

Episode 117-- 3 Years After Parkland Once You Hear a Witness...

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SPEAKERS

Aalayah Eastmond, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson, Ivy Schamis



JJ Janflone 00:08

This is the legal disclaimer where I tell you that the views, thoughts, and opinions shared in this podcast belong solely to our guests and hosts and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's okay, we find it disturbing too. Hey everybody, welcome back to Red, Blue, and Brady. As always, I'm JJ. I'm one of your hosts



Kelly Sampson 00:42
and I'm your co host Kelly.



JJ Janflone 00:44

You are my co host Kelly. I would never replace you but Beyonce, if you're out there, If you want to join us, bring back a nice little threesome. We can be your new Destiny's Child.



Kelly Sampson 00:54

I was trying to work an irreplaceable pun in there. Please hold.



JJ Janflone 00:58

I was just thinking about how much I like Kelly Rowland. Anyway, today Kelly and I are having an important conversation. But I will say it's one of the ones that I think we all hate having. Because it's it's rough. We're talking about loss, right? Today, to do that, we're joined by Aalayah Eastmond and Ivy Schamis, who are friends of Brady and of the podcast they've both been on before.



Kelly Sampson 01:20

And it's a real testament to their character and endurance that they're back again.



JJ Janflone 01:24

Absolutely. And that's because both IV and alayah are survivors of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, which happened three years ago. Now along with being an overall amazing human, Ivy is an office manager at Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School in Washington, DC and Aalayah Eastman is an Executive Council member of Team Enough, co founder of Concerned Citizens DC, and she's an intern with Pay Our Interns working to make internships more accessible to black youth. And that's not all. She is also a full time college student at Trinity Washington University. And I think we can all say that she is extremely impressive.



JJ Janflone 02:03

I don't know how she finds hours in the day, I think she might be magic. I just want to put that out there right now. Might be magic.



Kelly Sampson 02:11

But as we'll talk about, I think one of the most magical things is that she's also a human being who's like, been through a lot and is still coping with a lot and yet is channeling that into her activism.



JJ Janflone 02:21

Yeah. And Ivy too who's returned to the school system. And I know is, has to be like a delight and a treasure, right, at that day school. And I think what we're getting at here is that, while Kelly and I would love to spend time with Ivy and Aalayah talking about you

know, their current projects and their interests, instead, what we have to talk about is this, one of these horrific defining moments in their lives, which is the massacre that occurred on February 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas.



02:50

At the time of the shooting, Ivy was an almost 20 year veteran social studies teacher



JJ Janflone 02:55

and Aalayah was a 16 year old junior.



02:57

And their classroom, Room 1214, was one of the rooms attacked in the shooting.



JJ Janflone 03:03

And, and together we're discussing what happened that day, what has happened in the three years since and even what hasn't happened in response.



03:11

Yeah, and we're so thankful for Ivy and Aalayah, for sharing the time with us, but that we wish we didn't have to have this particular conversation.



JJ Janflone 03:22

Thanks so much for joining us Ivy, Aalayah. I know that you both are incredibly busy, and that this is a hard time of year. So I want to thank you so much for coming on. And maybe, can we just start off by having you introduce yourself? Ivy, you get teacher privileges, you get to go first



Ivy Schamis 03:38

I'm Ivy Schamis and I taught at Marjory Stoneman Douglas for almost two decades, and I was in the classroom, Room 1214, on the day of the massacre there. And Ella was in my

classroom along with about 30 other students, where two kids were murdered inside and four were injured. And I moved to DC exactly a year ago, to be away from all of that.



Aalayah Eastmond 04:01

Hi, my name is Aalayah Eastman. I'm 19, a sophomore at Trinity Washington University, and a survivor from Ms. Schamis's classroom almost three years ago at our high school, and I'm glad to be here today.



JJ Janflone 04:14

Before we before we get started too on, on I think what's going to be, it's like, it always is a heavy conversation. I think when we talk about this kind of stuff, but I've wondered, Ivy, since now you can tell tales out of school, what was Aalayah like, as a student?



Ivy Schamis 04:30

Aalayah was quiet. I know it's hard, you'll find that hard to believe. But Aalayah was very quiet. If I recall, I don't know if, it wasn't her choice to sit more towards the back I think I what I do is I give them seats because it's easier for me to memorize. I had 200 students a semester, so it's easier for me to memorize their names if I have a seating chart. So I just do it. I have the computer randomly do a scramble and I, and she was sitting sort of like in the middle of the class but towards the back. And I remember she was very quiet. And that's I think, why I was not so surprised but surprised that she found her voice, and she really became the number one advocate from that classroom. But she's smart and beautiful, too. And that she was always, before and after.



Aalayah Eastmond 05:17

Thank you.



JJ Janflone 05:18

How about Aalayah. How was Ivy? What was it like being in her class?



Aalayah Eastmond 05:22

Yeah, I always heard a lot of great things about Miss Schamis, since my freshman year at Douglas, because she's just been there for so long. Everybody knew her, and everybody

always had great experiences in her classroom. And it was actually pretty interesting, because I actually didn't know I was gonna have Miss Schamis for the second semester, because I didn't know like, the Holocaust history was broken up by teachers for each semester. So when I moved over to her class, I was like, wow, it's a totally different vibe in here. And I totally love it. I liked how she, like had her own structure of teaching, which you knew exactly what you're supposed to do when you come in and when you leave. So I really enjoyed her class. I wish I had more time in her class. But the the short amount of time that I had was amazing.



Ivy Schamis 06:10

Because it wasn't a normal year. Because after the shooting, everything was so different. If it had gone on as a regular year, of course, it would have been a much better academic experience than it.



Aalayah Eastmond 06:21

Yeah. Yeah.



JJ Janflone 06:24

And I can't imagine how hard that would be to come back, when we had we had teacher Julie Schardt, who was a teacher at Stockton, California, that they had their shooting. And she described it as, she was like, it's a completely different you, all your teaching plans just go out the window, your curriculum is kind of gone. After it happens, you've got to completely adjust everything.



Ivy Schamis 06:45

Well, my whole entire teaching career. I had been at Stoneman Douglas for 17 years at that point, and I haven't stepped foot back in that classroom since. Most people don't realize that, that Stoneman Douglas is 13 different buildings, we happen to be in building 1200. And that is where the shooting took place, and our classroom is a crime scene, so it was sealed off after February 14 and haven't been back in there since. So not only did some teachers have to start with their curriculum again, but I had zero materials, nothing, all my books, all my plans, all my tests, everything I owned, is still to this day, sitting in that classroom.



Kelly Sampson 07:23

That's, I mean, I have a couple really, really close friends who are teachers, and I know how hard they work and how many hours they put in out of school and how critical those materials are. So I can't even imagine, on top of trauma and grieving and suffering, also having to figure out how to rebuild some of that stuff from scratch as a teacher and as a student.



Ivy Schamis 07:45

Most definitely, most definitely. And they gave us rolly carts and, and paper and pencil and different supplies and said okay, and we had to teach in other people's classrooms when it was their planning. It was, it was, it was terrible.



Aalayah Eastmond 07:59

I've just that really gave me a flashback. I totally like erased that point from my memory. So I definitely remember, I believe Ms. Schamis was my only teacher in the 1200 building that year, because that's a class for mostly freshmen and like electives. So being a junior, you don't really have that many classes in the 1200 building. But I just remember like, the whole culture around campus was so different, because that's, how many teachers? That's 30 teachers displaced. So now like you see teachers walking to their next classroom with you, in already overly crowded school of over 3000 students, it was just a lot and they had their carts. And then there was dogs everywhere. And there's just so many people, it was just so much and I really just I totally erased that from my mind, because it was just oh, so overwhelming. Yeah, that just brought back a crazy memory.



JJ Janflone 08:56

I think a lot a lot of folks who like for me, for example, I think like a lot of like East Coast City schools or just city schools in general. The, the fact that that Marjory Stoneman Douglas is multiple buildings that are spread out, that it was a campus and that there were that many kids, I think that's something that I don't think people understood or still continue to understand, like the way that it was set up. I don't know what Kelly's experience was. But for me, my high school was just one giant building that you couldn't leave and couldn't go, but I maybe had a graduating class of I mean, ultimately, if people who walked like maybe 100 or so.



Ivy Schamis 09:00

Totally right, that's what people think when they think Marjory Stoneman Douglas so when you have some students and some teachers, I know everyone had their own experience, but saying like, oh, I'm a survivor or whatever, they were, although it's a 45 acre campus, they might have been all the way across the campus, even though yes, they're part of the school. If a third floor didn't hear gunshots going on in the first floor, it's impossible that people all the way across campus heard that too. So I think that most people really, think that you know, everyone was in that one building but it, but if you think of a college campus where the buildings are all spread out. We have 45 acres and ball fields and all kinds of that's what was happening at the school. That's how it was laid out.



JJ Janflone 10:09

Yeah, thanks for helping us understand because I, like JJ grew up in the Midwest and I went to a very small magnet school. That was one small, small building. And I also just want to say thank you, in general, for just talking about what it was like to be student and teacher because I feel like one of the things, as someone who is not part of the community down there, is it's easy to only think about the tragedy and not the day to day experiences of, you know, an educational environment and all that comes with that. You know, unfortunately, we're here today, I would love if that never happened, and we could just talk about what a great teacher you are and what a great student you are. But we're here because we're entering on the third anniversary of the shooting. And so I was wondering if both of you would share a little bit about what happened that day in whatever way you feel comfortable sharing.



Ivy Schamis 10:56

Okay, Aalayah, you go first.



Aalayah Eastmond 10:58

Oh, gosh, okay.



JJ Janflone 11:00

I like Ivy using her teacher privilege to just call on you. Do you like how she just did it?



Ivy Schamis 11:04

She didn't raise her hand. I just called on her.

A

Aalayah Eastmond 11:08

So, I remember that morning. I actually didn't want to go to school at all. Because I was just not in the interest of seeing high school lovey, dovey flowers and candy and mushy. I just didn't want to go. But because my mom is Trinidadian, I knew if I asked her, no, no, no, take your, you're behind to school. So I didn't even bother to ask. And I just went to school. And it was just a normal, normal day. I remember going to my math class, which is my second period, and we had a fire drill, and nothing crazy, just a normal fire drill. And then I made it to my fourth period class, which was Ms Schamis's classroom. And it was also just a pretty regular day, I remember Ms Schamis mentioning that her doors were locked today, because I remember the Monday and the Tuesday, teachers were supposed to tell us how we're going to have a drill soon and how we needed to lock the doors. So that was on everybody's radar already. And I remember today, we had presented hate group projects. And Nicholas Dworet was actually in my group. And I remember presenting that with him. And then I think today was the day that Helena had just kind of opened up with the classroom a little bit. And I remember kind of joking around with the camera, on your, forgot with those boards were called, the SMART Board. And then Nick was answering all the questions, literally the whole period. So like, that was the first time I actually heard him, like really participate. And I remember going to the restroom, and then being told that the bathrooms on the first and third floor were locked. So, I had to go up the stairs, again, not thinking anything of it. And then I remember coming back to the classroom, and we're working on our computers with our headphones in. And I'd say like about five minutes within me sitting back down in my desk is when we first heard the round of shots. And I would just remember immediate pause in the entire classroom. And we all looked up and looked at each other and paused. And then we heard it again. And that's when we all, literally at the same exact time, got up. And I remember, half of us went to Ms. Schamis's corner, which is the designated corner for a active shooter drill. And the other half of us went to a corner that was diagonally across from the door to the classroom. So I ended up going to the wrong corner, unfortunately, because that's what was closest to me. And then I would say, within about I don't even know, not even a minute of sitting there. We were the next classroom. And then I remember before we the perpetrator was shooting into our classroom, Helena was passing books from the bookshelf for us to shield our heads. And then I looked down to call my mom and then that's when, you know, it was happening inside of the classroom. And at that point, I still didn't really know what was going on. I was telling myself that it's, um, that it was a senior prank, because I saw red on the floor. And then when I looked up, I saw Helena not alive. And that's when I connected what was actually happening. And at that moment is when Nick was shot and he fell over, and I just matched every movement of his body because I knew that would be the only way that I would survive. And that's my story from February 14.



Kelly Sampson 14:40

Thank you for sharing that. And I'm sorry you had to share that. And I'm sorry that Nick and Helena aren't here and I'm glad that you are.



Aalayah Eastmond 14:48

Thank you.



JJ Janflone 14:49

Yeah, I feel really badly because I feel like I'm gonna cry, and I don't want to put that like emotion on you. But thank you very much for for sharing. Ivy are you comfortable?



Ivy Schamis 14:59

Yes, because it's very painful. It's very painful. But we have to talk about it because that's the only way things are going to change if, when you left my classroom, when my classroom in room 1214 had a big yellow banner that a Holocaust survivor, we had Holocaust survivors and veterans and all kinds of people come speak in that class. It was a very interesting class because I created it. There was no set curriculum, and so I was able to be very creative and free with thought. And when they moved us into the portable, I had a very big poster with it, saying, as you walk out the door, once you hear a witness, you become a witness. And that's exactly why Aalayah and me and everybody else that is a victim of gun violence needs to tell their story because, just like the Holocaust survivors, we are learning from them. And I had many of these survivors and also not just Holocaust survivors. I had Rwandan, a Rwandan genocide survivor, also come to my class. And, and you have to just tell your story, as painful as it is, you have to tell people so that they know what happened. Aalayah again, bravely tells the story about what happened. And it was so much, there was so much going on. And there's so many moving parts to this. They were on the laptops because it was, where they were doing, after they did their presentation with hate groups, they were had been researching hate groups that might be on the college campuses that they were attending. And Nick Dworet at the young man who was in Aalayah's group and who was ultimately killed in our tragedy, he had just owed a scholarship to the University of Indianapolis, a swimming scholarship. And so, that's why he knew some of the answers to the questions I was asking about the Olympics. We were doing a lesson on the computers from Eyewitness, that's a show, a foundation program that, they were learning about the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, because the 19, the 2018 Olympics in Pyeongchang going on at the same time. And so I was trying to make the class relevant and up to date with what was happening in Pyeongchang. So we were

talking about what happened. And we were about to segway into the Jesse Owens story. And so that's really where where we were at. And I remember it's similar, of course, to Aalayah, but the thing that I, that I have trouble with, is that when she said a designated corner I, there was never any training. Nope, there was never a red code drill at our school prior to the shooting that happened at our school. And in my opinion, there was no, and I used to say this to the kids, too, that I don't know, I don't know where we're going to hide if there was an active shooter drill because to me, there was no designated corner. Although it wasn't, that one corner where my desk was, was not in view of the of the, there was a big glass panel inside the door. And although you couldn't see that corner, you still were at risk, because if a shooter walked down the hallway and just shot through the, the wall, which was as thin as this paper, you could definitely I mean, you would have been either maimed or killed. I just felt like there was nowhere, absolutely nowhere, safe inside that classroom. And if the door was locked, which they told us, oh, you have to start locking your doors. We did that. But it's, but it was when the shooter shot out the entire glass panel, all that person had to do and we didn't know who it was at the time could just put their hand right through that glass panel and open the door, just like that. So I felt like it was a we were completely unsafe in that classroom. And there was really nowhere to hide truthfully in there. But when the kids scrambled, and I'm so thankful that they were very mature juniors and seniors had they been freshmen I'm not sure what they've been, what is this? Is this a drill? They wouldn't have acted as quickly, I don't know. But they really immediately got up and tried to scramble and try to find somewhere to hide. This classroom was very small. There were over 30 students, many of the students had close to, almost 40, in many of my in several of my classes. And there was furniture everywhere: a big RecordX in the front, laptop cart. It was very crowded, and there wasn't, really and that's my, the issue that I feel really bad about, that there was nowhere to really hide. And we didn't practice a code red drill because we hadn't had one. So and I was the adult in the classroom and I wasn't you know, there was no stop the bleed kit. We had stop the bleed training after. All these were reactive, not proactive things that happened. There was no way to know that the, the one resource officer that did have a gun on the campus wouldn't do anything, and it just and all of these things like that you're hearing and people are trying to say what to do well, if you had a gun, if they teacher had a gun to gun, it would have been impossible. I'm very anti-gun, but it, but it would have been impossible to fight back with a gun. We were ambushed by someone with a assault rifle. It would have been impossible to fight back. I know we talked about the victims in the school and I, terrible and the families of the victims and but I feel like, I feel like there's so much on educators' plates these days. And this is just one more thing and I don't know if we talk about that enough, what they're taking on because we're not just there to teach a subject anymore. And we've become, you know, just taking, just doing these drills or, which we didn't do some of the drills before the shooting. But what, or taking courses in, I took a summer course in suicide prevention or what to do when students seem or act as if they

were going to take their lives, stop the bleed class. These are all things that we wouldn't have thought of when I started in education 10-20 years ago, you know what I mean? So, I think that people don't really look at the point of view from the educator when these things happen. So I just wish that maybe people would talk more about what educators have to take on in the field and value that profession for what it's worth. And, and not really, you know, like, I feel like they're being put on the backburner, and oftentimes in these situations.



JJ Janflone 20:52

Well, and I want to thank you for sharing too, Ivy because I know that that, like that sense of responsibility when you have a class is huge. But, and I'm sure you don't need to hear like me and Kelly and I will tell you that like it's not, none of this was your responsibility. But,



Ivy Schamis 21:06

No, I know, it wasn't my responsibility. I was a victim as well as them. I mean, I had no idea, but I was the adult in the classroom. And I've told this story before. But here we are learning how to combat hate. And we were talking about hate all the time. And I was watching, I was one of the young ladies, Kelly called me over to crouch with her. So there were two girls under the well of the desk, everybody was everywhere. I was crouching with this young girl, Kelly, and I could see the door from where I was crouching. And I was just waiting for that hand to open up the handle and come in. And I thought to myself, and I've said this before, I don't know how I had the wherewithal to think this. But I said, Listen, I'm the adult in the room, I'm going to get up. And I'm going to say something. And I know I wanted to say what the hell are you doing, I wasn't going to do that. I said, I and here I am teaching about being upstanders, I'm just going to stand up because I know we were all doomed if he came in, and I'm going to stand up, and I'm going to say we love you. Because I'm thinking this person has so much hate in their heart, maybe, maybe by a miraculous chance if they thought people, if this person thought everyone loved him or her I didn't know who it was at the time, maybe they would stop for a second. It pretty much felt like we were all doomed sitting there, like, like sitting ducks. But I had the wherewithal in my head that I was going to stand up and say something as the adult in the room. But I did not get the chance, fortunately, because then we heard shots in the next, across the hall. So the shooter moved to the next room.



Kelly Sampson 22:31

I just don't wanted this to go unsaid, so I just want to reiterate what JJ said and say, thank you so much for doing what you're doing now. It's very, very brave and powerful. So thank you.



Ivy Schamis 22:42

Thank you.



JJ Janflone 22:43

Well, and, and then the question I have for both of you too is, is what, what is it like three years on to feel like you have to keep sharing the story or to have people continue to ask you these questions. You know, I, I can't imagine in any way, shape or form, it gets easier. So I'm assuming it's hard, but in different ways, maybe than when you first started. So I'm just wondering for both of you what, what that's even like?



Aalayah Eastmond 23:08

You can go first.



Ivy Schamis 23:09

No, you can go Aalayah because I'm just wondering, how do you feel? Because you really are in the thick of all of this with so many, you're so involved. And is it harder to tell the story? Do you know it harder, harder years down the road?



Aalayah Eastmond 23:23

So, it's honestly really unpredictable. I don't know. It just depends on when I'm telling it and how I feel at that exact moment that I'm telling it. I can't really predict if I'm going to cry this time, or if I'm going to be able to just say it or if I'm going to get a flashback this time. Or sometimes I'm just completely desensitized. So I don't I don't know if I would say it's necessarily harder to share my story. But it's definitely unpredictable, on when it will be hard, if that makes sense. But like we said earlier, it's something that we have to do in order to get real change and in order to fix a lot of the issues that we're still dealing with. So I definitely, you know, don't mind continuing to share my story and amplifying others that can relate as well.



Ivy Schamis 24:16

And I think we have to push ourselves too. We push ourselves to do that because we're putting a face, you can read statistics, and they're very important to statistics, but I feel like if you, if you hear it from someone who really was there and I know that there's a lot of organizations that are trying to get these red flag laws passed and, and they're trying to get guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't be, shouldn't have them. I personally don't think anyone but military and law enforcement. I don't, I believe no civilians should have guns. But I know that it's not against, you know, we're not trying to take everyone's Second Amendment right away, but I, but I feel like you're putting personal spin on this story that shows that it's not them that it's happening to. It's us, and it can happen to anybody. We were in our lovely suburban world, teaching school and have no inkling that this would ever happen. And it really changed many people's lives. I think it's really, really, really important. It doesn't, I was just thinking to before, if through these three years feel like the shooting feels like yesterday, and then ages ago at the same time, very weird. It's almost like a time warp. Right Aalayah?



Aalayah Eastmond 25:24

Yeah, it just depends on the day, I don't really, I can't really tell, sometimes. It's just, it kind of felt like life was just like before the shooting and after the shooting. So it kind of sucks.



Kelly Sampson 25:36

To that point about there being a time warp, you know, we're three, it's almost three years out. And I know, for members of the public, like me, sometimes we see things on the news, and forget about the fact that people have to live with those consequences. And that, you know, three years on, it's still real. And on top of that, you know, there's certain members of Congress who are saying that things are a hoax and unreal, when it's very much real in your life. And so I'm wondering if you could share a little bit with listeners about what it's like to kind of have to be in the aftermath of a major event like this in your everyday life? And also, if at all, what it's been like to see people try to say that it didn't even happen.



Ivy Schamis 26:17

Just quickly. I think the part that gets me is there's crazies all, everywhere. And people say things and do things that you're like, how can they do that? And that's horrible. But the part that gets me is that someone that does that is elected to Congress, and, and more all of these elected officials that act the way they do, which is so bizarre. It just, it boggles my mind that people follow that and people vote for people like that, that I think is what's really, what is really crazy to me. How dare someone say that doesn't happen. Come tell,

me and Aalayah and the other students in my class that that didn't happen, and all these other conspiracy theories, but it bothers me more that people are legitimising are trying to legitimize that lunatic by, by voting them into Congress. That's, that's insane.

A

Aalayah Eastmond 27:04

For me, I kind of got to the point where I don't care. I feel like we've all been called crisis actors from the very beginning. And I am now at the point where I don't need to prove anything to anyone, because I know what I experienced, our community knows what we experienced. And I think majority of the population uses their head and understands what we experienced as well. It's, this is not the majority, that's questioning whether the event happened or didn't and I have no room to even lend space to those that even want to question it or even go into battle with anyone, especially a survivor about it. So I mean, she can definitely take a walk near the high school and definitely that will tell her what she needs to know or anybody else that's questioning it. But I don't have any space for, for those people.



JJ Janflone 27:57

Well, and I think it's a really important point, right, that survivors almost have to make space in their lives to carry this trauma, right, you don't get a day off from what happened. And so I'm wondering if you can maybe try to, if you're comfortable, unpack a little bit for our listeners, how you deal with that trauma?

I

Ivy Schamis 28:17

Well, I am lucky also enough, prior to this, JJ to not really have had to deal with that, to tell you the truth. We've had tragedies, and it may tell you about school related, the biggest tragedy I've had to deal with at school was suicides. I've had several students in the past, have killed themselves that, students in my act, in that active class, and that was the, that was horrible, and still is a horrible tragedy and trauma that we've dealt with as teachers and as educators and then also, as you know, colleagues, but this tragedy, I think that mental health is coming more and more out of, into the forefront and more and more people are you know, and celebrities too, are coming out and saying it's okay to talk about this and to deal with different traumas. And things have come out like, like Calm and we're teaching young students how to do yoga, and how to deal with feelings. And I think that's a step in the right direction. But I don't think anyone really could tell you how to process the kind of trauma that that goes with a mass shooting, I would have no idea, prior to going through it what would happen. I think everyone also deals with it differently.

I think some people are hyper vigilant about things and they know, you have to, I guess put it in perspective, if you know that fireworks are fireworks and it's not guns going off, but certain things I guess, you know, trigger the feeling that you had when when that happened. And so the trauma is definitely real. It's there. It's making me, it made me not want to go back into the classroom anymore. I work at a school and, as an office manager, and I am I think, I'm tooting my own horn, I think that I was a really good educator, and I'm not continuing to do that. I'm, I'm afraid to be responsible for student safety to tell you the truth. So, that's a big difference in the way I deal with things. So the trauma is there. It's definitely real. It's scary. I look, of course and Aalayah will probably say the same thing. I look for the exit when I go into a big place. I don't like to be in terrible crowds. I'm definitely nervous about things that I wasn't nervous about prior to the shooting. Aalayah, you agree?

A

Aalayah Eastmond 30:28

Absolutely. Yeah, definitely. For me, I can't, people ask me this all the time. But I cannot give an answer. I don't, I don't know how to deal with trauma, because I'm still learning and I'm still figuring it out. And it's something that's definitely day by day, there's, I'm sure Ms. Schamis can agree that there's not a day that goes by, and I don't think about the shooting. And sometimes there's not a day in a week that I have not, that I haven't experienced a trigger. You know, it just it just depends. And it's very unpredictable. But I do know that, for me personally, my activism in the work that I do is a part of healing from that trauma. And it's definitely a healthy way that I cope with it. And I've also met people that can, unfortunately relate to my traumas. And that includes, you know, those that look like me, and black and brown communities that often never get the opportunity to talk about mental health and trauma. And we do know, there's a huge stigma around mental health in our communities, which I can appreciate is now being dismantled, because we're now pushing for more resources in schools. But I definitely think trauma is based on the person and sometimes the event. And it's all, you know, being learned day by day by, you know, a lot of people. I have a lot of friends who I've asked how they dealt with certain situations. And they often told me the same thing. I don't know, it's just, you know, day by day. But keeping busy and hanging out with those that can relate is definitely a way to keep your head up.

I

Ivy Schamis 32:07

It's important to have a support system as well. Like Aalayah said, she's meeting people in that realm. And so they're supporting each other, I'm still, I'm still close to my friends from Stoneman Douglas, because they, they can relate. So we have a support system set up and I feel a great support too just knowing that they're there and they know I'm there are

the students from that classroom. In fact, this morning, I was in my head milling around what I'm going to say to them at the third year tragic-versary of this and I, and I'm gonna send something out to them, because they know that I'm here anytime day or night. If they want to call, text, email, anything I will answer and I will try my best to be their support, because what they saw for young people was horrific, horrific, and I will never make light of that. Because the fact that they are going on with their lives, I mean, the best that they can and trying to, to now go on to whatever kind of careers they want to have and be a part, and have a prosperous and successful life, which was the best thing I could hope for for them is just remarkable to me, they saw things that no teenager should have seen, especially the young lady that you're talking to right now Aalayah.



JJ Janflone 33:18

Well, I think people's uncomfortableness or people's inability to know you know what to do in the wake of tragedy, I think is really exemplified by even things that happened at the school in the days and weeks and even months, you know, that followed the attack. And I'm wondering if you could explain to listeners a little bit what happened sort of day to day at Parkland.



Ivy Schamis 33:37

I don't know Aalayah if you think the same as me. But it was like the blind leading the blind when we came back. I feel like it was administration, I think it was in shock. And no one knew, I really felt there was not very good direction at all. Here we are they, then to close the building down, made us go into other people's class and we're teaching during their planning with zero materials. And they were I mean, they were trying to be accommodating, but there was just no, obviously there's no plan because no one really thought this was gonna happen. I think maybe the right thing now that I'm looking back, of course, hindsight that we should have, you know, went back and tried to teach our topics, but they were telling us, they were giving us playdough and Crayons to color. And I don't know, it was like a big, no one knew what was the right thing was to do. I just think it was a big mess. And I, I mean, I don't know, they brought in all kinds of counselors from all over the country. So students wanted to speak to a counselor which is good, they go in and tell their whole story to a counselor and then they want to go back and the next day was a different counselor. They had to start all over again. I think it was a whole valladon which just means mess, that it was a mess. I don't think there was a real thought, well thought out plan in place. And I think that eventually, it got a little bit better, but I, but that whole right after the school shooting that people were descending from all over, this is what's best and they came with rescue dogs. And therapy dogs, whatever from all over the night. I personally had one in my class to try to get the kids back to school, which I

thought was okay, but then it was distracting and nobody wanted to learn. I just, I think that you hope we never have to use it. But I think there should have been some kind of plan in place. God forbid something like that did happen. And it felt to me that there was, there was nothing planned. It was sort of the seat of your pants.

A

Aalayah Eastmond 35:24

Yeah, going, going back was not that fun. I remember like immediately walking back on campus, I don't know whose crazy idea this was to have the entire city of Coral Springs and Parkland, make two lines clapping and cheering on students walking back on campus. I was so uncomfortable, like, there was already news at every corner. And then the whole city, it was just so overwhelming. So that already like made me feel super uncomfortable. And then of course, being a black woman, I'm not greeted by seeing armed police officers across campus. And that was definitely a shared experience, and shared feeling across the entire pretty much black student population at Douglas, the therapy dogs, as a student, who's not going to love therapy dogs, they were great. They were amazing. But it felt like that aspect and literally only our teachers were the only two things, good things, that came with returning to campus. But I didn't appreciate the counselors in the media center, it was just so poorly, I don't know whose idea that was, but just to have us share our experience with someone new every time, was just a lot. And then sometimes I didn't even think they had enough counselors because there's just a lot of students, they it was just so many things that I feel like administration didn't consider or even think about. So then even when there are students like me that were in the 1200 building, in a classroom needed somewhere to go vent or or talk, we didn't, we didn't have anywhere to go. And we didn't feel comfortable sharing it with someone new. So it was just kind of like we're on our own. And we kind of just had each other and our teachers. But thankfully, my senior year, they kind of got it together a little bit. But it was still a couple holes left open, which I guess I can understand because it's a national, national issue now. But yeah, it wasn't, it really wasn't fun.

K

Kelly Sampson 37:26

As you are both sharing, just a reminder for people like me, and we talked about this a little bit before with the building being spread out. But just that when you say Parkland or Marjory Stoneman Douglas to remember that there, it's there, there's not just one experience, in that, because it was such a big campus that some people, like both of you were a lot closer to what happened. And so just to not think about it, as everybody had the same experience on that day. And to slightly turn a little bit, I wanted to get back to the activism that you spoke about Aalayah, and that you spoke about Ms. Schamis, in terms of, you know, telling your story and the power that that has. And I'm wondering at

this point, you know, after three years, obviously, there's been some changes to policies and procedures and things like that. But I'm wondering, what are some things that you wish would have changed more? And what are some of your hope for the future?

I Ivy Schamis 38:16

They got rid of bump stops, you remember this Aalayah, they got, in Florida after the shooting, so I thought, oh, great, we're in the right direction. And then the lovely governor decides that teachers should be armed, just like the representative from Georgia that said, oh, the good guy should fight with the bad guys with guns. I it's just that also is, that's crazy. Who thinks of that? I just, the the laws to be able to take guns away from people who shouldn't have them that, that needs to be enacted in every state. I think that there's not, they're not doing enough. They're not doing enough. It's much, it's so easy to buy a gun. I think they should also restrict the amount of bullets, and there's so, look at what just happened in Florida with the FBI that was ambushed when they were serving a warrant. I don't, I don't know if we're really learning the lesson. This whole "never again" really needs to be never again if we're going to do something about it. But I think that fighting guns with guns is 100% wrong.

A Aalayah Eastmond 39:15

Yeah for me, my focus in my activism journey has now been primarily on racial equity in the protection of black lives and uplifting black voices. Something that we know and it's very apparent, this country was built on systems and institutions that were always made to exclude black people and oppress black people. So my focus and my goal is, quite frankly, to dismantle those systems. And that directly relates to gun violence, because we know that gun violence happens in our communities because of this cycle. And that also plays a role in police violence, which we know was a huge conversation in 2020, and we really haven't, we haven't gone anywhere since, what real change have we seen in regards to police violence since the protests and we didn't even get justice for Breonna Taylor. So for, for right now, my focus is definitely uplifting black voices, and definitely speaking out on the injustices that black people are still facing day to day.

K Kelly Sampson 40:21

And at the same time, because I'm also like JJ, in awe, so that's why I'm really glad to hear that you kind of share that even as you're doing all these things, you're hurting, you know, and you're still healing and going through pain, because I think sometimes it's easy to, and maybe this is something we do as a country just to make ourselves feel better. But after things happen, and people turn to activism, sometimes it's easy to be like, look at them,

they're so strong. And you know, it's easy to sort of forget that activists who are working on issues are still human beings and still doing the work from a real place. So I'm grateful that you've shared with us, you know, even as you're doing all these wonderful things, that you're, you're a person, you know, this isn't just okay, now I'm gonna you, just whatever. And I think that's like a really important part of this, of understanding how these things really impact people is like, it's not you're not superhuman, and that's why we shouldn't have warzones in classrooms, because it's just people. So thank you, thank you both, actually.



Ivy Schamis 41:20

Thank you.



Aalayah Eastmond 41:20

Thank you. And I know people don't do this on purpose. But I'm often defined by my experience. I'm often introduced as the black Parkland survivor, or Parkland survivor, or gun violence survivor, it's never my name, and they never want to know about Aalayah outside of activism. And that often times starts to feel like people only view me as that one way, and it's not fun. So I think people should be more cognizant of not defining people by their experiences, and recognizing that we oftentimes, or if not, every time, have way more to offer. And there's a lot more about us. And I really appreciate you guys starting this podcast off with asking about how I was before the shooting. Because those are, those are definitely things people don't often care about when I when I do things like that. So I really, really, I really, really appreciate it.



Aalayah Eastmond 41:21

And we we appreciate you. We love you. And we're so thankful that we got to speak with you today and that we get to know you in general. So thank you so much. Both of you.



Ivy Schamis 42:30

All good things, all good things, stay healthy, everyone.



JJ Janflone 42:33

Yes. So Kelly, this week our Unbelievable But is from your home state, Michigan.



Kelly Sampson 42:44

I want to say like, cuz that's my state and I love it. But it's an Unbelievable But so I know it's not good.



JJ Janflone 42:51

Yeah, they're never, it's never like, yay, my hometown is being featured. And for this story, we travel to Jackson County.



Kelly Sampson 42:59

I've been there before. It's not it's, it's within, it's close enough to Detroit. I've been through there.



JJ Janflone 43:05

Good. So I'm glad it's known to you. Because it was still pretty early in the day there when a 33 year old man unintentionally shot himself in the leg while he was at work.



Kelly Sampson 43:14

Okay, so lots of questions. Who, what, where, when and why? Like, why?



JJ Janflone 43:20

Yeah, so this was, this was another one of these stories where were the lead was sort of buried, okay, so he, the man works at a machine shop. Okay, he is also a concealed carry permit holder. So I don't know if you can see where this is going. But he went to work carrying a concealed pistol, and somehow the gun got caught on a machine, though it was through his pants, and then fired.



Kelly Sampson 43:42

So when I think about a machine shop and the potential injuries that you could get there, this is not one of them. And it just, I think that's where because sadly like the idea of an unintentional shooting is now I think we're showing how commonplace it is. But there are so many ways you can get hurt in a machine shop and this is not one of the ones that I would have ever contemplated. Is he okay?



JJ Janflone 44:05

Yeah, so he like all of our Unbelievable Buts, you know, he was taken to the hospital but he's he's now doing well, but I think it just goes to show you can you can take precautions, you can think you know what you're doing. But ultimately, you know, when you introduce a loaded firearm into a situation, you might end up causing some harm. This week's News Wrap Up begins with a shooting at the Minnesota Allina Health Clinic that killed one person and injured four. While details continue to emerge, law enforcement have confirmed that the shooter was known to local police and that the attack was likely targeted at the health care center. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz has likewise confirmed that, quote, improvised explosive devices end quote, were found in relation to the attack. Now, Minnesota does not have an Extreme Risk Law that would have allowed law enforcement to act on credible concerns and to petition a court to remove firearms from those who are considered a threat to themselves or others, and we've talked a lot about Extreme Risk Laws and how they work and how they don't work on other podcasts which are linked in the description of this episode.



Kelly Sampson 45:08

And our hearts do go out to the person who was lost as well as the people who were injured. And meanwhile, the New York State Senate passed S 13 and S 14 which are bills to regulate self assembled and untraceable ghost guns. This is huge as unregulated and untraceable ghost guns are quickly becoming the weapon of choice for people prohibited from purchasing firearms under federal and state law. We've seen ghost guns used in crimes in New York already, such as the shooting of 6 year old Miguel Everson by his uncle, who was a prohibited purchaser, but obtained a ghost gun.



JJ Janflone 45:45

Hey, wanna share with the podcast? Listeners can now get in touch with us here at Red, Blue, and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call or text us at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever. Kelly and I are standing by.



Kelly Sampson 45:59

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