

## **Episode 108: Kennedy hung from a power line**

EMTs and other first responders see a lot of things. Sometimes, they arrive on scene and find a situation that they never expected to see.

In Port Orange, Florida, paramedics were called to the scene of a car accident on Interstate 95. Only one car was involved. When they arrived, they discovered that something had crashed through the windshield of the car and hit the driver in the head. That “something” was still inside the car. It was a large turtle. The driver of the car survived, and surprisingly, so did the turtle.

And then there are a lot of situations where first responders show up, and there’s nothing they can do. Accidents happen, and people die in a large variety of ways.

Chrissy is a Paramedic, and she has a video where she talks about the variety of calls she has been on. There’s a link to her video in the show notes. Some of the things she’s seen are pretty traumatizing.

### **Chrissy**

I was actually working with my husband at the time. We just had our baby. Our baby was, I think, less than a year old. We responded to an unresponsive 3-week-old. What happened was Dad fell asleep in bed with the baby. He rolled on top of the baby and the baby suffocated. Hours and hours went by where dad was sleeping. Then, he finally woke up. The baby was blue, unresponsive, and cold - it was horrible. You go through training for baby CPR and stuff like that with mannequins, and you pray to God that you never have to use those skills. When I looked at this baby, it looked just like the mannequin and that's what I had to do when I was on this call. It's just like the mannequin. Unfortunately, this baby was beyond help - that was the most devastating part of it. The baby was beyond help by the time we were called to respond.

So paramedics are pretty much trained to expect the unexpected. But still, there are some things you would never even dream of happening.

My guest today is Kennedy. She’s a teenage girl who lives in Idaho. She was in a rollover car crash, and while the car was rolling she was thrown out. That in itself is not really that unusual – when you’re not wearing a seat belt, it’s very likely that you’re going to be flung out of the car with great force.

What makes Kennedy’s story very different is where she ended up.

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### **Scott**

Do you have a fear of heights?

### **Kennedy**

I've always had a fear of heights - I don't like them. I get really scared. Being up super high makes me super nervous. Yeah, I would say fear of heights has, kind of, always been a thing.

### **Scott**

Even if you didn't have it before, I would think that you maybe would have it now after what happened. This is the craziest story. Let's talk about what was going on that day. You guys were in the car. Who were in the car with you?

**Kennedy**

I had Jacob and Nikia - my two best friends - in the car with me. I've gotten off work at 5 o'clock. I was having a hard day because, 2 days prior to the accident, my boyfriend and I had broken up at that time. So, I was just, kind of, in an emotional mess. So, they came over and said, "Well, let's go have fun for the rest of the night. Let's go get something to eat, get some soda, hang out, and make you feel better."

**Scott**

These are good friends. They wanted to help you out.

**Kennedy**

Yeah. But my mom and my 2 sisters were actually in Logan for the weekend to help my grandma with some yard work and spend some time with her. My dad stayed at home because he wasn't feeling too well. So, they and my mom were, like, "Will you please stay home with your dad just to check up on him?" I just didn't want to stay home and, like, wallow in my feelings. So, I was like, "I'm gonna go with my friends." Obviously, I should have stayed home and helped my dad. We came back home from going to town. I checked on him and he was fine - he was sleeping. Then, they were like, "Let's just go watch the sunset really quick." So, we drove down the road to a mountain - it's 4 miles down the road. We call it 'The base of the D' because there's a big D on the mountain - for Declo. We just drove up there and we parked. There was, like, a little dirt parking lot.

**Scott**

Is this, like, a scenic overlook where you would park and get a really good view?

**Kennedy**

Yeah. We were up there. We were talking. I was crying and telling them how I felt. They were validating me, just listening, and being really good friends. Then, there was this beat-up couch up there. They were like, "Oh, let's hit the couch with the car." So, as the stupid teenagers that we were, I took the car and just, like, barely bumped it. I was like, "Oh my gosh! My license plate is dented! My dad's gonna kill me!" They were like, "No, it's okay." I just bumped up once and I was like, "I'm not gonna do that again." Then, we sat and watched the sunset. It was really pretty. Then, Jacob's mom called and said, "Jacob, you need to be home by nine." We were like, "Oh, no. It's like 8:30." So, we called her back and said, "Hey, is it okay if we come over and make crepes at our house?" She was like, "Yeah." Jacob's car was at my house. We drove back to my house to go get his car, then go into town to go get ingredients to make the crepes, and then we're gonna go to his house. On the way from the base of the mountain to my house - which is 4 miles - we crashed.

**Scott**

Was anyone in the car wearing a seatbelt?

**Kennedy**

None of us was wearing a seatbelt. I think that's probably because, most of the time, you hear that most accidents only happen a few miles away from your house. My accident took place only a mile away from my house. Since it was only a 4-mile drive, we didn't think anything of it.

**Scott**

How old were each of you at that time?

**Kennedy**

I think we were all 16.

**Scott**

Then, right now, you're about to turn 18.

**Kennedy**

Mmhmm. In July.

**Scott**

And you're the one driving?

**Kennedy**

Yeah. I always drove. We started driving - I pulled myself together to drive. Then, I can't remember what happened but I busted back out into tears. I just started crying. My speedometer did not work in my car, but I wasn't going fast because I wasn't going to drive fast while crying. So, I was just driving and bawling. The roads were super dirty because the farmers were going in and out of the fields. We live, like, in the country, so there were farm fields around us.

**Scott**

Can you elaborate a little bit on that? What does it mean when you say that the roads were super dirty? What were they dirty with?

**Kennedy**

Like, dirt, rocks, and debris from the fields, I guess - I don't know. So, I couldn't see very well. The road looked like everything else. I started going off the left side of the road and I could feel my wheel go off, so I, like, overcorrected too far to the right. We went off the road. They said that there was, like, a little bump. The left side of my car hit the power pole and it flipped us sideways, so we started flipping and rolling in the air. We bounced off the ground 3 times, slipped in the air, and just kept doing that. In that process of us flipping, I was the first one out. We don't know where I went out - the sunroof, the windshield, the door. We have no idea where I went out, but I got flown out and I landed on the power line by my femur. Then, Nakia was the next one out followed by Jacob, because Jacob was in the backseat.

**Scott**

So, the car was rolling with such speed that you were just flown from it...

**Kennedy**

Yeah. We had Life360. It logged my phone and the car's phone at 58-59 miles an hour. The speed limit on that road is 55-miles an hour. So, we were only going 3-5 miles an hour over the speed limit. So, it wasn't like we were speeding like crazy. I don't know. It was hard to get those rumors about me going super fast squashed.

**Scott**

Yeah. Well, people assume a lot of things. So, you were launched from the car. This is the most unusual factor in this whole story - rather than being thrown out to the ground, you were thrown straight up...

**Kennedy**

We have no idea how I got thrown.

**Scott**

Somehow you got your broken leg--

**Kennedy**

--wrapped up in it.

**Scott**

Yeah. The powerline...

**Kennedy**

Mmhmm, they said the top wire had electricity and the bottom one didn't. I don't know what that means exactly.

**Scott**

There must have been some voltage through it because there was an element of electrical shock or burning.

**Kennedy**

Mmhmm. Yeah.

**Scott**

Were you conscious as you went through the air or as you got tangled up in this line? Did you know what was happening?

**Kennedy**

I don't remember everything. I don't remember flying up there. I remember waking up, like, seconds after I got up there. I was conscious the whole time until I was put into the ambulance. I was awake all the time for 45 minutes.

**Scott**

You woke up hanging from this line?

**Kennedy**

Yeah, upside down.

**Scott**

What was going through your head at that time?

**Kennedy**

This is, kind of, weird. I'm religious. So, it was very weird to me, but I got a FaceTime call from God - it was, like, a dream of going to heaven, I guess. There was, like, a screen in front of me. There was a

picture of God with his hand going through the water and I was trying to accept it because I was in so much pain. I just couldn't do it anymore, and I wanted to go home. I was like, "He's calling me. I'm supposed to go." So, I was trying to accept it. The phone only rings for a certain amount of time. So, I was stressed out because I was, like, running out of time. Finally, the screen just went black and I could see my reflection. I was bloody. I was gross. I just started crying because I knew that I had to live with what was going to happen to me and that it wasn't my time to go. After that, I woke up. That, kind of, came to me like a dream, I guess.

**Scott**

Right. Because you didn't actually have your phone with you.

**Kennedy**

No. My phone was on the ground.

**Scott**

Yeah, that was all in your mind.

**Kennedy**

So, it was weird that it came as, like, a FaceTime call. Then, I woke up. I remember I was super high in the air. It felt like I was upside down. It was, like, black, even though it wasn't black at that point - my vision wasn't very good. I woke up confused. I remember that I started crying. I told myself, "Kennedy, you can't cry. If you cry, you're done. That's the end." Then, part of me was like "Why didn't I give up?" because, prior to the accident, I had really bad depression. I think I would have ended up committing suicide if this didn't happen. So, I don't know why I didn't give up on the wire.

**Scott**

I had not heard that part of your story.

**Kennedy**

Yeah, I've tried to. It's hard for me to talk about that because I feel that it was a weak point in my life. So, I tell a lot of people, "My accident saved my life because, if it didn't happen, I think I would have been dead by suicide."

**Scott**

It's interesting that the worst situations, sometimes, in hindsight, happened for good reasons.

**Kennedy**

Yeah.

**Scott**

While you were up there and trying to figure out what happened, could you see Jacob and Nakia? Did you know where they were?

**Kennedy**

I was actually facing toward the road, so I was looking away from them. They were in the field behind me, so I couldn't see them or what was going on, but I could hear screaming. The memories of screaming, the breaking of the glass, the screeching of the metal, and all of that started to come back to

me. I don't know if the screaming came from when we were rolling in the car or when she was behind me because I did hear from the EMTs that she was screaming. So, that might have been her screaming behind me but I had no idea what was going on.

**Scott**

I'm interested in the fact that the screaming just came back to your memory - the memory of that just came back to you. Was it because the therapy or counseling that you were going through brought that back? Or did it just happen to come back?

**Kennedy**

I think it just happened to come back because me and my friends were driving and this lady almost hit us. It was, like, scary because it was almost another car accident. I was just sitting there and all the sounds were coming back to me. I was like, "Oh, I didn't like that." So, now, when I drive, saw something on the road, and err on the side of the road, my brain would like, "Oh, you're gonna hit that." Then, I can hear it all. If I know that I'm not going to hit it, my brain would tell me that I'm going to and then I'd hear it all over again.

**Scott**

In one of your videos, I saw that you, kind of, made a joke because people ask, "Why didn't you call 911 after the crash?" Of course, you couldn't because you didn't have your phone, but your response was, "I was too high to reach the phone." Some people actually thought you crashed because you were high.

**Kennedy**

Yeah. I didn't make, like, an explanation video. I'm like, "No, I was not high on drugs. Please look at the picture." Then, they were like, "You're lying. You photoshopped that." I was like, "I don't know how you can come up with this." My hometown would call me out and be like, "You're lying." But I don't know.

**Scott**

Eventually, people stopped to help and someone actually did call 911. Let's hear that call.

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**911 Operator**

911. What's the address of your emergency?

**Man**

350 and 650 from Declo.

**911 Operator**

okay, can you give me the coordinates? 350 What?

**Man**

350 south and 650 south. We've got to have ambulances and police out here right away.

**911 Operator**

What's going on?

**Man**

Car wreck. A girl is hanging by her leg from the telephone pole wire. Her mom is over in the ball pit. Her dad's over by the car. There are multiple people hurt. You got a fix on my phone?

**911 Operator**

Okay. Give me the address one more time.

**Man**

Just west of 750 East and 350 south of Declo.

**911 Operator**

Alright, stay on the phone with me. I'm gonna get the ambulance and everything head in that direction. I'm going to get more information from you.

**Man**

We're gonna need several ambulances.

**911 Operator**

How many people?

**Man**

how many people are here? (Silence) At least 3. You really need to hurry. There is a girl hanging by her broken leg from the telephone wire.

**911 Operator**

Medic one, Declo, 316, respond to the area of 750 East 350 south for a possible 2-vehicle crash. Unknown injuries. One female has a possible broken leg. Standby for further. Okay. How many vehicles, sir?

**Man**

(Silence) The ambulances are coming.

**911 Operator**

How many people?

**Man**

At least 3.

**911 Operator**

Okay, how many vehicles?

**Man**

One.

**911 Operator**

One vehicle?

**Man**

Yes. There is a girl hanging from the telephone wire from her broken leg that's severed.

**911 Operator**

Medic one, 316. Be advised that this will be a one-vehicle crash. Three people are possibly injured - one female hanging by a broken leg from the telephone wire. Are you with the lady now?

**Man**

(Speaking in the background) GOD! She is fucking upside down and dying. There is a girl hanging on the copper wire with her legs - it's about four-off. We got to get down there.

**911 Operator**

Can you call, I think, United Electric? Get them just in case. Sir, has the vehicle hit that power pole?

**Man**

It hit the power pole and sign. The people are in bad shape.

**911 Operator**

Okay. Are all the people inside the vehicle?

**Man**

No. None of them are, that I know of.

**911 Operator**

Okay.

**Man**

There are 2 or 3 of them out of the vehicle.

**911 Operator**

2-3 out of the vehicle?

**Man**

Yes, they're all thrown out.

(Speaking in the background) Just go down there. Bring your outfit. Help people. They're laying all over.

**911 Operator**

I've got the medics heading in that direction. I want you to stay on the phone with me until they arrive. if you can.

**Man**

I'm going to stay on here.

**911 Operator**

Okay, and give me updates. Declo Fire, respond to the area 750 E, 350 South, for one-vehicle crash, 3 people possibly injured, one female hanging by a telephone wire with a broken leg. Declo Fire, respond to area 750 East 350 south for one-vehicle crash.

**Man**

(Speaking in the background) Brothers, sisters, mom, and dad - how many?

(Crying in the background)

**911 Operator**

Are you with them now?

**Man**

(Speaking in the background) I got help coming. I could use some help first. She's still alive.

**911 Operator**

Are you with her right now?

**Man**

(Speaking in the background) Yes, they're all alive. Flash your light to the cop!

Tell your officer that they just drove past the road. They need to come down the 350 road west.

**911 Operator**

My RP is advising. This is near the Den Darrington residence. In locals, I'm showing a 705 East 300 South. Is it by Den Darrington's house?

**Man**

Yes. Now, they're turning down here.

**911 Operator**

Okay, who's coming back?

**Man**

We're gonna need a bucket truck out here and get this girl off the powerline. Do you realize that? We need something like a bucket truck to get this girl. She's hanging on the power lines.

**911 Operator**

We've contacted the power company

**Man**

There are 3 people. They are in really bad shape.

**911 Operator**

Are they juveniles? Are they adults? Do you know?

**Man**

2 juvenile and, I think, 1 adult.

**911 Operator**

Okay. Are they all conscious and breathing? Can you tell?

**Man.**

Yes.

**911 Operator**

(In the background) Someone is hanging from a wire approximately 18 to 20 feet above the ground. We need a bucket truck.

**Man**

They are all thrown out.

**911 Operator**

Okay, sir. I'm gonna let you go with the deputies and stuff, okay?

**Man**

What's that?

**911 Operator**

I'm gonna let you go, okay?

**Man**

Okay.

**911 Operator**

All right. Thank you so much!

**Man**

Thank you.

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**Scott**

By the time people realize what was how happening, how many people were gathered there? Could you see the crowd?

**Kennedy**

They were all underneath me. Jacob and Nakia were obviously on the ground, so they could get in an ambulance and get taken care of. On the other hand, I couldn't get taken care of for another 45 minutes - I was just hanging up there. I remember looking down. They were all holding a tarp underneath me. I remember it felt like a ton of people. I just remember looking at them confused, like, "Why? Why are you getting me down? Why are you underneath me holding a tarp? Like, Like, I'm not going anywhere. I'm wrapped up in here." So, I was just really confused about why they weren't getting me down.

**Scott**

Of course, on the ground, they couldn't tell how tightly wrapped up you were in those lines. So, from their point of view, you could fall any minute. I'm picturing, like, when firemen are at the bottom of a burning building, they're holding something so that, if somebody jumps, they can land on this thing. So, that's what these people were holding for you in case you fell?

**Kennedy**

Yeah, I have another 2 pictures posted on my Instagram - 1) The one which a guy took when no one was there. 2) Someone took on the sideline when there were quite a few people underneath me. You can see them holding the tarp.

**Scott**

Were they talking to you?

**Kennedy**

Yeah. They said I was talking and, like, having a normal conversation. They said I was acting like it was a normal day - I was totally calm. Then, I started to go out of it because I was losing a lot of blood. I can remember the blood running down my face and getting in my nose. So, at that point, I was, like, getting delusional. I remember feeling, "Are you guys gonna get me down? I really need some help." I just kept saying, "Can you help me get down, please? I need to get down."

**Scott**

This had to be a unique situation for the fire department. How did they get to you?

**Kennedy**

They used a fire truck - I think it had, like, a bucket at the end, maybe? I'm not 100% sure because I don't remember that part. They used some sort of ladder truck that had a stretcher on it. I think there were 2 men - one who put the tourniquet on and another one in the bucket.

**Scott**

I would assume that they must have contacted the electric company just to confirm that it was safe for them to get to you.

**Kennedy**

I think they had to get the power turned off. I remember turning to him, looking at him dead in the face, and saying, "You really gotta get me down. I can't do this much longer. I'm gonna die." He said, "We're trying." He was, like, stressed and breathing hard. Obviously, my life was in his hands at that point. He got the tourniquet on. Then, my memory kind of blinks out. They said that that was the only time I screamed and cried - they had to take my bone and leg back through the wire to get me untangled.

**Scott**

You must have been partially awake if you were feeling that pain, but you don't remember that part...

**Kennedy**

No. There's a video out there that I actually haven't seen yet because my parents have been hesitant about me watching it, but I think I'm ready to watch it. I think that part is the end - when they're getting me on the stretcher and everything - so we'll see how that goes as I watch the video.

**Scott**

One of Kennedy's friends who was also in the car at that time was Jacob. I wanted to get his perspective on what he experienced.

**Jacob**

I remember hearing, like, bangs and crashes all around me. I was hit pretty badly in the car because I was not buckled up. The only way I can really describe it is I was in a washing machine. The next thing I know, it was very painful. I remember hearing my body hit the inside of the car. I remember hearing myself moaning and groaning as I was being tossed around. Then, when I opened my eyes, the first thing I noticed was that my wrist was sliced open and it was bleeding really heavily. The first thing I wanted to do was see if my friends were okay. I saw the car because, when I look up from my wrist, the car was right in front of me. I looked to the left and I saw Kennedy in the line. I have no idea where Nakia was. Obviously, I was worried. I was completely astounded by how she got up there. I worried out of my mind for her. I tried to get up but I couldn't. When I played soccer, I pulled my hip out of place and it felt the exact same. I was pretty much laying there helpless. My wrist was bleeding - so is my right wrist - and I was holding my left wrist above it so that the bleeding wasn't so bad.

Anyways, I was in a lot of pain, I couldn't really breathe because I had a punctured lung. Kennedy was screaming for help. I had no idea what to do. I had no clue where my phone was because we had all been thrown out of the car along with the phones. The car was, at least, 25 feet away from me - probably more. Anyways, after, like, 5 or 10 minutes, a dude on a motorcycle showed up. Then, he was like, yelling. I don't think he saw me. The first thing he did was he called 911. I heard him, like, exclaiming over and over how she was in a telephone wire, how they had to hurry as fast as they could and get a ladder truck. I don't remember if it was he or someone else - I had gotten their attention - who came over to me. I used his phone to call my parents and they got there in, like, 10 or 15 minutes right after the first responders. I had a broken neck, back, and pelvis, but I didn't know that at that time.

**Scott**

Now, back to Kennedy and her injuries.

**Kennedy**

When I was on the way up or getting out of the car, my arm was completely ripped off - it was holding on by the skin on my back. If you look at all my scars, my whole arm is scarred up other than my back. You have 5 main nerves that control your arm. 3 of mine were ripped from my spinal root and 2 of them were stretched really bad. So, my arm was, like, paralyzed, but they did a nerve transfer to help, so it's slowly coming back. Then, my femur was snapped - that's where it was tangled in the wire. My collarbone and my humerus were snapped.

**Scott**

You were quite a mess.

**Kennedy**

Oh, yeah.

**Scott**

Can you talk about when your dad showed up at the scene?

**Kennedy**

Yeah. My memory got cut out when you put the tourniquet on. Then, it kind of comes back when I was in the bucket truck or the ladder, and when I was laying on the stretcher. I remember looking at the men and, like, "Thank you for saving my life or trying to." Then, they got me in the ambulance. I was in the ambulance. They were stressed out and they were, "We're losing her! You got to do this!" I can't remember exactly what they were saying, but I remember feeling so much peace as if it was my time to go. I remember looking at them one last time - the guys that were in there - and, kind of, giving them my eyes, like, "Thank you for all you did." Little did I know, my dad was right outside the ambulance. So, he could hear when they were saying, "We're losing her!" He got there two minutes after they got me off the powerline wire. When he showed up on the scene, the police officer was like, "No, sorry. You can't come any farther." He was like, "That's my daughter! I'm going to get her!" And they were like, "No." I think my dad thinks that they were trying to hold him off because I was still in the wire, and that'd be traumatic to see as a parent.

He finally looked out in the field, saw my car, sprinted to it, and he couldn't see me in there. So, someone called and went, "Jared she's in here." He got to the ambulance and they won't let him in, so he just knelt next to it and prayed, like, "God, please don't take my daughter. Leave whatever you possibly can. Please, don't take her." They finally said, "Jared, do you want to come in and give her a blessing?" He said, "Yes." He came in and saw me and my leg - he didn't think they could save it from the start. He came in, puts his hands on my head, and gave me a blessing. As soon as he came in, my eyes were rolling in the back of my head. I just knew that it was my time to go, so I just, kind of, gave up, I guess, because I knew there was nothing else I could do. As soon as that was happening, he came in, gave me the blessing, kissed me on the forehead, and said that my face was just covered in blood. It sounds gross but, since he kissed my forehead, he had blood all over his lips on the drive all the way to Pocatello. All I could taste was my blood. They told him, "Say your goodbyes now because she's not going to make it."

**Scott**

I'm a parent and I can't imagine how traumatic that is. Did you come back to consciousness on the way to the hospital?

**Kennedy**

Yeah. I guess I was telling them about how my day was going, what I was doing that day, that my boyfriend had just broken up with me and I was sad about it. It's really embarrassing, actually.

**Scott**

They probably found that to be a little bit amusing.

**Kennedy**

Oh, my life was literally on the line and I was talking about how I just got broken up.

**Scott**

When was the next time you were conscious?

**Kennedy**

It was a few days later. My first memory was when my vision would go in. I don't remember really opening my eyes, but I could hear everyone in the room and it was, like, dark. I remember it was really dark because, I think, my eyes could just barely open. So, I could hear everyone talking but I didn't really

know what was going on because, obviously, I was still in really bad condition. I remember that my dad told all the doctors, "No conversations inside of the hospital room. I know my daughter's in here." They were telling my dad that I was, like, brain dead. They said, "We think she has a really bad brain injury." He went, "No, she doesn't. She's fine." He said that when they would talk about what was going on, he would see a tear roll out of my eye. So, that's when he told them 'no conversations in the room'. That's when he taught me to squeeze my hands. He'd be, like, "Squeeze my hand for yes." I would squeeze. Then, he taught me to squeeze 3 times for 'I love you'. So, I would sit there and squeeze because I was still intubated.

Then, the next thing I learned was to like spell things out with my finger. I remember my family there. My dad was always next to me, like, holding my hand, and would fix anything. My mom was always, like, kind of, in the corner because she doesn't do well with that kind of stuff - it was hard for her to look at me, but I remember her still there. Then, my older sister would come. I remember her just crying next to my bed. She'd always play a song, but I never heard the song before, so I was really confused. Then, when I got out of the hospital and heard the song again, I said, "I know this song!" She went, "Yeah, this is the song I used to play for you in the hospital." So, that song means a lot - it's Astronomy by Conan Gray.

### **Scott**

It's interesting because, when someone's in a state like that, although it seems like they're not responsive or hearing or seeing anything but, many times, they are able to hear and know more about what's going on than we think. Obviously, that song is embedded in your brain now.

### **Kennedy**

It was just weird because when I woke up, someone send it to me and goes "Look at this new song", I would be, like, "I know this song. This isn't new." That was because my sister had been playing it for all those days.

### **Scott**

Can you talk about when they told you that your leg had to be amputated?

### **Kennedy**

That day, they told me that my leg had to be amputated. I was still actually in a coma. I had 4 amputations in total. I don't remember the first amputation or anything. For the last amputation, they were like, "Kennedy, this is a really big surgery." I had no idea what it was for. They were all stressed out. I came out of that surgery. I didn't know if I had to get my leg amputated at the break because my leg just kept rotting. They just had to continue cutting and said, "If we have to cut any more, we'll have to take it at the break, and she'll never be able to walk again." I had no idea my leg was even amputated in the first place, so I just know that something was wrong. I came out of that surgery and ended up having to get amputated at the break. The room was just full of sadness, and I could feel it in my heart. I knew something was terribly wrong, but no one was telling me. I remember my dad came up to my bed. I said, "Dad, what's wrong?" He said, "Nothing. Everything's gonna be okay." I said, "I know everything's gonna be okay." He just broke down. My dad does not cry. So, after seeing him cry, I knew something was really wrong. Then, he pulled himself together.

Later that day, he came up to me and said, "Kennedy, I have to tell you something." I said, "Yeah?" He went, "We had to amputate your leg." I said, "Did Nakia and Jacob have to lose any limbs?" He said, "No." I said, "So they're okay." He went, "Yeah." I said, "Well, I'm glad I'm the one that had to lose a

limb." I kind of turned my head away and wanted to be alone because that's, like, hard to take in, because I love soccer. So, I remember, I thought, "Oh my gosh, I'm never gonna be able to play soccer again." So, that hurt me really hard, really bad. Then, I was, kind of, okay with it. There's nothing I can do. So I was fine. Then, I think, the next day, physical therapy came in and they said, "Okay, we're gonna do 10 squats today." This was the day after, like, one of my last surgeries. My dad was like, "Oh my gosh, what are you doing? She just got out of surgery. She can barely move." They were like, "Nope, she can do it." I was like, "Yeah, I can do it." I hadn't seen my leg yet and I was scared. So, they put me at a 90-degree angle and I was looking up. My legs were covered with my gown. They said, "Yes, she is covered." I said, "Okay..." So, I kind of looked forward - I still wouldn't look down. Then, we did my 10 squats.

I sat back down and looked down by accident, and my gown was all the way up. I didn't realize how short it was - I thought it was, like, below the knee or at my knee. When I looked down and sat, I looked at my dad and said, "Dad, you didn't tell me it was this short. I have nothing left. My leg's gone." He went, "I know it's short, but you still have something." I said, "Don't, Dad. It's gone. It's all gone." Then, I started bawling. It was hard because I didn't realize how short it wasn't and there was, like, nothing left. They tried to get me to touch it. I said, "No, no, no." Then, I finally touched it and, kind of, embraced it at that point. So, I laid back down. They were like, "Let's get on your right side." So, I got on my right side. They were like, "Try to move a little bit." So, I was trying to move. The funny thing is my trauma name. In the hospital, you'd get a trauma name, and my name was Trauma Gobi. So, I said, "I'm gonna name my little leg Goby." Since then, I named it "Goby." Since then, I just embraced it at that point. The doctors were really impressed because they were, like, "Most people will just shut down and be done."

### **Scott**

Obviously, both of your legs are, kind of, something you've been used to having your whole life. When you look down, and it's just not there, that has to take some time for it to just sink in.

### **Kennedy**

Yeah.

### **Scott**

How has your recovery gone? What kind of progress have you made since then?

### **Kennedy**

I've made a ton of progress. The doctors and everyone were, like, so impressed because I had, like, the best mindset. I was like, "I got to do it. I have no other choice." So, I embraced it, went forward with it, and did my best. I wasn't even supposed to eat out of the hospital till September. I was out earlier in July. I just worked my butt off. I knew what I had to do, did it, and just kept the attitude of, like, "You can do this. You were sent here because I believe everything happens for a reason. We were sent here knowing the trials that we were gonna go through." So, I just felt prepared and grateful, I guess, to be even alive.

### **Scott**

How's the progress on the use of your left arm?

### **Kennedy**

It's gotten really good because they did a nerve transfer surgery, where they, like, split the nerves and put it to different muscles to, like, help grow and get my arm to work. My wrist can't, like, lift up or my

fingers cannot extend - I have surgery for that on June 4. My bicep can make my arm bend to a 90-degree angle and it can slowly abduct and go forward. So, it's slowly coming back and it's doing really good. They only expect 50%.

**Scott**

That's the prognosis?

**Kennedy**

Mmhmm. They were like, "You'll only have 50% use." I said, "No. I'll have 100%." They were like, "No, you won't." I said, "Yeah, I will have 100 or close to 100. I won't settle for 50."

**Scott**

Describe the first time you put on the leg prosthesis.

**Kennedy**

I was in a wheelchair for a few months. As a 16-year-old teenage girl, you don't want to be in a wheelchair, especially when I was who I used to be - I never had to be in that situation. So, being in a wheelchair was hard. As soon as I got my prosthetic, I was so excited and happy to walk again. I immediately wanted to take it home, but that was, like, the test cast to make sure everything worked. Then, I got it a few weeks later and I loved it.

**Scott**

I've heard stories of people the first time they put it on - it's kind of painful. How did that go and how long before you were comfortable walking with it?

**Kennedy**

They accidentally put pressure on my leg and it split the bottom of my leg open. I kind of have a circular and sensitive spot on the bottom my leg. So, my prosthesis would put the liner on. I had a pin on the bottom line, so it pulled it - that milking sensation would give me blisters on the bottom where the little sensitive spot was. So, I would walk - I don't know - 3 steps and I'd have, like, huge blisters. I finally figured out how to put it on, and then I was fine - it doesn't hurt too bad. Sometimes, when I'm sitting for a while and then put it on, I'll hurt my sit bone because that's where it, like, keeps you up. But for the most part, it's not bad at all.

**Scott**

Did you actually ask the doctors if you could have your amputated leg back?

**Kennedy**

I did. I wanted it back so bad.

**Scott**

What would you do with it?

**Kennedy**

I don't know. I have no idea. I think it was like all the meds - I was so upset. I was, like, "I want my leg back! Make them give it back!" My dad went, "You can't have it back." I said, "I want it back!" I don't know.

**Scott**

Can you talk about the first time you went driving again?

**Kennedy**

Obviously, I was, like, super scared, cautious, and tensed up. It wasn't bad, actually. I was surprised because I was expecting it to be really hard for me. Recently, it's been hard hard for me because, as I said earlier, I would just be driving and my mind would be like "Oh, you're gonna hit that" and I can hear everything again. I feel like I see things jump out at me. So, like, I would start having panic attacks recently when I drive, so I try not to drive at night anymore.

**Scott**

It was nighttime when this happened, right? It was dark...

**Kennedy**

Yeah, it was pretty dark, not quiet all the way, but--

**Scott**

I find it really interesting that you went from one extreme to the other. Prior to the accident, you said that you suffered from depression and were, perhaps, even suicidal. Now, at the other end, you are like, "I've got everything to live for." How do you explain that transition?

**Kennedy**

I don't even know how to explain it myself. I just woke up and knew that life was worth living for and there was so much more out there for me than what I thought. Before, I felt like social media made me so upset and people don't understand that. Then, I would stay off social media for weeks and didn't see anything. I think that was why I was so upset. Obviously, I had other challenges going on. My dad was diagnosed with cancer a few years back, so I was dealing with that and the stress of that. It feels good to not be sad anymore and just be grateful for what I still do have in this amazing life that I can still live.

**Scott**

You told me that, since this story became public, you've had some people who also lost a limb or gone through something really traumatic contact you. They came to you for advice or inspiration on how to get through that. What do you tell those people?

**Kennedy**

I have a lot of girls come to me and tell me how they're insecure about their scars or about their amputation - even boys too. For a lot of girls, it's a lot about insecurities. I have my own insecurities also. One thing I am not insecure about is my scars because I think that just shows how much I've been through. I don't think there's anything to be ashamed of. I understand that, because of the amputation and missing a limb, you're so different from everyone else. If you look at it in a positive way, it makes you stand out - people are going to be drawn to you and want to know more about it. You can turn it into a teaching experience instead of looking at it like, "Oh my gosh, my life sucks." So, I told them, like, to just be grateful for what you still do have and that you're still even alive.

**Scott**

That's a great way to look at it. Speaking of social media, you have told this whole story on TikTok, and you're kind of a TikTok celebrity now.

**Kennedy**

Not quite. I started it all on Instagram - my sister started there - and I've, kind of, kept it going because they were like, "I think this is a really good opportunity for you to share your journey and everything. You go through your feelings and use it as a journal." And it's been really great for me. Then, TikTok - I didn't take that seriously, I guess, until probably January. Then, I just kept going and posting videos. Then, I posted the one "Why don't you call 911 when you crashed?" and that got almost 43 million views. So, since then, my followers skyrocketed. I used it as a way to escape and deal with my trauma with humor. So, I make videos that I think are funny, and people seem to like them.

**Scott**

Obviously, they do, and they are funny. They're interesting. They're entertaining. What do you see going forward? What is your plan like? Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

**Kennedy**

One of my goals is to become a Paralympian - I would absolutely love to - because sports have always been a really big part of my life. So, I would either be a Paralympian for snowboarding, skiing, track or anything - I would want to pursue that. Obviously, college is in there. I have my surgery at the beginning of the summer, so I probably won't go to college until the spring semester or next fall semester. I would work on, possibly, going to the Paralympics. I don't even know if I would make it, but it's just something that I would love to do.

**Scott**

One of my previous guests is a Paralympian, so maybe I can connect you with him.

**Kennedy**

Oh, really?

**Scott**

Yeah.

**Kennedy**

That'd be cool.

**Scott**

You have thoughts about your career or what you'd want to do for a living?

**Kennedy**

I'd want to go into business. I'd like to start my own business. I don't quite know what, but I'd like to learn how to do a business, how to run it, and how to work your finances. I just feel like there's a lot you can learn in that major and there are a lot of different things you can do with it.

**Scott**

Sure. It's a wide-open world. Well, Kennedy, I appreciate you coming on here and sharing your story. I'm so glad you made it. And thanks very much.

**Kennedy**

I had fun. Thank you for giving this opportunity.

**Scott**

While Kennedy was hanging up there on the power line, a couple of things happened. First, the power line that was wrapped around her leg pinched off the main artery so that she didn't bleed out. And the second thing is that she could have also bled out from where her arm was ripped away from her body, but the assumption is that the electricity in the line actually burned that area around her shoulder and back, and had a cauterizing effect so that she didn't lose all her blood from there either.

So the power line very likely saved her in both of those ways, in addition to just catching her so she didn't fall another 20 feet to the ground, which could have also been fatal. Pretty incredible story.

All right, we have things to talk about –

I'm thinking about doing an episode of all first responder stories. If you're an EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter, or any other kind of First Responder, I know you have a story. You know what I'm talking about. When you're out with friends, and someone mentions your line of work, and then you get the question – what's the craziest call you've ever worked? Every EMT has a story. You might even have more than one. Well, I want to hear it.

You can call it in to the Podcast Voice Mail line at 727-386-9468, or you can just record an audio file on your phone and email it to me – [Scott@WhatWasThatLike.com](mailto:Scott@WhatWasThatLike.com). I'll put a bunch of these together and we'll have a whole episode hearing about the bizarre things you've seen on the job.

And a question – are you on Pinterest? Well, I am! Or I should say, the podcast is. I'm kind of still figuring it out and easing into it, but you can follow me at [WhatWasThatLike.com/pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/WhatWasThatLike.com/pinterest).

And one more thing before we get to this week's Listener Story. There's a podcast I want to tell you about. This is not a paid ad, and in fact the host of the show, who's a friend of mine named Brandon, he doesn't even know I'm mentioning it here. But he does a great show called Music City 911. Brandon lives in Nashville, and he works as a 911 dispatcher. For his podcast, he plays real-life 911 emergency calls from all over the US, and he analyzes them from his perspective as an actual 911 operator. So not only does he have the inside knowledge of how the call plays out, how the operator handled it, what the caller did that was right or wrong – he also has a voice that is perfect for audio. I've been subscribed for a while and listen to every episode, and I think you'll really enjoy it. You can find it on any podcast app – just search for "Music City 911".

And now we have this week's Listener Story. This one's from my friend TZ, and he TOO has a great voice for audio. His story describes a mystery that he's never figured out. If you have any ideas, I'm sure he'd be interested.

Stay safe, and I'll see you in two weeks.

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(Listener story)

## TZ

This story is true. It happened about 2 years ago when I bought a new house and got, kind of, lucky because the market dipped during the pandemic. The house was a total wreck. I don't know for sure, but I suspect the woman who lived here before was an alcoholic and she lived alone. There were plates and silverware on the front lawn. The grass was growing up to my shoulders, almost. It took months of cleaning and repair to get it livable. I'm pretty lucky that my dad is a contractor and he was trained as a carpenter. So, one of the things we did together was remodel the kitchen. We tore out all the old cabinets, and the tiles, and put in a new sink. It was a couple of months of putting in 40-50 hours every week, but it paid off - the kitchen looks great now. I want to tell you about what happened when we were right in the middle of the kitchen remodel. I rent the house out now to a couple other roommates to help pay the mortgage. But at the time, I was living here alone. When I woke up and opened my bedroom door on the second floor, I heard the sound of someone taking a shower downstairs - that's impossible because I was the only one there. As I walked down the stairs in, kind of, a half-awake state, I noticed that the living room looked like a sauna or a steam room - there were water droplets pulling on the ceiling and dripping down, and all the walls were also covered in water, and there was thick fog. So, you could almost not see 5-6 feet ahead of you. When I turn the corner at the bottom of the stairs and looked into the entryway to the kitchen, what I saw absolutely shocked me.

We had taken out the sink and all the cabinets and we had the new cabinets ready to place where the kitchen sink was. The 2 water lines - hot and cold - were sticking straight up. When we had left our work for the day the previous night, the knobs were turned firmly off but, on this morning, when I looked into the kitchen, the hot water line was fully opened and spraying a fairly thick stream of water directly into the ceiling, about 10 feet overhead, which was then cascading down like a fountain. It looked like something you'd see at a waterpark. The floor was flooded with water. Since it was hot water, it was putting off massive amounts of steam. I immediately panicked. I don't know anything about plumbing. So, I called my dad right away - I'm sure I sounded, kind of, insane - and told them what was going on. I hung up the phone and went over to the waterline to see if there was anything I could do to shut it off. All I did was turn the knob, then the water turned off - I probably turned it, maybe, 2 good rotations.

Over the next 24 hours or so, with a wet vac in the basement, we vacuumed up, probably, over 100 gallons of water. It was a good way to clean the basement floor. Luckily, only a couple of the cabinets were ruined, so we weren't out that much money. It actually could have been much, much worse. The thing that I can't figure out is how the waterline got opened in the first place. I know I didn't do it. I have been known to sleepwalk, but I would say that the chances of me doing this is, maybe, 1 in 1000 or 100,000, I guess - it's possible. I know no one else was living in the house. I know that my 2 cats don't have the necessary dexterity in their paws to turn a handle like that. There were no signs of anybody breaking in. Plus, it was an empty house with nothing to steal, unless it was a kid playing an elaborate prank with basically no motivation. To this day, we have no idea who did it. As I said, my dad works in construction and came up as a carpenter. I asked him, "In your 40 or so years of practice in the trade, have you ever had a situation like that or something similar?" He said, "Never." He's never seen a waterline just open.

Well, that next weekend, I got some sage from my sister in even though I don't necessarily believe in ghosts. I saged every room of the house and also prayed whatever kind of prayers I could think of. Knock on wood, to this day, about 2 years later, we haven't had anything except a few noises in the attic - nothing like that has happened again. So, if you enjoyed this story, if you enjoyed my voice, maybe you would like my podcast where I tell true crime stories. I mainly stick to ones you haven't heard before - the more fringe bizarre ones. If you do want to check us out, go to [tapesfromthedarkside.com](http://tapesfromthedarkside.com) or just

search for "Tapes from the Darkside" in your pod player, including Spotify and Apple. Maybe, I'll see you guys on my feed.