

Episode 15: Zane was trapped on the hood of a car

On November 29, 2018, 50 year old Andrew Bush of College Station, Texas was driving his white Dodge Charger. Up ahead was a red light. Cars were stopped, waiting for the light to change, and one of those vehicles was a Ford pickup truck in the left turn lane.

Witnesses say Bush didn't even brake before slamming into the back of that truck. The driver of the pickup truck was 20 year old Zane Wallace, a Texas A&M college student, who was with his girlfriend Mackenzie. They were shaken up but not seriously injured.

Zane got out of the truck to check on the driver of the car that just hit them. And that's where our story today really begins. Zane had a day he'll never forget.

As you listen to my conversation with Zane, I think you'll get the same impression I did when we were talking. He's a good kid, very polite and respectful. And throughout this whole ordeal, his concern was not for himself, even though it was his life that was in danger that day. Instead, he was concerned for the safety of his girlfriend, and the welfare of the driver of the car that hit them. I like Zane and I think he has a great future ahead of him.

The incident that Zane told me about was caught on video by someone nearby who happened to think quickly and hit "record" on his phone, and you can see that at WhatWasThatLike.com/15.

And if you don't already follow me on Instagram, you really should. I post something new there every day, @WhatWasThatLike.

And now, here's my conversation with Zane.

Scott

Have you ever seen the show "T. J. Hooker"?

Zane

Yes, sir. A little bit.

Scott

I know you're probably a little young - it was back in the 80s. I know there are clips of it on YouTube and some other places. Your story reminded me of that show where William Shatner was the star and he was kind of, this veteran, tough cop, and his partner was a young rookie. It was just a show that was so bad that it was funny. The thing that made me think of it is because it seemed, like, every time when he was chasing the bad guy - the bad guys were trying to get away - William Shatner as T. J. hooker, the cop, would just jump on the hood. So, that was just so stupid. As matter of fact, Saturday Night Live did a spoof of that when William Shatner was on that show. I'll put up a link to that video on my website for this episode so that people can watch that if they want to. In your case, it wasn't so funny - this was real life. So where did this actually happen?

Zane

It happened on a bridge. I was heading to get a drink for me and my girlfriend. The road is called Briarcrest Drive. I was turning left to Texas Six Friends Road, in the turn lane.

Scott

So it was just you and your girlfriend - What's her name?

Zane

Mackenzie.

Scott

Okay. So, you and Mackenzie were in the car. What kind of car was it?

Zane

2005 F150 - a four-wheel drive.

Scott

Okay. So, a pickup truck?

Zane

Yes, sir.

Scott

Okay. All right. So you stopped at a light and you're getting ready to turn left?

Zane

Yes, I had my blinker on, ready to turn left, when I got rear-ended.

Scott

Did you see him coming?

Zane

No, I actually turned to my girlfriend and asked her what she wanted from the store. Then, I saw her glasses flying off her head from the impact of him hitting me.

Scott

So, it was a pretty hard hit then.

Zane

Oh, yes, sir.

Scott

I wonder... Do you think he braked at all before the impact or he didn't even see you at all and just hit you at full speed?

Zane 4.55

The driver who was behind him told me - after all this had happened - that he never saw brake lights. He said he gunned at the red light where he had started. When he came over the crest of the bridge, he never touched the brakes.

Scott

Okay. Just take us through what happened since you felt the impact.

Zane

Well, I put the truck in 'Park', I checked on my girlfriend and made sure that she was okay - that was what I was most worried about at that moment. I immediately told her to call 911 so that process could be started taken care of. I told her to stay in the car and that I'm gonna go check on this guy who hit us to make sure he was okay and that the vehicle is able to move. So I got off the truck, I shut my door, and as I was walking back to where he hit me with his Dodge Charger, he started backing up. So, I got between the tailgate of my truck and the front of his car as he was backing up just to inspect the damage - see if it's leaking any radiator fluid or engine oil, or see if the truck is still drivable. As I was walking up to look at it, he puts the car on 'Drive' and gunned it at me.

Scott

How far away was he at that time?

Zane

When he gunned it at me, he was no more than 5-6 feet.

Scott

He hit the gas and hit the brake real fast...

Zane

Yeah. It was a bull trying to scare you off - just run and stop - like, "Get out my way! I'm not playing!" I put my hands on the hood thinking, like, "Oh, he's not gonna run me over." I didn't know what his deal was. I told him, "Stop. Hey, I'm here." I immediately thought, like, "Oh, he didn't realize or the transmissions got messed up from the accident." I put my hands on the hood and the man in the car started screaming, "Move! Move!" As I look up at him, the driver guns his car again. This time, I had to choose whether to go underneath the car and get run over or get on the hood of the car. So, I choose the one that looked more safe at that moment - I jumped on the hood of the car and I held on.

Scott

That's pretty crazy when you consider the safer option is to jump on the hood of the moving car. But that was, obviously, the right decision as we look back on it, right?

Zane

Yes. At least, in my mind, I did not want to get run over. I don't think many people have been on the hood of cars moving on the highway - I sure haven't. So, he just gunned at me. It was pure instinct. That was, like, my only option for survival that went through my mind was just to hold on. Because we were in the turn lane, he pulled out into the traffic and continued going straight with me on the hood. My girlfriend was still in the truck waiting, like, wondering what was going on when she saw me flying by on the hood of this car. He continued to drive over the bridge through the red light where I was waiting to turn and kept going straight down this road.

Scott

His hood was kind of crumpled up from the crash, right?

Zane

Yes. The bridge was curved. When he hit me, his car actually went a little bit underneath my truck. So, when I jumped on it, the hood had been bent at an angle that I could hold on to the back of it where it connects to the drip rail of the car right on the windshield and have a pretty good handhold.

Scott

So, he just took off down the road.

Zane

Pretty much. I keep thinking back on it - like, what was going through his mind? Like, "Oh, I just hit this person. I'm gonna attempt to run him over. Then, when he tries to dodge out of the way, I'm just gonna take off with him on the hood of my car and drive for a mile" - like, what would make him do that? People kept asking me, like, "Were you scared at that moment?" Like, there was no time to really be scared - it was just pure adrenaline and primal instinct to hold on.

Scott

The whole time when you're holding on, you're positioned in a way that you were, kind of, face-to-face with him.

Zane

Yeah. I was facing the windshield of the car, looking at him. It still haunts me - I still have nightmares about it. The look on his face was, like, "I don't care if this guy dies! I don't care if this guy falls off! I'm getting out of here!" I mean, it was the most terrifying thing in my mind. I mean, we were going down this road at 60 miles an hour and I was staring him dead in the eyes. I looked over my shoulder as he swerved side-to-side, from one shoulder of the road to the other, slamming on the brakes, and trying anything to get me to loosen my grip in order to jump off or fall off the car so that he didn't have to stop. I looked over my shoulder and saw that we were coming to the next red light at the next intersection. Then, I saw him heading straight for one of the traffic light poles - like, he was going to run into it. (Sigh)

I remember thinking in the back of my mind, "Today is not the day I die. I'm going to make it through this." I turned to him and started screaming, "Let me off the car! I don't want to die! Please let me off!" Clear as day, that was the first time we made eye contact with me on the hood of this car because he just kept dodging and won't look at me. He looked me square in the eyes and just shook his head "NO!" As I said, it's as if he didn't care if I died on that hood as long as he got out of whatever he was trying to get out of. At that point, I was banging on the window and trying, like, anything. Maybe I can break the window and get into the car. Maybe it'll, like, wake him up from whatever state that he was in. I was doing whatever I could to make him stop but, of course, I couldn't. Then, all of the sudden, the guy slammed real hard on the brakes and turned real hard to the right. Then, I was like, "I have to get off now because this is my only point. He's obviously not going to care if I'm on the hood or not if he hit something else." So, I jumped off of the hood. Let me backtrack a little bit. At that point, I don't know how many people were chasing this car with me on the hood of it.

Scott

And these were all people that witnessed the initial accident?

Zane

Just random people that happened to be there. None of them were, like, cops or anything. They were just random bystanders that went into action. They are the reason I'm able to sit here and talk to you today because, without them, I would not have made it out of that hood. I remember when I looked over my shoulder as the guy slammed on his brakes, there was another blue pickup truck in front of him that had managed to come around, get in front of him, and slowed him down enough for me to be able to jump off without falling and hurting myself, basically.

Scott

So, that's when you saw your opportunity.

Zane

Yes. The truck that slowed him down was the reason I was able to go off the hook like I did. Because he was not stopping and just kept going, I took my opportunity to jump off and I started sprinting after this car. The guy who was in front of him - who slowed him down enough for me to jump off - stopped and checked on me. I'm like, "Just keep chasing him. Keep going." In between there and where they finally are able to box him, I remember nothing - like, it's just a blur. The only thing I do remember from that time is looking down at my cell phone in the back of this white truck that I had no idea how I got in the back of and this guy took me to where they had stopped him. I remember looking at my phone, calling my girlfriend, making sure she's okay, and making sure that she knows that I'm not hurt. We finally got to where this guy was - this guy had been boxed in by all these people that were chasing him - then, I jumped out of this truck and I shook the driver's hand.

Scott

This is the same driver that slowed down in front of him?

Zane

No. This was just another completely random guy that saw me running down the side of the road after and chasing this guy.

Scott

Okay, so he picked you up.

Zane

Yeah, he picked me up off the road. I jumped out of the truck, shook his hand, and said "Thank you. I really appreciate it." I started walking to where the driver of the car was. At that point, I was angry. I didn't know what I was going to do. Then, the man who was able to slow him down enough for me to get off the car grabbed me by the shoulder, took me over to his truck where he had actually been pinned at a red light with his truck in the back. So, the car was, like, sandwiched in. I later found out that he actually continued driving through this red light, hitting people, and running people off the road. The guy who got in front of him and slowed him down grabbed my shoulder, opened the truck's tailgate, and sat me down. He handed me a pack of cigarettes, a Gatorade, and said, "Don't move. Smoke till you're either happy or till you puke, but don't move." We were sitting there. At that point, the whole road got shut down - 3 lanes of traffic - because everybody boxed in around the car and didn't want to move because they were either witnesses or scared that this guy was gonna keep running. I realized now that it's a good thing that he grabbed me and told me to sit down because I don't know what I would have done at that moment - it wouldn't have been a good thing.

Scott

You might be in jail too

Zane

Oh, I would have been in jail if he didn't stop me. I mean, I was angry. I was sitting on this tailgate smoking cigarettes back-to-back. Then, the cop rolled up, looked at me, like "What did I miss?" Apparently, it got lost in translation between when my girlfriend had called and told them,

“Hey, my boyfriend's on the hood of this car” because the department that came was, literally, on the, like, jurisdiction line - so, it got swapped to city or county or something like that. So, these guys never found out that I was on the hood of the car until I told them - and the 20 people who were standing around and chasing the guy down with me on the hood also told them the same thing. They still didn't believe us because they thought this was just so crazy - there's no way it happened. Then, the cops were, like, “We weren't believing him until there were 6-7 people telling the same story.” Then, they were, like, “Okay, this actually happened. It's not just this kid making this stuff up.” When these cops showed up, I jumped off the tailgate of the truck because the cop pulled me aside to talk and I told him what was going on and everything. He just looked at me with the look of awe on his face - like, it was something out of an action movie which, looking back now, it pretty much was. He started asking other people questions.

I looked over to my side and saw the man who was driving the car being put in handcuffs. I remember, like, “Oh, my girlfriend's still back at my truck. She's still on the road.” So, I went to this cop, like, “I need to go to my girlfriend.” The guy who was originally behind the car on the bridge said, “I will take you now!” He put me in his car and I just broke down. I held it all together then. I mean, there was a girl that was in one of the vehicles that were involved in this chase - I didn't know that they were involved, I thought they were just people that stopped - and she was crying her eyes out. I felt so bad because I'm like, “I just traumatized this girl.” Actually, I ran into her family earlier this week and my mother got a chance to talk to them. The father was driving the car and the girl was in the passenger seat. The father told my mom in the store that he originally said to himself, “I cannot get involved. I can't traumatize my daughter when this goes bad. I was thinking that it's gonna go bad. There's no way there's gonna be any type of goodness in this situation. But something came over me and I had to do it. I told my daughter to close her eyes and look away because, like I said, this was not going to end well but I had to do something. I couldn't stand by and watch.” I still feel bad about it to this day because I could see the look of fear in her eyes. I can only imagine what mine looked like. I was so worried about her and everyone else that was involved, that I didn't realize like, “Oh, it could have not ended well.”

So after all that, I got in the car of the guy who drove me to where my girlfriend had actually moved the truck into the parking lot. As we were driving there, I was going into shock and breaking down. I had my seatbelt on. I was leaning over the seat, holding my knees, like, in the fetal position, basically, hyperventilating, and about to pass out. I didn't know whether to cry or scream - I didn't what to do.

The whole time, he kept saying, “I'm glad you're alive.” I didn't realize that I could have died. I was just in shock from everything - it's just sensory overload. We got to where my girlfriend parked the car at the gas station. At that moment, I was so glad to see her - I was so glad that she was okay. He had to hold me back by the collar of my shirt while he was driving to the parking lot of this gas station to keep me from jumping out of the car and sprinting to hug her and make sure that she was okay. That's when reality sets in and I broke down. Now, when I looked back, when my parents looked back, and when everyone looked back, they didn't want to say I should have died because even in the best circumstances of that whole ordeal, it should not have ended with, like, me walking away without a scratch off of a car that was going 60 miles an hour down the road, swerving, and doing everything in his power to get me off.

Scott

How far did you actually travel on the hood? Do you know?

Zane

I've clocked it. From what I remember, I got off from where I started at just above or under a mile - it was the longest mile I've ever ridden on a truck. During the news interviews, they asked, "Do you feel heroic or reckless for jumping on the hood as he sped away?" I'm like, "First off, it wasn't like, 'Oh, I'm gonna get this guy!' It was, like, pure survival. I don't feel heroic or reckless. I feel lucky to be alive. I feel lucky to be able to sit here and talk to you. If it weren't for the people who were there that day - that special group of people that God put in that spot at that time - I would not have had the honor to have Christmas to my family a couple of days ago, I would not have been able to hug my girlfriend that night and tell her everything's okay, I wouldn't have been able to go to my little brother's football games and my little sister's cheerleading things.

(Sobbing)

People keep asking me, "Am I angry?" I'm not angry. I'm thankful that I'm okay. I'm thankful that no one else got hurt. People keep asking, "What kind of sentence do you hope this guy gets?" I'm like, "I can't wish anything gets done to him because it's not my place. He needs to get help because we all make mistakes - some worse than others. I'm not here to judge those mistakes. I'm not here to judge you. I'm not here to judge him. I'm not here to judge anyone. I'm here to live my life and forgive those who make the mistakes because I'm not the one to judge them. I'm lucky to be alive and I thank God that I'm not in the ground. Regardless of what happens to this guy, I hope he gets help and I hope he betters himself through this.

Scott

From what I read, he was probably drunk or, maybe, on drugs. So, he obviously wasn't in the right frame of mind - he wasn't thinking logically unlike you or anyone else would think. Does the fact that he really wasn't himself make it easier for you to not judge him or not be angry at him?

Zane

At first, it did. I ended up going to the ER that night just to get checked out. The cop came. My parents were there. My little brother was there. My girlfriend was there. Me, my mom, and my dad were in this waiting room and I was smiling. I had a neck brace on to make sure that nothing cracked until they get me an X-ray. At that moment, I wasn't angry, I was happy that I'm alive. Then, the cop came in - he was still astonished at everything that happened - and he said, "Well, he's under arrest for his second DWI." When he said 'Second', that's when I realized that there's, like, something else going on here and I can't be angry about it. I got messages all over Facebook, like, "Oh, I would have beaten him up! Oh, I would have killed him!" At that moment, I was going to - blinded by rage. You do a lot of stupid things whenever you're in a circumstance that you don't know. I could have forgiven him way easier if this was his first time, but that was his second DWI! So, something's obviously wrong and, maybe, he really needs to get help. Maybe, God put me there so that he didn't kill somebody down the road. Why was I there? I don't know, but it's for a reason that I don't understand. It haunts me, and it will haunt me for a long time, but I know it's for the better, for good reason.

Scott

The guy that was driving the truck that got in front of him and slowed him down intentionally, he's really the biggest factor that saved your life that day.

Zane

Yeah.

Scott

Have you met with him since then? Or have you talked to him?

Zane

No, I haven't been able to find him. Honestly, I'm going to find him, I'm going to thank him, and I'm going to have my family thank him because if it wasn't for him and the others who were there, I would not have been here today.

Scott

When did Mackenzie find out that you were okay? Was it when you called her?

Zane

I called her, like, 20 times but she was still on the phone with the police trying to get everything sorted out. When he hit me, there was another girl in front of me. She actually drove down the road to check on me and then drove back to tell my girlfriend that I was okay.

Scott

Oh, so that's how Mackenzie found out?

Zane

Yes, because she was still on the phone with the police and figuring everything out.

Scott

So, you've never talked to the guy that hit you?

Zane

No, I haven't.

Scott

Do you ever want to talk to him?

Zane

Part of me does. That night, as we're going home from the hospital - my dad drove my truck because they gave me a narcotic to calm me down - I asked my dad, "What would you have done in a situation like that? Did I do something right? Did I do something wrong?" He told me, "I can't tell you that because no one I've ever known, met, seen, or encountered has ever been something like this." I asked him, "What would you do to the guy?" He said, "I just want to know and ask why. I don't want the 'Oh, I was scared' excuse. I don't want the 'Oh, I was drunk' excuse. I want to know why he did it." Part of me wants to know the real reason but part of me also doesn't. I just wanted the guy to get whatever help he needs me to go about my day.

Scott

Is there any part of the story that I haven't asked you about that you want to include?

Zane

While I was standing there with this group of people around me, I was doing everything in my power to keep myself from just melting, going into shock, and passing out. As I was standing there, I remember listening to these people saying, like, "Oh, you're so lucky to be alive." I

remember thinking about all my past experiences - there were four times in my life when I should have died and I remember them every day. I thank God every day that I made it out of those times because I'm still able to hug my girlfriend, to hug my family, to see my little brother and sister grow up, to hang out with my friends, and to go through college.

Scott

You've told me a great story. The weird thing is it's interesting to look on the news and see, "Oh, look! There's a guy hanging on the hood of a car. Yeah, he was okay" - it's almost kind of a joke. But when you see that this is a life or death situation, it becomes a whole different viewpoint.

Zane

Yeah. I grew up in a very small town. Everyone in my high school class was, like, my fan. I got all these texts, like, "I'm glad you're okay but that video was hilarious." I completely understand that because the first time I watched the video, I giggled a little bit inside. After I kept rewatching it, the anxiety and the feelings that I went through at that moment were coming up. I'm like, "I understand why people think it's funny. I understand why people think, like, "Oh, that's so cool." I saw the 'awe' factor there although it's a completely different story for the person that's going through that situation. Now, when I look back on stuff like this in the news and stuff. I'm like, "I can't laugh at this thing because I know how that guy feels and I can relate. It's just a scary thing to me."

Scott

Boy, what a crazy story.

Zane

Yeah.

Scott

Do you know what will be interesting? What will be interesting is, 50 years from now, you and Mackenzie become grandparents and tell your grandkids, "Here's what happened to grandpa back when he was a kid" - they'll probably think that's pretty wild.

Zane

Oh, yeah.

Scott

Alright. Well, Zane, it is a great story and I'm glad you're okay. Thanks for sharing with us.

Zane

No problem, sir. Anytime.

Scott

Thanks for listening to this episode. My goal for each show is to introduce you to people and stories that you just won't find on other podcasts. If you want to help support the show, you just need to subscribe! That way, you'll never miss an episode. You can click on any of the 'Subscribe' buttons on the website, which is WhatWasThatLike.com. You'll see all the links right there at the top, where you can subscribe directly to this show on Apple podcast, Google podcasts, Google Play Music, Spotify, Stitcher, radio, or on whatever app you use to catch your podcasts. You'll see there are also links to Twitter and Instagram - so, you can follow us there and I hope you do. If you really want to connect with me and get in on the discussion with other

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