, the class started by a young man who was at my - standing at my desk, as I stand out in the hallway until the bell rings. And then we shut the door and the doors - I locked the door that day. And, um, a young man was standing at my door with a, uh, heart, uh, chocolate, you know, a box of chocolates with a heart with puppies on it, because they know that I love dogs. And it was so cute and everyone was in a great mood, and I had put it on the desk and we started the class with, um, because it was History of the Holocaust and it depended, it was a timely class. So, I was teaching a lesson on the 1936 Olympics because the Olympics were going on in Pyeongchang at the same time. But since it's 90 minutes, we had a little time before we started the lesson to finish up what we had started the last time. And interestingly enough, that day, the students were, um, in groups, and they were presenting to the class how they might be able to combat hate groups on their college campuses. Um, and so the students were - had highlighted and they were looking up, they did research on what hate groups might be on their college campus and what they could do to try to combat that or how they could, um, how they could be an upstander, basically. We talked a lot about being an upstander in class. And so they finished that,</p> |

and we began the 1936 Olympic lesson and we use a program from the Shoah Foundation called IWitness. And it's a Steven Spielberg started that in Los Angeles, that we listened to testimony of survivors, um, yes, of survivors or anyone who had been through the Holocaust, depending on what their situation was. And we were listening on a giant recording screen in the front of the room and they were answering questions on their laptops, on their computers at their desk. And we were listening to Margaret Lampert, and she is a track star, a German Jewish track star, that was not able to compete in the 1936 Olympics even though she qualified. And, um, we were going through the Olympics and they finished this lesson. It was a great lesson, and there was, um, and we had been interrupted actually by student government coming into deliver flowers to certain students who had paid, it was a fundraiser for Valentine's Day from their person or their secret admirer. And um, there was about 20, 20 to 25 minutes left of class, and they were going to put their laptops away. And of course I said, don't put them away, we're not done yet. We're going to look up, we were going to start the next thing, which was in, to look up people that had to do with the 1936 Olympics, um, in to introduce a film we were going to see called Race, it was about the Jesse Owens story. So the students, um, I put, again, I put the names up on the record cause they were people like Sam Stoller and Marty Glickman who were Jews that weren't allowed to - American Jews - that didn't participate. Avery Brundage who was the head of the IOC and the AOC, we talked about Jesse Owens and his coach, Larry Snyder. And I had the name Adi Dassler up there. And um, the kids get a kick out of it after I tell them who Adi Dassler is, and I said "Does anyone know who Adi Dassler is?" And they stared at me and a very handsome young man in the back of the room who actually moved his seat so that he could sit near his friend while they were working on the laptops. And his name is Nicholas Dworet. And he raised his hand and he said, "I know Adi Dassler. That's um, that's Adidas, that's the founder of Adidas." And we were so surprised and I said, "Oh, Oh my gosh, how do you know that?" Cause most students, you know, it may sound familiar, Adi Dassler, but he didn't know Adidas was the founder, um Adi Dassler was the founder of Adidas. He is a, um, athlete himself, and he was, had just earned a swimming scholarship, to the University of Indianapolis. So he knew a lot about sports, and he knew a lot about brands, the kids got so excited cause, that's like kind of cool if you knew if you know that. And then I said I just, to myself, I said "I'm going to go a step further, So do you know that his brother-" and I was about to tell them, and he, like, kinda jumped up in his seat and he said, "His brother is Rudy Dassler, and he founded Puma!" And just at that moment when

all the kids looked at Nick and like thinking, "God, you're so smart." That's when we heard shots in the hallway. Very loud, very loud, booming sound in the hallway. And I'm not a gun person. And it was unmistakable. It was unmistakable to have even thought that would've been something other than a gun. And so, the kids for a split second, I happened to be standing in the front of the room at the time and it's hard to explain, but it is a square room. There is no walk-in closet. There is, there's actually virtually nowhere to hide unless, um, I have a teacher desk, and two girls ran under the well of the teacher desk, but there's really, it was just four corners of a room with one side, all windows, and the other is a metal door with a large, glass panel window right down the center of the door. So, the kids looked at me, and literally within seconds just flew, flew out of their seat. Trying to, like, scramble to find somewhere to hide or curl up. And so, um, when they all flew to the different corners of the room, I looked over, you know, just to make sure that they got out of their seats. And a, a young lady named Kelly, she called me over to - to be crouched near her. So I just ran over to her, which was not far from the desk where the other girls were underneath. So we were many students in a very small room, so, and all just lined up, kinda like sitting ducks, if you will. I mean, and um, within seconds of the shot we heard in the hallway, the AR-15, which I, of course, didn't know at the time, was just blasting through the large glass panel in the door, just aiming anywhere and um, and just going, bullets were flying all over the classroom and all over. Um, we were all crouched down, of course. And so just, you know, trying to figure out what are we going to do. There wasn't really much time, and the bullets were flying everywhere. And um, so I was among Kelly and a couple of other kids, of course. And while we were crouched there, I was just looking, I can see, from where I was crouched, at the door handle. So, if you put your hand through that shot out glass, you could open the door from the inside, no problem. So I was just thinking, okay, the door is gonna open. And this person, who I wasn't sure if I knew who it was, it could have been a former student of mine. So, I thought, okay, what I'm gonna do, um, if he comes in, I'm just gonna stand up. And I was gonna say, cause it's a Holocaust class, it's impossible to not know there's a Holocaust class, because when you walk in it's all like, kind of like, I tried to make it like a museum. There were posters and banners on the wall that said "we will never forget," and that was given to me by a Holocaust survivor. I had the kids, I know that sounds crazy, but I had the kids the year before, they painted like a perimeter of barbed wire around it, to make it feel like it was a Holocaust museum. Um, and again, I didn't know if we were targeted, but I just figured, and we talk all the time about helping others. So I said, I'm just gonna stand up,

and I'm going to tell the person that was shooting into the classroom, "We love you." Because, I figured it was going to be my last words, but this person had so much hate in their heart that, I mean, maybe nobody loved them. This person, I, I had no idea. So I said, I'm just gonna do it. I'm just gonna stand up when that, when I see the door open, but the door never opened. Um, the door didn't open and we heard, then, gunshots across the hall. And actually my best friend teaches in, uh, psychology in the class across the hall. So I knew that, um, that was the class that was next. And so I had, um, so we were quiet. Um, I think one young lady was screaming, but the kids were all very mature, extremely mature, and telling each other, "Shhh, Shhh," like to be quiet. And a young man next to me, Sid Fischer, looked at me and he whispered, "Mrs. Schamis, are we gonna die today?" And, um, I'm not normally very calm, but I said; "Nope, we're not dying today." And, um, you know, unbeknownst to me, all, all the damage that had been done, and it was on the other side of the desk. The bullets flew into Nicholas Dworet and Helena Ramsay and four other students were injured. One very badly injured Samantha Fuentes. Um, and then another young man was on the other side of me, shaking like a leaf, so I was trying to hold him, and then another young man was kind of stood up. And, um, all of the classes are quite diverse. We have every nationality, every background in there. We have Muslim kids and Jewish kids and Spanish kids and black kids and white kids. Everything. And one young man happened to be Israeli, that was in the class. And he start, and he, I guess he stood up to look and see what was the, the state of the classroom. And he started reciting the schmatta and I, and if you don't know what that is, that is the prayer that many of the Jews, at the end of your life, or when they walked into the gas chambers, they were reciting the schmatta, as sort of like the last words, um, praying to God, and I didn't show it, I don't think, but I got very scared because that's like the end. That's the end. So, um, oh, the - and so then we heard shots going through the rest of the hall, but we didn't move. We did not move. Um, and one of the young ladies later told me that she saw him come back and look into the glass panel and I thought, well, she must be delusional. But when they came out with the video of exactly what happened, the, the, the, um, surveillance, he did come back into the, and looked in and we were so, I'm so proud, because we were so still and so silent and probably what he saw inside made him think he got everybody in there, because it was a mess, and moved onto the, I - terrible to say I didn't want him moving on anywhere, but moved on to the next classroom and then ultimately the next floor. So there were, um, and I don't know, no one ever told me how many minutes there were, but it didn't seem very long until

the SWAT team came. Because, um, the other thing about the classroom, I've been in that classroom for, since the building was erected. The school was built in the early nineties, but that was, there's 13 buildings. I don't know if people realize, it's not a one big building like they have up north, there's 13 buildings. That building was built nine years prior, and I had been in that classroom ever since. The one thing the students think I rigged was that there's no cell phone service really. I did not. But they just, and because you know, they all "Ms. Schamis, you, I can't use my phone in here!" But it just, it was just the position of the classroom, I think, and so we were all trying to get 911 and couldn't get through. So it was called failed, call failed. And there was a landline in the class, but no one was gonna stand up and go get it. It was up on a shelf. So, Kelly, again, was somehow in a position where she was able to get 911, and because she kept telling them "We're in room 1214, 1214," I don't know for sure, but we were one of, if not the first room that SWAT came into, and they came in by putting their hand through that glass panel, which is what I thought the shooter was going to do. And they're the ones that were able to get us out. And that's pretty much, I mean, what happened inside the classroom that day.

- JP: [14:37](#) Thank you so much for, for opening up your story to us. We really, really appreciate it, and know it's not easy.
- Ivy Schamis: [14:46](#) No. No, but I think people should know.
- JJ: [14:49](#) Yeah. Yeah. That's one of the reasons why we started the podcast - Brady decided on a podcast, because not enough people hear it.
- Ivy Schamis: [14:56](#) Nope. And when you, and when you hear it on the news, and you say, "Oh gosh, another shooting at a wherever." I mean, until you're in there, listening to those deafening sounds of the bullets blasting through your classroom and your kids are my kids. They're my kids. I love my students. And you see that and, and what, what you know, and so and it's terrible to say, but all of these people that love their gun, do they really see what happens to victims that get torn apart by bullet in an AR 15? I don't know.
- JJ: [15:30](#) And it feels, the way you describe it, it sounds like it's a lifetime of time,
- Ivy Schamis: [15:34](#) Right.

JJ: [15:34](#) but it's so...

Ivy Schamis: [15:35](#) I was shocked to find out, the few minutes that the shooter was in the building felt like hours.

JJ: [15:41](#) Yes. And that's like, it's like a wound ripped in the world,

Ivy Schamis: [15:44](#) Right.

JJ: [15:44](#) in a very short amount of time.

Ivy Schamis: [15:47](#) Absolutely.

JJ: [15:48](#) And one of the things that I wanted to ask you about, is as someone who taught before a certain, you had so many like teaching awards, you know what I mean?

Ivy Schamis: [15:56](#) Haha, I guess!

JJ: [15:56](#) Like a long and very celebrated career of teaching.

Ivy Schamis: [15:58](#) Thank you, yeah.

JJ: [15:59](#) That, you know, they are your kids,

Ivy Schamis: [16:01](#) They're my kids.

JJ: [16:02](#) You love that love them,

Ivy Schamis: [16:03](#) Love.

JJ: [16:03](#) even when they annoy the crap out of you.

Ivy Schamis: [16:06](#) Yeah.

JJ: [16:06](#) You love them.

Ivy Schamis: [16:07](#) Yeah. No, I love them. All of them.

JJ: [16:10](#) Yeah.

Ivy Schamis: [16:10](#) Yes.

JJ: [16:10](#) And you feel responsible for them and everything.

Ivy Schamis: [16:13](#) You bet.

JJ: [16:14](#) And so what is it like to sort of be worried about yourself and worried about them?

Ivy Schamis: [16:19](#) Oh, my gosh.

JJ: [16:19](#) Both during and then after, I'm sure, too.

Ivy Schamis: [16:21](#) Right after, like literally right after, one of the students, or some of the students, started a group text, which they included me in, and it was, oh, it's invaluable. I mean, we, we still text all the time, but they, um, and they were, it's not like they were a group of friends. They were just put in this class and so, they became super close. I think we'll have that lifelong connection. But, um, originally, they started the text because we all were helping each other figure out where this wake is, that funeral, it was really something. I mean, and so it was, it was really like, "who can give me a ride to the celebration for Helena's life" or - it was really unbelievable. And so they all pitched in to help each other and then give each other support and that just turned into a whole, um, communication. It opened up communication among all of us. So yes, I, I don't, I don't know, um, what I could have done in that situation. We were not set up and we were not prepared for that. And you know, and all that. We never had a red code, a red code drill, which is, um, an active shooter drill, but I still to this day say, "where was my hard corner? Where was my safe space?" There was not a safe space in there no matter what. So it's not like, and, I didn't have a minute, or two minutes to say, okay, everyone go here or - and had we lined up against the wall, who am I to know that a shooter's not going to just go down the hall shooting through the thin drywall between, so there, you know. So I think about that a lot about, you know, being responsible for my kids. I could have just been there for them. After, really is, is really when they needed me the most, because there was nothing I could have done during the shooting differently.

JJ: [18:12](#) I'm going to make you be like, not selfish. I'm gonna make you think about yourself for a minute.

Ivy Schamis: [18:16](#) Oh, okay.

JJ: [18:16](#) But what about yourself? You know, because if you're wearing a bunch of hats now as like, teacher, as adults as -

Ivy Schamis: [18:21](#) Oh my gosh, we became, so we always, teachers were, wore many hats. There was no doubt about it, for sure. Um, but this is so different. This is totally different. Now, we're guidance -

besides being guidance how we were before, we're really therapists. We've become, very much so, therapists. And um, after we went back to school, the kids knew that my place was a safe haven. Still, you still have to teach, you still have to do your job, but it's just, um, unbelievable how much more. Yes. And I also became a parent to a lot of those students that maybe couldn't talk about it to their parents because their parents weren't there. You know, it's just different. We share a kind of a different experience. Terrible. I would take it back in a heartbeat. I mean, of course, to, to not have a great relationship with the kids. I'd rather have them, have them all here and safe. Um, but they're, many of them, are scarred for a very long time.

JP: [19:15](#)

How did you balance helping, kind of becoming that parent, that teacher, but also taking care of yourself?

Ivy Schamis: [19:23](#)

I didn't really take care of myself. Um, I didn't take care of myself. I was there for them. If they texted me in the middle of the night, I answered the text. It didn't happen often, but it did. So some of them, there was, um, one of the students was at an a concert, months later, and they thought, there was a scare, that there was a shooting, and I was the first person they called. And we've, and I took the kids because of the, um, nature of the class and what we were doing with the, um, with the IWitness and the Shoah foundation, some of the kids were able to accompany me to, to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and I've given them some opportunities that have come about for me to speak about gun violence. And so I think that, um, that I just made myself available as a source of support for them. My, both of my personal children grew up in Parkland and graduated from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. So I put myself in the shoes of a parent. I was, my, my own children were grown, so I then felt very comfortable falling into the shoes of, of a parent to them. So I didn't really, I didn't do anything to take care of myself. I did not go to any therapy or anything for a long time afterwards because I just made sure that I was always available for the kids.

JJ: [20:42](#)

You've said that you've taken a step back from teaching now.

Ivy Schamis: [20:45](#)

Now, yes.

JJ: [20:46](#)

Is, is that sort of part of a self care- ?

Ivy Schamis: [20:49](#)

Oh, 100%. Absolutely. I really was, um, I just went completely 100% forward and I went back to school. I'm not judging anybody and what they did, there were teachers that could not come back. Um, and there were, and they were not either in the

building or they were not shot into and they just, it was just too much for them. But I knew I had to be there because what would that look like to the students? If I was gonna give up. I, I wasn't giving up and I'm not looking at this as giving up, but I had to stay until every last one of them graduated and it wasn't very easy. Some of them had a hard time coming back. Um, were maybe going to take classes online, some of them, um, a couple of them almost didn't graduate, did not really have enough credits, so in June of 2019 the rest of the students, some of them graduated in June of 2018, and the rest finished and I had to see them through to at least the June of 2019. And then I put in for a leave of absence so that I could really concentrate on what, what, what I need to do. I started mindful meditation. I started seeing a psychologist. I needed to but hadn't done that. So I'm starting to do that now.

JJ: [22:05](#)

Which is good. I'm really glad that you're,

Ivy Schamis: [22:08](#)

Thank you.

JJ: [22:09](#)

doing that.

Ivy Schamis: [22:09](#)

Oh, thank you!

JJ: [22:09](#)

I'm sure, I don't know if that hasn't, but it's,

Ivy Schamis: [22:11](#)

Thank you, I have to say there's been tremendous amount of support.

JJ: [22:14](#)

Yeah.

Ivy Schamis: [22:14](#)

The community in Parkland is amazing. Amazing. We lived there for so many years, and I used to say to my husband, like, just about the school - and people moved to Parkland because of the school system there, but I would say to my husband, all the time, "why don't people know about Parkland?" Our drama department is amazing. Our athletics are fantastic. The band is fabulous. Our academics, we compete in everything we're the world, we're in the nation's number one, blah, blah, like everything. I just, our school, I was the biggest cheerleader for our school, and now they know us, but for not the reasons I originally thought. So it's really crazy because I used to say, how do people not know about Parkland? It's such a great community and it really, they, everybody stepped up. You saw just from the students did not become like that just because they have great parents and great community support and great teachers at our school.

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| JP:          | <a href="#">23:08</a> | And one thing that, in reading about your story and what you've said afterwards, I've been really inspired by your description of resilience, and what that word means to you, and how Parkland personifies that. Can you tell us a little bit about what your definition of resilience is, and how you've experienced that and seen that in the town of Parkland after the shooting.   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">23:36</a> | Well, Parkland or - Parklanders as you can tell, don't take no for an answer. Um, and I've always said that that's very hard if when you're a teacher and kids have an 89 like, that's it, you're, you're sunk because them, their parents, everyone, is like on your neck because that "I'm - why - my child doesn't get that." Um, and so, but that perseverance and that persistence works in good ways as well. And um, I think that resiliency is definitely a fluid term. I mean it depends on, it - the community is hurting, they are definitely hurting, but they're trying to move forward, and they weren't going to take this sitting down like some of the other communities we reached. We reached out to some of the communities that had gun violence after us, and some of them didn't want anything to do with us. Um, and so these kids, I know the world thought this is great and I think it's great too, what they did, but I was not surprised at the how the March for Our Lives started, and the movement started, and the rallies. I was not surprised, because these are the kind of students that come from the kind of families that are that type of resiliency, and they're not going to let this happen or we're going to try not to let it happen to another community. Even though it did. It's hard to fight. It's very hard. It's very hard, but little increments. I think that like you've said, or we're making progress step-by-step. |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:02</a> | We've seen now that the stats are out, but it takes the average American about three weeks to forget about a mass shooting,   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:10</a> | Look at that.   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:10</a> | before they move on to their next one, because they're so common now that there's actually this trauma news fatigue.  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:14</a> | Isn't that awful?   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:16</a> | Where it doesn't factor in. And I think what's so, what's been so admirable about the Parkland kids, but the Parkland community more, most of them aren't technically kids anymore.   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:24</a> | Yes.  |

|              |                       |  |
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| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:24</a> | That are adults, the Parkland collective.  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:27</a> | Fabulous.  |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:27</a> | If you will, is that they've refused to let what happened be forgotten.  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:33</a> | Oh, yes.   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:33</a> | They've really, they've really pushed this, you know, that "This is Enough" narrative, and they've done a fantastic job with it.   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:40</a> | Yep.   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:40</a> | What is it like for you, though, as someone who, who went through it,  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:43</a> | Mhm.   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:43</a> | ...and is still sort of a part of it in terms of activism, when sort of student leaders, particularly in the March for our Lives, when they get the online troll or -  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:53</a> | Horrible.  |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">25:53</a> | The AdHawk attacks, that happened a lot to them.   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">25:56</a> | I want to cry and they're like, "don't worry Mrs. Schamis! We're good. We got it. We're not worried about that." That's amazing to me, because I think that I'm more thin skinned than they are, and the, they, they move past all that, because they know there's a bigger picture out there. There's something out there that they can be a part of that, they could probably change or they will change.  |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">26:17</a> | Mhm.   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">26:17</a> | They will change, um again. They have to know that it takes time. But many of them have gotten so politically active. It's unbelievably impressive. Aalayah Eastmond, the young lady, she now goes to school in Washington, D.C., um, she was in my class, a little, sat in the back, "eep". You didn't hear anything from her. She found her voice, and she's speaking out, and she spoke at the Kavanaugh hearings and she's out there doing, and I just think, look at that - if - and one and I think that they're starting to see that one voice - and we've learned that in the Holocaust class. And I like to think that the Holocaust class really |

helped a lot of these, as many of those activists from March for Our Lives, and others have con- come through this. It's an active, an academic elective. But we talked about being an upstander all the time and you've got to take a stand for something, and this "enough is enough" and "never again." That #NeverAgain came from um, the - from the Holocaust movement that um, right, that this is never gonna happen again and we're going to stop it from happening again. And I know that when they were sitting around talking about their, about their slogans, they said that this was not, it was not just a coincidence. We thought about the Holocaust class. So I'm super proud of them and I - and they're - and they're not stopping anytime soon.

- JP: [27:37](#) We've been lucky enough to work with Aalayah Eastmond here, as she's on our executive council of Team Enough and she has done incredible work. Not only talking about her experience at Parkland in your class, but as well talking about the gun violence that her family, family has experienced in New York City, and in a totally different area.
- Ivy Schamis: [28:01](#) Right.
- JP: [28:01](#) Can you tell us a little bit more about your relationship with Aalayah and how you've seen her progress,
- Ivy Schamis: [28:10](#) Oh, my gosh.
- JP: [28:10](#) From your class.
- Ivy Schamis: [28:12](#) Yes.
- JP: [28:12](#) to, to an activist speaking in March for Our Lives, speaking at the Kavanaugh hearing, and kind of really becoming a leader in the movement.
- Ivy Schamis: [28:20](#) Yes. Here's a good example, and we know, and people know Aalayah, but there's, believe it or not, many students that are like her, that want to, that would love to speak out and have their voices heard. But she spoke out from the beginning, which is amazing. Yes, she sat pretty quiet. Not that she didn't contribute academically, she's very bright, but she just was a quiet young lady, who probably didn't think her opinion meant much, is what I'm thinking. And then after all of this, in fact that night, right after the shooting, some of us were transported by bus. It was a hodgepodge and very chaotic. But um, we were transported by bus to the Marriott, which is a hotel not far from

the school. And where they tried to get statements and they were trying to organize. They really had, it was a mess. And then we found each other there, and she was wearing a jumpsuit that the police had given her because they took her clothes as evidence. And I was devastated because that's the first time I had seen her after we were all just herded out of the building and told to run, and everyone went every which way. And so I lost track of the students and, and we talked about what had happened in the classroom and I think she just made it her mission now that she's not going to be silent about what happened. And she wanted to talk also to, more, speak out for people that look like her and be for, be for women of color that have a voice in gun violence, and so I'm super proud of her. We did the Lipstick Lobby together and um, and we've, we are, we've been together a lot in that last year and a half. She was one of the students that would come to my classroom a lot when she just wasn't feeling great and just needed a pep talk or a boost to get back on the right track. Um, I wrote her letters, I think for school, for her. And so we've become close, and she's darling, and I'm so proud of her and all of the students that really decided to take a, to take a stand.

- JJ: [30:20](#) There's very few times where I'm hoping that the, that I wish that we had and more visual medium because you just light up so much when you talk about our students, like it's, it's very evident that these are special to you,
- Ivy Schamis: [30:33](#) Yes.
- JJ: [30:33](#) ...that they're very special people in your life and so I'm really glad that they had you and that and that you had them following this.
- Ivy Schamis: [30:40](#) Yes. I think I'm gonna always have them.
- JJ: [30:43](#) Yeah.
- Ivy Schamis: [30:43](#) Like when I come here to DC, I just want to look up my students. I live here and there's a lot of Stoneman Douglas alumni here. They make me happy. They know! Cause they get it, just like I get it when the kids talk to someone about what happened in the classroom, I get it, I was there with them.
- JJ: [31:00](#) I just, how do you go back to regular life after this? How do you go back to teaching? How do you go back to making your lesson plans for upcoming school years or going to continuing pedagogy education classes?

|              |                       |  |
|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">31:16</a> | Right.   |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">31:16</a> | Like, how do you do all of that?   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">31:18</a> | <p>Right. Well, I think I'm in a special position because teaching Holocaust education is really weirdly related to this hate, and it's weirdly related, but I didn't always teach that, so it was only, we started six years ago at our school. But um, I think it's, it's not regular. It will never be regular. I think it will never be regular. There's always that awareness of what happened and I think that, first of all, I had to go back and be there. That was not even a question. That was not a question. So we had to be there for each other. The community, and the country, at large was really unbelievably supportive, and that was a big help. I don't know if people realize that, but after something like this, the letters and the support from not just the local community, but everywhere, that came pouring in I think was, it really does help. I think that when people send schools, send letters and they make quilts and they do like posters, and all kinds of things, I don't know if they realize that, um, it helps to know that others around the country are thinking of you and they're with you. And so I think that was it. But going back and teaching what, what are you supposed to do? I think that's what you, that's just what you do, that's just what you do. You move on, you don't forget, you move on. And it was very tough going back right after the shooting. Well they didn't, they suspended all, um, all fire alarms and all of that. But then the following year we went back and then we started having those mandatory code drills again, it really triggered a lot of students.</p> |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">32:55</a> | I was going to ask about that.   |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">32:56</a> | Very much so.  |
| JJ:          | <a href="#">32:57</a> | <p>I know that now there's much more of a, almost sort of militarized police presence on campus. I know that they started the drills and then, I believe I had read an article with you. Where you're talking about, they put you in a temporary classroom that didn't have any of these new safety measures that they had put in to place. So, what...</p>  |
| Ivy Schamis: | <a href="#">33:12</a> | <p>A portable classroom, it was just as unsafe as the other classroom. It was just one big square, with nowhere to hide, giant windows, and a glass panel through the front door, believe it or not. So we just had to hope that it was, like you said, the perimeter is secure and I can't, and I tell the kids too, I can't live my life paranoid. I can't do it. And thinking that everywhere I turn, and I know kids tell me everywhere they go, they look for</p>   |

an exit. I know that and that's okay, but you know, it's going to take a lot of time. There's nothing wrong with being vigilant, but you can't live your life in fear. You just can't. I mean, we just, I hope, and that's why being part of this Brady and being part of, um, trying to end gun violence. I don't know how or when or what it's going to take, but you've got to hope that that's gonna be a big help.

- JP: [34:04](#) One part of kind of this journey that we're on to try to be advocates on this issue, that, that we have been working on with, is social norm change, and how do you change the conversation around gun violence to make people think about it differently and in a less politicized way. And I know of course as you have been a teacher of social studies, and the Holocaust, a big focus of that is human rights as an issue. Do you believe that gun violence and gun violence prevention is a human rights issue?
- Ivy Schamis: [34:41](#) Oh yes. Look at all the effect that gun violence has had on, on, if we're just looking at the United States and not looking internationally, although the whole world is looking at us as if, "what kind of country is that now?"
- JJ: [34:55](#) Yep.
- Ivy Schamis: [34:55](#) People are afraid to come here. Oh, they think they're going to get shot everywhere they go.
- JJ: [34:59](#) China did issue a travel warning.
- Ivy Schamis: [35:01](#) Look at that, look at that!
- JJ: [35:03](#) The U.S. was a little bit, that's obviously a political move, but also it was, they weren't wrong.
- Ivy Schamis: [35:07](#) Right, right. Because let me go to a concert. Oh, I might get shot. I'm going to go sit in church. I might get shot! Or a synagogue, or school. It's, oh yeah, it is an absolute human rights. I listen, I, and I know that changing the whole mindset of not saying gun control, but gun violence prevention, is just something that is really - changes your psyche a little bit. It's, it's common sense. Who is going to disagree? My opinion is that nobody, no civilian, And I know that doesn't fly. And so, no, and you know, we, I feel being a safer world if just the military and, and um, law enforcement had guns, but that's not reality. And I guess that's not going to happen. But all of these programs with voluntary buy back and, um, it just makes common sense, that

people should not be toting guns everywhere they go. So it's definitely, how can it not be a human rights issue?

JJ: [36:00](#)

Especially because you have taught on the Holocaust.

Ivy Schamis: [36:04](#)

Yes.

JJ: [36:05](#)

And won awards from the Shoah Foundation.

Ivy Schamis: [36:06](#)

Yes. And saw terrible things done to people.

JJ: [36:10](#)

How do you feel then about people who identify themselves as gun rights advocates who say, I don't know if you've seen these memes and whatnot, you know, the Holocaust wouldn't have happened, had individuals been armed.

Ivy Schamis: [36:19](#)

Oh, my goodness gracious, that is insane!

JJ: [36:21](#)

How do you feel about, how do you feel about that red herring that gets thrown out?

Ivy Schamis: [36:26](#)

No, completely false. Completely false. They, it was a completely different, a whole mindset. I can give you lesson on the Holocaust. We'd be here for, you know, a few days. So...

JJ: [36:35](#)

I mean, I'd be happy to be there for it, but...

Ivy Schamis: [36:37](#)

It's not, it was a, it was a whole government backed, political...

JJ: [36:42](#)

So they're just wrong.

Ivy Schamis: [36:44](#)

No, no. Yeah. And these people had guns. Oh yes. They're coming to round everyone up, and they're, you know, with, and they can take out their guns and shoot. They were demoralized and dehumanized and had no means with which to defend themselves and resist. And then when they did round up, whatever, you know, weapons they could get in hold off the, they were completely obliterated, but, so no, it was a completely different mindset. We're not talking about Nazi Germany here in the United States with people with their whole, their, with their gun racks. Oh my God. It's completely, not even, it's not, it's insulting to be able to compare that, truthfully.

JJ: [37:20](#)

How do you feel about, you know, you teach history, and now Parkland is history.

Ivy Schamis: [37:26](#) It's so crazy because I also teach an international relations class. Yes, that was my undergraduate degree. And um, we watch in the international relations class, we watch a 10 minutes, CNN, Carl Azuz does the CNN 10 every day. And we do that to just, it's a springboard for what's going on news-wise. And he did a thing on Parkland last year or after, after the shooting. We're watching it and there we were. We were the subject of that and we were the subject of a Scholastic Upfront magazine, which we read. It was crazy, because now we're the news, and so it's, it's a little weird. It's very weird and we're part of this now and everything just, we're looking at the newspaper here in Washington right there. The front cover was about the shootings and Parkland's in there now. And like I said in the beginning, we wanted everyone to know Parkland, because it was such an amazing community and now Parkland's in the news for reasons that I would've never ever imagined.

JJ: [38:23](#) Yeah. That's in the fabric of what Parkland is now.

Ivy Schamis: [38:26](#) Terrible. That that's what we're associated with. But we're also associated with things that are going to help make change. That's what I, that's what I'm trying.

JP: [38:33](#) We can only hope that the news out of Parkland is brighter moving forward. We have hope too that it will be.

Speaker 4: [38:43](#) \*Music\*

JP: [38:43](#) So, speaking of being in the news, we have a interesting story here that didn't get nearly as much attention as I thought it would.

JJ: [38:53](#) Yeah. And generally when a story opens up with like this happened in Beyoncé's neighborhood, you think that there's going to be a fair amount of press. But I think this passed by in a blip, really quickly, because there's no overt violence in this story. But I think the possibility of violence is very present there, and that's what makes it scary.

JP: [39:10](#) And oftentimes when you hear it's in Beyonce's neighborhood, it's something that's not that serious.

JJ: [39:15](#) That's true.

JP: [39:16](#) I feel like usually fun things happening in Beyonce's neighborhood. I've never been to Beyonce's neighborhood.

JJ: [39:20](#) I was going to say I've never been invited to Beyonce's neighborhood. I don't know.

JP: [39:22](#) Maybe one day.

JJ: [39:24](#) That's the dream. So this is that a Los Angeles man, his name was Girard Damien Saenz, he is fifty seven years old, has been held on suspicion of unlawful transportation and giving, lending, or selling an assault weapon illegally. And as such, he had a search of his home, and during that time, federal and local agents had to seize more than a thousand weapons that he had had stockpiled. And this, why it ended up getting media attention again, is that this was not in a store, this was not in sort of a quiet rural bunker sort of thing. This was in Beyoncé's neighborhood. This is a neighborhood where the average house goes for more than seventeen million. So it was in this massive, beautiful mansion and federal agents had to descend. And basically, if you look at the photos, they've run out of places to just lay the guns out, so they just start taking over neighbors lawns, streets.

Cordy: [40:20](#) Well, what does that tell you then about why he's living in a seventeen - in...

JJ: [40:25](#) Exactly.

Cordy: [40:26](#) A community that has an average home price of seventeen million dollars, where someone like Beyonce could live, because people are, he's in business.

JJ: [40:34](#) Yes, exactly.

JP: [40:36](#) Yeah. I mean the relation there to gun trafficking is so evident, and in addition, you see that the original, the reason why they were able to go to his house, was because he was held on suspicion of transporting or lending or selling an assault weapon, which in most states - luckily this was in California - is legal.

JJ: [41:00](#) Yeah.

JP: [41:00](#) So there's a good chance that if he wasn't living in Los Angeles,

JJ: [41:04](#) Oh yeah, had he been living in Virginia,

JP: [41:05](#) in a bunch of other States,

|            |                       |   |
|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Cordy:     | <a href="#">41:08</a> | Texas!  |
| JP:        | <a href="#">41:08</a> | He would have, he would've been able to continue selling guns and profiting off of death.   |
| JJ:        | <a href="#">41:15</a> | I mean, don't sue us, Mr. Saenz, for implying that you're a trafficker of guns. He hasn't had his day in court yet, but it seems, I didn't go to school for math, but it seems like one plus one, this case probably does equal two.  |
| Cordy:     | <a href="#">41:25</a> | I bet if the punishment were different, people wouldn't, maybe they wouldn't do that. They think twice about it. What about in ,another countries? Guns are illegal and so they wouldn't do that because it, I mean, what do you get a slap on the wrist? I don't know, what, what do you get for the, the punishment for doing something like that. And like you said, if it's legal, no punishment.   |
| JJ:        | <a href="#">41:45</a> | You know, if he's just, it turns out he's really good at like making and selling ceramic cats.  |
| Cordy:     | <a href="#">41:49</a> | Right.  |
| JJ:        | <a href="#">41:49</a> | There were still people willing to sell him that to take a ceramic cat money and allow him to have a thousand weapons.  |
| Cordy:     | <a href="#">41:55</a> | Right.  |
| JJ:        | <a href="#">41:55</a> | And I guess my question for that is who, why would you need that many?  |
| Cordy:     | <a href="#">41:59</a> | You don't need any, you don't need any.   |
| Speaker 4: | <a href="#">42:05</a> | *music*   |
| JP:        | <a href="#">42:05</a> | Now back to hope. There's also something else that makes me hopeful that the gun violence prevention movement will be successful: the young people we have in this movement.  |
| JJ:        | <a href="#">42:15</a> | So someone who I am incredibly inspired by, is Kaylee Tyner. Now, she's a now graduate of Columbine High school in Littleton, Colorado and as a former resident of Denver, Colorado. I know that the, sort of specter of what happened at Columbine High School, which was located in Littleton, Colorado, continues to be present. But, in, out of sort of the sadness of that, Kaylee came up with something amazing, her and her friends, to help commemorate the massacre and raise |

awareness about the ongoing gun violence epidemic. She and a group of other individuals conceived of a campaign called #MyLastShot and this went viral on Twitter.

- JP: [42:54](#) Kaylee is an incredible student advocate who just graduated from Columbine High School. She works with us here. She's on our Team Enough executive council. So she's been leading up a lot of the different programs, efforts that we do here with young people. #MyLastShot was a campaign that she'd been working on for months before she released it, I think about over half a year ago. And she, within days of the release of the program, it was on CNN's front page.
- JJ: [43:27](#) I, Oh. And we have our, one of our communications interns, Catherine is here in the room with us and she just showed us off that it's on the back of her ID. And I think that's so funny, cause I just ordered one, today, for myself.
- JP: [43:38](#) So to give an explanation of those who don't know what #MyLastShot is, it is asking students to take a pledge and that pledge they can get a sticker, put it on their laptops, put it on their ID cards, and it says; "if in the event that I die from gun violence, please publicize the photo of my death #MyLastShot." Signed, the student's name. It's something that, obviously is heart wrenching to hear that there are 12, 13, 14, 15 year olds saying that, if I die in my school or in my community, I want you to publicize the photo, the gruesome photo of my death, which is really hard to hear, but shows how much these students really care about this issue. I am always so inspired by students who come up with ideas and are willing to execute them, and willing to put in the time to make it happen, because it's not easy.
- JJ: [44:32](#) And I will say that, I checked their frequently asked questions section of their website ,because as an older person, who is no longer in school and doesn't have a student ID, I wondered if I was allowed to participate too. And they actually say yes, anyone can purchase one of these stickers, place it on the back of your ID, because anyone can be a victim of gun violence. It started as a student movement, but it's definitely spread. They do not make any money off of this. The cost of the sticker merely covers the cost to actually create the sticker. So this is sort of a self controlling, self rolling project, but I think it's wonderful. It's doing the same thing that Emmett Till's family did when they insisted on having an open casket funeral for him to show the horrors of of racism and white supremacy violence in the United States, that there is intense violence that happens against individuals by guns that continues today, and we need to let people know. So if you're at all interested in my last shot,

we've linked to their website, we've linked to all of their social. If you go to BradyUnited.org, it's all there on our podcast page, but really just like, major props to Kaylee for taking this and in making something beautiful and her own that I think has a lot of impact. And if you guys out there have your own Kaylee, if you've got someone in your life that you think is doing a phenomenal job that needs to be uplifted, please send us an email and let us know. Go to BradyUnited.org/Podcast or you can even send us a message through our social @BradyBuzz.

- JJ: [45:55](#) We do accept carrier pigeons too. If you want to send one of those our way.
- JP: [45:58](#) Yeah.
- JJ: [45:59](#) If you send me a GVP hero of the week by raven, you do get bonus points if you can make that happen.
- Speaker 4: [46:08](#) \*music\*
- Lynn: [46:08](#) thanks for listening. As always, Brady's lifesaving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible. Thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast or visit BradyUnited.org. Be safe and remember, take actions, not sides.
- Speaker 1: [46:51](#) \*music\*