

Episode 69: Kira was attacked by a serial rapist

What's the most scared you've ever been?

I'm not talking about being on a crazy roller coaster ride, or watching a scary movie. What we're talking about in this episode is the kind of fear that just grips you, and controls you, and won't let you think about anything else.

I asked some of the listeners of this podcast that very question recently, in our private Facebook group. And at the end of this episode, you'll be able to hear some of their answers – and there's quite a variety. Turns out being scared can show up in our lives in a lot of different ways.

And our guest today, Kira, has experienced that kind of gut-wrenching fear. She was on a downtown street, alone. It was dark, because it was 3:30 am. She was walking to work, and thought everything was okay.

But she suddenly realized she was not alone.

Scott

What city did you live in when this happened?

Kira

I lived in Portland.

Scott

Portland, Oregon?

Kira

Portland, Oregon, yes.

Scott

Now I know you grew up somewhere south of that like in Arizona or something like that. How did you end up in Portland?

Kira

I had a friend who had moved from Arizona up to Oregon near Portland in one of the suburbs. When I told her that this guy and I had broken up and that I was going to have to move she said, "Come up here. Live with us and stay with us while you get on your feet." So I did. I packed up my car and sold everything that wouldn't fit in it. My ex helped me tremendously actually, he was a great help with selling things and getting some money stocked away so that I wouldn't be totally broke when I went out there.

So I packed up a month later and drove up to Oregon and moved in with my friend and her husband. I started a new adventure on my own. I had always lived alone because I moved out when I was 18, so being on my own wasn't a new thing but this time I was really on my own. I didn't have access to the same people.

Scott

Right, you're in a whole new city and you had to find a job. At least you had a place to stay, that's a good thing.

Kira

They were so kind to me to let me stay there. Yeah, finding a job is difficult. I mean applied for everything. The only thing I could find was a supervisor job at a little pizza place.

Scott

Is that where you were working when this happened?

Kira

It is not where I was working. No, I moved on from that to something a little bit more corporate. Where I was working when this happened was more of a customer service call center, for lack of a better way to describe it. It was in downtown Portland.

Scott

So you had to be to work really early?

Kira

Yeah. Marcus and I had just moved out here closer to downtown when I started this job. I had just barely started it, and initially my schedule didn't start until 7. So I was walking a little bit later. Then when I started my permanent schedule it started at 5 am. I would have to leave the house earlier by 3:45 or 4:00.

Scott

That's because you walked to work?

Kira

Yeah I walked to work. I started walking when I moved here. Honestly it started as wandering because I was trying to find myself. I was in this weird place and starting over with my life, so I started walking quite a bit and I fell in love with it. I had been walking to work for years by the time this happened.

Scott

Now you mentioned the name Marcus. Can you tell us who that is?

Kira

Marcus is everything. He's my person and partner. I met him 4 years ago and he's my best friend. We live together and share a life together. He's my teammate. Teammate is an excellent word for who Marcus is.

Scott

Ok. Well tell us then, your daily schedule was leaving you house at 3:30 or so and walking for an hour or hour and a half to get to work?

Kira

Yeah. I left a little bit early that day, but for the most part I was leaving before 4 am to get to work everyday. I had been doing that only about 2 weeks at that point.

Scott

So obviously it's still dark then.

Kira

Very dark, yeah.

Scott

So can you just take us through what happened on that day/

Kira

Yes. I woke up pretty early that morning and was out the door around 3 am. I was looking for a scooter. They have these rental scooters downtown where you use an app on your phone and you load money on it and scan a barcode on the scooter and it will start up for you. I had been doing that for a couple of days and it was fun but it also made me feel a little bit safer because it got me where I wanted to go quicker.

So I was looking for one of those and there wasn't one along my normal route. So I had to take a route I had taken previously that I didn't care for as much because I had run into a couple of people that made me nervous and uncomfortable so it felt scary to me. I had started taking a different route and purchased some pepper spray and a stun gun. I also downloaded a safety app called Noonlight. On this day I wanted that scooter and the closest one to me was in that other area. I thought, "Well I've got the stun gun and I have the Noonlight app," so I thought everything would be fine. I left for work and I remember it being a particularly beautiful day. I had a hoodie on and I had taken it off and just wore a t-shirt and some jogging pants and tied that sweatshirt around my waist and took off.

Scott

Can you explain, before you take off, how does the Noonlight app work?

Kira

So it's just a free app and it's really simple. You create a passcode that's 4 digits and when you want to use it you open it and there's a sensor right in the middle of the screen. You put your finger on that sensor, and when you take your finger off of the sensor you've got 10 seconds to enter the code that you created and if you don't enter that code within 10 seconds then Noonlight will try to call you. If they talk to you and verify that everything is fine, then great. If they talk to you and everything is not fine or if you don't answer, then they use your GPS coordinates to dispatch police to you.

Scott

So the whole time you're walking you've got your finger or thumb on this sensor on your phone?

Kira

Yeah. It's funny because more recently I've heard people say, "I can't imagine carrying my phone for that long of a walk." I hear you but it worked for me because I carried my phone anyway.

Scott

So you're carrying your phone but even though that app is running you can still listen to music or podcasts or whatever while you're walking?

Kira

Sure. I was listening to a true crime podcast. If you want to change it or pause it or something you've got to take your finger off the sensor, enter your code and then go do your podcast thing. So you're unprotected during that time, but yeah you can still hear everything. It doesn't make noise or interfere with anything.

Scott

Ok. So that's good. It sounds like an interesting app, we'll have to talk a little more about that.

Kira

Yeah it's fantastic. So I was walking and listening to that podcast with earbuds in. I was really just enjoying the morning. I really liked that time of day, it was nice and quiet and generally I didn't encounter very many people until I got a little further into downtown and I had about a mile and a half before I got to downtown. I was just enjoying the walk and enjoying the podcast. I got about a mile in and there is an Under Armour corporate building that has a running track attached to it that is for public use and is always open. Otherwise, it's pretty dark, there's not even a sidewalk on the other side.

I walked over to the sidewalk in front of Under Armour. I happened to glance over to the track and I saw a gentleman jogging. I really only noticed him because he was jogging weirdly and wearing weird shoes for jogging. Also, it's Portland so there's a lot of weird stuff that you see, and it was the 5th of July and 3:30ish in the morning at this point, so people were still partying and there were still fireworks going off in the distance. So I didn't really pay him any mind.

There was an ambulance parked at Under Armour that was dark and waiting for a call. It was just quiet. Just past the Under Armour there is a freeway overpass that marks the separation from the regular city street to the downtown area. It's less residential and marks the downtown. Just beyond that overpass there was a construction area at that time and then you're right downtown after that. When you get to the overpass on the left, currently there is a homeless camp back there, but there used to be more in and out. People would hang out back there or sleep back there sometimes because it's really dark. It's so dark and black back there that was the only part of the walk that intimidated me. So I would walk in the middle of the road because it was 3:30 in the morning and nobody was driving on the road. I moved into the middle of the street and was on the overpass.

I got to about the middle and just did a casual glance over my left shoulder. I always do that, I always look around and there's never anybody there. This time there was that guy from the Under Armour track. He was jogging on the sidewalk. I did a double take really fast. When I first saw him he might have been 10 or 15 feet behind me, then I turned again and he was coming up to me already. I wasn't scared, I was irritated. People come up to you all the time downtown. He was saying something so I took my earbud out and I said, "What?" He said, "Show me your tits and I won't hurt you." At first I didn't say anything. I remember immediately looking to my left where we were standing and if I could have I would have taken off but it was behind me and I couldn't go. My immediate thought was to run but I couldn't. I was trying to figure out what was going on.

I just stuttered and he just said, "Just take them out. Take them out and I won't hurt you or I won't kill you." I realized that he was standing in a position so close to me and I didn't feel like I could really do anything. In my assessment of that I realized he was holding his hand up weird and I had my hands up because I had my phone and a stun gun in either hand. I realized his hands were up and he had a knife and was holding it right in front of my chest at my sternum in

front of my heart. That was it. That was all that was between us was just the length of the knife that he was holding.

I don't know how to explain it. My heart just sank. Your brain has two things happening. Your body and your feelings are taking over and shutting you down and making you slow so you can move and you're panicked. Then your brain is doing this other thing where it gets to work and says, "I got this." It's assessing and it's thinking. There's one part of me that just wanted to cry and have a tantrum because it was too much and I didn't know what to do and couldn't get out of it. This guy was going to touch me and he was going to kill me. The other part of me was thinking, "Look at his face and his eyes and look at the knife. Look around, can you run?" So there's a lot happening. You can just hear your heart pounding and that's it, that's all you can hear. There's nothing else that exists in those moments, you're just there with the person.

I had to do what he said. I had a backpack on and I didn't want to take it off. I had the phone in my hand and I had taken my finger off of that Noonlight sensor when this first started. I could feel my phone buzzing for the code and then for their calls. I couldn't answer obviously, so I just kept not answering. I put my phone into my hand with the stun gun and used my hand to pull my right breast out of the top of my shirt. As I did that he was just staring at me and had that knife right there. He licked his lips and made this sound like a groan.

He smacked his lips and said, "Let me touch them and I won't kill you." I said, "Please don't. Please don't." He said, "Just let me touch them and I won't hurt you." Every part of your body is revolting and saying, "You can't allow this to happen." Then your brain is saying, "Just hang in there a little bit longer. It's not the right time." Your brain just knows what to do. It wasn't the right time to run.

I had the stun gun but I wasn't thinking about it too much. He could easily have stabbed me, which I was certain he was going to do. I was 100% certain that he intended to kill me. He told me that if I did what he wanted that he wouldn't do anything, but then he just kept asking me for things. So at some point I'm going to say no. The minute that he put his hands on me and reached out and touched my breast, that was it. I knew that was it. I've heard survival stories so many times and I've heard a lot of things that I always thought, "That can't possibly be true." It's kind of a weird graphic thing to say but I've heard a lot of people say, "I knew I'd rather be killed than be raped." I don't know how to explain it but in that moment I just knew, "I don't want to let him rape me and I don't want to let him kill me, but I would rather make him chase me down and fight me for whatever he wants. I just cannot stand here and allow it."

I couldn't go anywhere at that point. He had his hand on my body and a knife in his other hand right next to that. I wanted him to finish doing that. He was talking to me, being really vile and saying things I won't repeat. He said things like, "Those are really nice. That's really nice." He said something like, "I've seen you before." I really didn't know if he meant distance or time. It was just sort of a passing fleeting thought in the middle of everything he was saying about my body and how much he liked that and how nice that was for him.

To be honest with you I struggle to remember if he stopped touching me or if I just eventually said as nicely and politely as I could, "May I please go now?" He kind of straightened up and he didn't have his hand on me anymore. Then he said, "No. Stay there. Stand there." It was at that point that I just took off. I just left. I had a backpack on and I remember thinking through before I ran that he was going to chase me. There was a hint of disbelief that maybe if I ran he wouldn't chase me. I felt certain that if I ran I wasn't going to be fast enough, so if he stabbed me he

would get my backpack. That was the best chance I had. I briefly glanced back when I was running, I just was running so fast, and when I looked back he was just standing there with his hand up with that knife in it just staring at me. I might have seen him taking a step in the other direction or I just know now that he went in the other direction. He was just standing there when I looked at him and I kept running.

I was trying to answer the phone. I was panicked and out of breath and just desperately trying to answer that phone. I think the call ended and they tried to call back again and I was just swiping, swiping, swiping trying to answer it.

Call audio

Kira

Hello?

Noonlight

Good morning. This is Noonlight calling. We received an alarm--

Kira

Please help me. Please help me. Please help me.

Noonlight

What's wrong?

Kira

Somebody pulled a knife on me and asked to see my tits. Then he asked to touch them and I'm running and I don't know where he is.

Noonlight

Ok. Can you get to someplace where there is somebody there? I'm gonna go ahead--

Kira

No, there is nobody out here. I'm in downtown Portland. There's nobody out here.

Noonlight

Ok. I'm gonna go ahead and send the police. I have your location.

Kira

Are you still tracking me?

Noonlight

Yes.

Kira

Please- (inaudible)

Noonlight

Ok. Hold on one moment I'll have someone dispatched, give me just a moment.

Kira

I can't run any more. I can't.

Noonlight

I need a dispatch, this is Noonlight. Someone pulled a knife on her, she's running right now, she's on the phone with me.

Try to get to the Chevron. Can you see the Chevron? Try to get to the Chevron.

Kira

(heavily panting) Hello? I just passed an ambulance but there's nobody. I don't know where this guy is.

Noonlight

Ok. Take some deep breaths. Did you stop running or are you still running?

Kira

I can't run anymore.

Noonlight

Ok, so you're by Chevron?

Kira

I'm by Chevron but I'm scared to just stand here. (heavily breathing) Sorry.

Noonlight

It's ok. My coworker is on the phone with the police right now.

She's by the Chevron. Someone pulled a knife on here and they're chasing her.

Kira

He touched me! He fucking touched me. (crying) I can't believe— I had a stun gun in my hand and I couldn't do anything. I was just fucking paralyzed. I'm such a coward.

Noonlight

Ok. Help is on the way right now. Take a couple of deep breaths.

Kira

(crying) I'm sorry. I can't. I can't.

Noonlight

They're on the way now. They're going to be there shortly, the police. I'm going to stay with you until they arrive, ok?

Kira

Why aren't they here yet?

Noonlight

Do you have a description of the gentlemen?

Kira

He's white. He has gray hair that was in a ponytail.

Noonlight

White. Gray hair with a ponytail.

Kira

He was wearing a black hoodie zipper jacket.

Noonlight

Black hoodie.

Kira

He was probably 5'8.

Noonlight

5'8.

Kira

He might weigh 150-170.

Noonlight

150-170.

Kira

He had lighter eyes I think.

Noonlight

Where did it originally happen? Where were you attacked?

Kira

It happened on Barber, I don't know the name of the road but it's by Stuki's which is a hotel.

Noonlight

By Stuki's the hotel.

Kira

It's right by the freeway overpass.

Noonlight

By the overpass. She ran all the way to the Chevron.

Kira

(crying) I think he went the other way. I just want to get off the street but there's nobody. There's nobody.

Noonlight

They should be there any minute.

Kira

(crying) I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Noonlight

It's ok. Don't apologize. Don't apologize.

Kira

I prepare for that everyday because it's so scary and then when it happened I couldn't do anything. I just couldn't do anything and he touched me! I can't believe that happened.

Noonlight

Take a couple of deep breaths.

Kira

Why aren't they here yet?

Noonlight

They'll be there shortly.

Kira

A sheriff just passed me. A sheriff just passed me. Oh my god. This is taking forever. That guy told me he noticed me before he saw me. He was following me for a while.

Noonlight

Oh wow.

Kira

I don't even know where he's at right now. (crying) I can't fucking believe this. I just want to get off the street so bad.

Noonlight

I know.

Kira.

There's nowhere to go. Nothing is open. There's no people except creepy people. I'm in a fucking nightmare right now. I'm so sorry this is not your fault.

Noonlight

No, no, no, it's fine. It's fine. I understand.

Kira

I'm all alone. (crying) I'm all alone. I'm so scared. I am so fucking scared.

Noonlight

I'm still here. You've just got to take some deep breaths.

Kira

He had a knife. He had a fucking knife. I couldn't do anything. (crying) There's nobody around.

-call disconnects-

Noonlight

Aw, Jesus.

Kira

Hello?

Noonlight

Ms. Kira? I'm sorry we got disconnected. Did the police arrive?

Kira

Are you there?

Noonlight

Yes.

Kira

There's nobody here yet. It's been almost 10 minutes that guy could've killed me by now. Where are the police? (crying) I am not far enough away from where this happened and that guy could be watching me. I'm so scared. I'm just out in the open and there's nowhere to hide. There's somebody walking towards me and I'm scared. I have to go away from here.

Noonlight

Ok.

Kira

There's somebody coming towards me. Where are they? Where are they? Where are they?

Noonlight

Let me see if I can get you on the phone with the police. That way you can tell them where you're at. We did have them going to the Chevron but I see that you're moving.

Kira

I'll go back. I'll go back. I just don't know what to do.

Noonlight

I know, I know. I just don't want them to not be able to find you.

Kira

I don't either. I'll just stand right here for a minute. I'll just stand across the street from Chevron.

Noonlight

What are you wearing? What is a description of you?

Kira

I'm wearing black pants and gray sneakers and a dark blue shirt with pink American Eagle and a lavender sweatshirt tied around my waist and then a black backpack. I have a stun gun in my hand but I'll put it away. I see a police officer and I'm across from the Chevron. I'll go across.

Noonlight

Yeah. I want to make sure you're there and safe before I hang up.

Kira

I'm safe. I'm with the police.

Noonlight

Ok.

Kira

Thank you.

Noonlight

You're welcome.

Kira

She stayed with me. She was my lifeline. She was everything in that moment. I just wanted to get home to Marcus. I thought about him the whole time and all I wanted to do was just get back to him. I couldn't though, I had to be on the phone with Noonlight. She was really the next best thing. I knew she knew where I was, I knew that she was telling somebody what was going on, and if this guy managed to come back in the 13 minutes it took for somebody to get there that she would be able to tell them where I was last. Somebody knew and that was comforting and I could actively scream and sob in her ear and be hysterical. I'm really glad that I had that. She was very kind to me. They're so fantastic.

Scott

That had to be so reassuring, just having a voice at the other end of the phone to talk to, knowing that she had her computer there and could see exactly where you are.

Kira

Yeah. No matter what, somebody's coming. I didn't know when, it felt like a lifetime, I cannot imagine having done that alone. Trying to run and dial 911. I couldn't even get my phone unlocked. It was in somebody else's hands and she was capable and confident and reassuring. That's exactly what I needed. I don't want to have the perspective of having done that without Noonlight. I'm glad that I only have the perspective that I do.

So I had been sort of crouched down across the street from the Chevron. I moved over there because I saw somebody that scared me. They pulled up by the Chevron and I almost didn't see them because their cars were so dark and it was so dark out there. I finally saw them and ran screaming across to them. There were 2 cars, 2 officers. One of them got a description of the guy from me and got in his car and took off and went to look for him. Then the other officer stayed with me.

He was fine. I feel like saying he was fine might be giving him a little too much credit. It was clear to me that he either had a rough night or had a rough job and he thought something else was going on. Once I convinced him nothing else was going on, that I wasn't selling drugs or whatever he thought I was doing. He didn't make any accusations to be clear. It was just a lot of, "How do you know this guy? Where did you meet this guy? Where do you live again? Where are you going? Why are you going there?" He got the information and we made the report.

I asked him if he would take me home. I told him we were about a mile and a half from my house. I don't remember his exact words but it was something along the lines of, "I don't usually patrol that far so that's outside of my patrol area." Then he just kind of looked at me. I was like, "Ok, well I guess I could call a Lyft." I honestly, thinking back, I wish I would have been in a better place to say, "Man are you kidding? You cannot be serious right now? Somebody just tried to kill me." Looking back, I don't know what it means, but it's certainly an example of what that kind of a job does. Right? Like the stress.

Scott

To make you kind of cynical, you mean?

Kira

Yeah. To treat humans, victims, that way. I feel like there's a lot going on there. A lot to unpack, but that's for a different podcast. He agreed to drive me home. When we were in the car driving back he told me that if I was going to be walking around downtown Portland I should carry a gun and that it's not safe to be doing that. He did get me home and did shake my hand and told me he was glad I was safe. He put his spotlight up on my front door and said he would wait until I was inside and he sure did that, that was great.

So I went inside and locked the door. I sat down and it was really dark and really quiet and Marcus was asleep. I didn't even know what to do and I didn't know how to tell him. I was immediately in problem solving mode, because that's what I do. I started minimizing right? I thought, "Well I'm not hurt. I don't have to go to the hospital. This can wait until he wakes up from work. I don't want to wake him up." I didn't really know what to do, I wasn't really thinking straight. Your body is in such shock. It's difficult sometimes to even recall how scary it was. Your body just develops a physical barrier. It just revolts trying to go back to that place. I remember so vividly sitting on that floor and being uncomfortable. I didn't take my backpack off and I was uncomfortable. I remember thinking, "Get up. You can do it. You're home now and safe. Get up and take your shoes off." I just couldn't. I just didn't know what to do.

I don't know how long it was but I finally got up and took my backpack off. I went into Marcus' room and I was going to go in softly and try to wake him up softly and just say, "Hey, this thing happened and I really need a hug." Instead he woke up and I immediately started crying and said, "This guy attacked me." It was horrifying. He was horrified. I woke him up to that news and I feel really bad for doing that. God, I feel so bad. He got up immediately and pulled me into his arms and we cried together and I don't think either one of us really knew what to do.

I don't think I can stress that enough, there was just so much of me not knowing what to do. It looks like a lot of puttering and pacing, right? It's just sort of walking in the bedroom and sitting on the bed and then getting up and walking into the kitchen and going into the living room and sitting on the couch. We were just sort of frantic. He called into work. I remember him going outside and calling his boss and I couldn't hear exactly his words but I remember he was so mad, not at me. Watching somebody break down because they love you and they couldn't protect you, that's hard to see and it made it really real in that moment; seeing him distraught. Seeing him actively in despair over it even happening, you know? In those early moments that really made me think, "Ok, it is as scary as I think it is."

The rest of that day, all of those initial few weeks blend together. It's only because I know dates of some things that I can keep them straight, but otherwise I think I would have a really hard

time knowing chronologically when I did what. I know in the first couple of days we went up to the bar that's right before that overpass and told them what happened and asked them if they video. They said, "We have a camera that points outside but it really only watches our patio tables and it might just barely get to the sidewalk, but I don't have access to it." He had the manager look at it and in a couple of hours he called and said, "Yeah if you want to come down here we'll put it on a thumb drive for you." So we did. We went into a tiny little room and he showed us the video. It showed me walking and him walking behind me a few seconds later. Then it showed him running back the way that we originally came in the opposite direction a few minutes after that when he was done with the attack. So we got that video.

At the time my sister's husband worked in law enforcement in a different state and I think he had reached out to the Portland police for me and asked them if an advocate could get in touch with me. That would've happened I think regardless. I don't want to discredit PPB saying they wouldn't have given me an advocate, but I think he sped up that process. So I did get a call from the police advocate that very first day. She was great and lovely and kind. She offered to come and meet with me that day. I didn't want to see any humans. I just wanted to be with Marcus and be in my home and feel safe. She told me that an investigator wouldn't reach out for a few days, and they didn't. This happened on a Friday and I think they reached out Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week.

My original investigator was really great. He was a really kind man. He had been doing that for a long time and was getting ready to retire, but he was very kind to me and very concerned that this had happened. He was also optimistic, which was good because I was not. He was optimistic that we would do a sketch and he would track down some video and talk to the patrol officers on the street and that they would find this guy. I suppose that did make me feel a little bit better but I was very skeptical that they would actually find him.

There was no DNA. We did have that video from the bar but it wasn't very good for identification. It was good for a timestamp and identifying his clothings, so it was good for corroboration. General description you could see that he had a ponytail and that he was white and thin, but you can't make out his face or mine. His face was locked in my brain, right? It's hard to get that down on paper when I don't have a picture of him. So I went in and did the sketch. The sketch artist was lovely. Sketches are what they are right? They're not supposed to be an exact likeness and it definitely wasn't, but it was a general description of him.

Then that was it, I took a leave of absence from work. I tried to go back initially (laughs). I'm laughing because it's so absurd. Looking back, we didn't know what we were doing. We were just beside ourselves, Marcus and I. We both have talked about me going back to work and said, "I don't know what we were thinking?" I think we were thinking we should maybe try to get back to normal, right?

Scott

Is it sort of kind of a, I don't want to say the word 'denial,' but was it a thinking of, "Maybe if I go back to work that means things are kind of getting back to normal?"

Kira

Yes. I don't think denial is a bad word. It carries a weird connotation sometimes but you do have a tendency to want to minimize it. Maybe it's just my own weird insecurities or feeling like, "Oh I'm being a drama queen. This is not that big of a deal." I don't know. You're just desperate to not feel the way that you feel. Questioning if you're doing that to yourself or if this is just how

people feel after something like this. Or thinking, "Am I just not working hard enough to feel better?" You just desperately want to feel normal.

I had just started that job and they gave me kind of a hard time about it. That was unfortunate and disappointing. Ultimately they ended up working with me on it because I don't think they had a choice because of the ways the laws are here. So they ended up putting me on a leave of absence. I tried to go back Monday. I tried to go back Tuesday. It didn't work out either day. It was after that we were like, "Alright, just stay home. It's time to just stay home." I think both of us were still, at that point, in shock. I was desperately scared. I was so scared.

I didn't talk about this a lot before but this life was so different for me. I was so happy living here in Oregon and sharing this life with Marcus. He's my best friend and I've never met a human like him in my whole life. He's the most beautiful person I've ever met. I was really happy. I wasn't really scared of anything, I had overcome a lot of fear. I kind of have high anxiety and wasn't letting myself experience a lot of life in Arizona. When I moved here that changed for me. I had become really adventurous and a lot more comfortable with strangers. People come up to me all the time on the street and it was fine with me. I felt untouchable, prior to this. It was an immediate shut down of all of that. You could almost just hear prison bars closing around you. Like you're immediately trapped in your brain about how fucking scary the world is. Every decision every time you leave the house is, "Is it worth it?" If I think nothing is going to happen and I'm wrong again, and I'm not lucky this time, then I'll die. The consequence is that someone is going to try to kill me. That fear is immediate, it is almost palpable like you can hold on to it. It feels like it changes the chemistry of your body, you just immediately change.

Anyway, I was scared and sitting at home staring at the door thinking about how unsafe our deadbolt is and how flimsy it is. That somebody could really come in here if they want to. I got into trauma counseling pretty quickly and that was helpful. After a couple of weeks after that initial shock wears off, you really do feel like, "I've gotta get back to living." Even though I wasn't, I still wasn't really going anywhere alone. I did have a beautiful friend at the time who was willing to go on adventures and indulge my anxiety and panic about people, and stay right with me or leave if I wanted to leave. I got to leave the house and live a little bit, monitored (laughs) or chaperoned.

Then 3 weeks after this happened my investigator called and said, "We made an arrest." I was shocked. I didn't even know that they were really looking. I had talked to him and he had told me that he was talking to patrol officers and they were going to release the sketch to the media at some point. Otherwise I hadn't heard anything. He called just out of the blue on the 27th of July, my attack happened on the 5th. He called and said they arrested somebody and he told me that the day prior to that on the 26th, the guy they arrested had attacked 2 women that were sleeping in an alcove; which happened to be about a block away from where I was working at the time. It's crazy. So they were sleeping in that alcove and one of them woke up with him on top of her with a knife to her throat, and he raped her. Her friend woke up and saw what was happening and pulled out her knife and they fought. He slammed her head on the concrete and her finger got cut up from grabbing his knife away from him. She grabbed it by the blade and got it away and he took off running. They were so brave.

So he had attacked these women and at the time I didn't know how, I've still never been told how they got his name although I've made educated guesses from things they've said. At the time I didn't know who he was or how they got his name. I'd never been shown any pictures or

anything, so he's just this guy and they arrested him and that's great. We went to the grand jury maybe 3 weeks after that on the 12th of August.

When I say we, it was me and those 2 other victims. We got to meet and have a couple of moments to love on each other and that was really special. I'm glad that no matter what else happened I got to have that experience. I think that was valuable for all of us. It was helpful for me to see them and know they were ok. I think it was helpful for them to see me and know I was ok. It was nice to share a hug with people who get it, who have been involved in really rotten trauma that's pretty similar. Even though our circumstances were not the same, we had really bonded. Bonded sounds trite maybe, or cliché, but it was bonding and that was lovely.

We went to the grand jury. They indicted him and held him. At some point, I really don't know the timeline, but I want to say within 2 weeks of the indictment they received a phone call from somebody who saw this guy's picture in the news. They said that it was the same person that had attacked them on the 25th of July. Which would mean there was my attack on the 5th, and attack on the 25th, the attack on the 2 women on the 26th, and then they arrested this guy on the 27th. So he would have been pretty busy those last couple of days.

I don't know anything about that victim, I just know that he approached her from behind and held a knife to her throat and raped her. They were able to get DNA from that attack, although it wasn't enough for a profile. They were able to get DNA from the knife and from one of the victims in the last attack, which matched each other and were for a male. So they have his DNA and that's great. It takes crime labs a long time to test DNA. There's still lots of rape cases, and not just sex crimes, but murder cases and assaults and other violent crimes that haven't been tested. So we were sort of expecting to just wait.

He was in jail and on bond, they had evidence but I didn't know what all the evidence was. So we were just waiting. Then a couple of months went by and in the end of October or beginning of November I got a phone call from the deputy district attorney that was prosecuting the case. He told me they had a big problem. He told me they came upon some new video. The guy's defense attorney was able to get video from his apartment, the person that they arrested, that seemed to eliminate the possibility that he could have committed the last 2 attacks. It basically showed him entering before the attack on the 25th and not leaving until after the attack on the 26th. Unfortunately it had been too long and the video from the night of my attack was deleted. So there was no way to know what the guy they arrested was doing on the night of my attack.

They assume all 3 attacks were related because of a lot of reasons, some things I probably don't even know about, but mostly description and proximity and similarity of crime. They told me they rushed the DNA after they got this video. The crime lab said it didn't match him. So they let him go. They should've. He had been in jail for months and it wasn't him. We know for sure it wasn't him for the last 2. For mine, I suppose there's always a little bit of doubt, there's some things that make me think, "Gosh, that's really weird." But I don't think it's him. I don't think it's the guy they arrested. It could be I suppose, but we'll never know because we don't have DNA for mine and he wasn't the guy for the other 2 attacks. If we assume they're all connected then he's not the guy for mine. It's sort of hard to say for sure.

Scott

That's got to be pretty disappointing. You think they got this guy, now all of the sudden you're back to square one.

Kira

Yeah. I didn't feel a ton better when they arrested him at that point. It all happened so fast and I was so scared. You're not just scared of him, you're scared of everyone. I was so stressed I was just raw from the anxiety and the despair of having experienced that kind of a trauma. With the idea of a trial, I kept thinking of a defense attorney cross examining me and trying to shame me or lying or asking me invasive questions. It all seemed really intimidating to have to do all of that. Knowing that he is real and being able to see him and feel like that guy won't be able to hurt anybody else; that being taken away was really disappointing. I don't understand how they were so confident that this was the guy and then it definitely wasn't. I don't know what evidence they have because it's an open case and they won't share it with me. I will just probably never know. The statute of limitations will probably run out in my case. They've said, "If we don't solve it and the statute of limitation runs out, then at that point we can talk about releasing evidence and documents to you." Until that point they're not going to give me anything. So I don't know.

Scott

How long is the statute of limitations on something like this?

Kira

My old investigator retired. My new investigator told me that he believed it was 12 years. I'm saying that, but I may have just looked that up so don't quote me on that. 12 years is the number I have but I honestly don't remember where I got that information. It's not forever. The crime that they charged the initial guy with was not an attempted murder charge, because he didn't hurt me, it was a sex assault I think or sex abuse. It's a serious felony and carries a hefty bond and prison term. They also charged him with assault with a weapon. Those aren't lifetime statutes of limitations though. They're 8, 10 or 12 years at best and it might even be shorter than that.

Scott

Have you kind of resolved in your mind that it's just not going to be solved? That you just gotta get on with things? Or where are you at?

Kira

That's a moving target. This whole thing is such a process and there is so much going on that you have to deal with. The weight of it all gets really heavy sometimes. There are times where I just cannot take another second of thinking about that guy or why he isn't in jail or how unfair it is. I just can't take it anymore so I'll just think, "I don't care." I'll go through my process of rationalizing why it makes sense that they can't find him and why I can still have a good life even if they don't find him. How I can still feel that I can get my needs met in the arena of healing without that being a part of it. My healing doesn't have to be dependent on them finding him.

Other times I don't feel like that. I think, "He's out there hurting people." He's a serial sex offender, so what if he kills somebody? The weight of that is also heavy and it renews my interest in wanting to get his face out there and getting in front of people and talking about it so they find this guy. I know people say this all the time, but it could be you. It could be you. You think it's not going to happen because you don't live a high risk lifestyle, you're not a criminal, you don't buy or sell drugs, you're not a sex worker, you're not a marginalized person, you're not living on the street, you're not hanging out with people that put you in danger. There's lots of reasons why people think it's not going to be them. I don't do any of those things either. I'm just a regular person with a job and a person that I love very much and a life that I love very much. It

just happens so fast and it happens even when you're certain that it couldn't possibly or wouldn't possibly happen to you. I don't want that to happen to somebody that I love or to anybody.

Justice is sort of whatever, I mean, is there justice for this? Is putting this guy in jail justice? I don't know. My feelings on that are also kind of evolving. I don't know. I do know that he's dangerous. I also want to see him. He's just a ghost right now. He's just some guy that I'm telling a story about and I don't know how to explain it, it just feels like it's dissipating. It started out as this big ball of energy and trauma with me saying, "Oh god there's this guy and he's this horrible bad man and we're going to find him and put him in jail." Now it's just sort of like, "Gosh, so sorry that happened. There's lots of unsolved crimes out there. Yours is going on the shelf with all the rest of them." There's also sort of a, "Yeah, yeah. You got attacked." Nobody says that, but there's just a fear. I want to see him without a knife. I want to have him in front of me and be able to say, "Ok, he's just a man. He's just a guy. He's a wounded guy, a broken guy, an unhealthy guy, he's a violent guy. I don't know what's wrong with that guy but he's just a guy." There's some validation and some comfort I think, that would come from seeing him, knowing he exists and him not being able to hurt me.

Scott

For other victims, what suggestions would you make about how they can put their life together after something like this happens?

Kira

I think that's going to vary so much from person to person. I think 6 months ago and 8 months ago; at every marker I've thought, "Wow I'm so much further past it. Any day now it'll just go back to normal. My life will be back together." I'm doing all this work and going to therapy and I'm trying to be kind and honest with myself. I'm trying to heal from other things, just all the baggage that we all carry around from whatever, childhoods or life or whatever. I'm really trying to put some work in. I think it's going to be different for everybody.

I know I benefited quite a bit from doing the things that I really loved to do, in a more controlled way in the beginning. For example, I really liked to go on little drives and road trips to go hiking and camping and go to the coast. That looked different after. I got really scared to go to any place that wasn't home (laughs). I cannot stress enough that I was so lucky to have a very small group of friends who knew how to get me in those places and sacrifice for me. They would do those kinds of adventures in a less jovial way. It was all sort of an experiment, "Can I handle going out around people? I guess we're going to drive 2 hours and find out." They were willing to do it with me. So doing the things that you want to do in a way that makes you feel safe.

I think talking to somebody too. It's not that talking to somebody fixes it immediately right? Maybe you got sexually assaulted in college or maybe somebody hurt you in your 20s and your years or decades past it and you've never told anybody. It's not that telling somebody is going to fix it, but it just releases and makes you feel like you're not carrying it by yourself. It demystifies it a little bit.

Scott

I can understand that.

Kira

Ultimately I wanted to get back to living. Everybody's goal is different. Some people might say, "I just want to feel safe walking in my neighborhood." That's the thing they want to accomplish. So their journey might look different from mine. I had a desire to go out and live in whatever way I wanted. There was a sense of wanting. I still do, I shouldn't talk in the past tense, I still have a desire to do whatever I want to do. To get in the car or go for a walk or go camping. To do whatever I feel like doing, alone, without worrying about my safety. It's really frustrating. It's like a giant giant bag that I have to take everywhere that's so heavy and so frustrating. I wanted to get out there and live. Big steps for me were going skydiving. I'd always wanted to go skydiving and I'd never done it. I was like, "Well, might as well right? I'm not going to be any more scared than I've already been." That's actually not true. I was terrified.

Scott
(laughs)

Kira
It's terrifying.

Scott
Well it's supposed to be right?

Kira
Yes, but it was liberating too. I chose it, it was a fear that I chose, and that was really empowering. Doing something scary, that's actually scary, and accomplishing it. That was a huge step. Then back in September or October of this year, I went camping alone for 2 nights, which was huge for me. I'd never done that before in my life, gone alone, certainly not since this attack. That was very empowering.

Scott
Wow. That is pretty impressive.

Kira
I know lots of people go camping alone, but give the-

Scott
A lot of people don't too (laughs).

Kira
Yeah I know (laughs). Yeah, given the circumstances it felt good. I have a tendency to want to say, "We're all gonna get through it and you can get through it. You just gotta take care of yourself and you'll be ok." That's not always true. I'm a year and a half in and I am currently, actively right now, depressed over it. PTSD is real. It ebbs and it flows.

I think maybe the most important thing is to really be patient with yourself. Accept that the way you feel today is probably not how you're going to feel tomorrow, or in a month. Allow it to be a fluid process. Don't decide immediately how you feel and how you're always going to feel. Let yourself go through the journey and take really good care of yourself. Do whatever that looks like. If that means cutting somebody out of your life that isn't good for you, do it. If that means eating more cookies because they sound delicious, then eat more cookies. It's self care. If all you can do is get out of bed and order pizza and watch Netflix for 2 weeks, then I guess that's what you've got to do to take care of yourself. Be patient. Be kind. Talk to somebody, reach out.

You don't have to talk to a therapist if you don't want to go to therapy. You don't have to report it to the cops if you don't want to go to the cops.

There's lots of local and national resources and I have an email address for victims of violent crime, so you can reach out to that and tell me. If you don't want me to email you back just write, "I don't want you to email me back." You can just tell me your story because you just want to talk. That's fine.

Scott

What is that email address, just so people know?

Kira

Its violentcrimesurvivors@gmail.com.

Scott

We'll have that in the show notes as well. Have you spoken with the operator from the Noonlight app that you were on the phone with that night?

Kira

I did! That company is so gracious. They connected me with her pretty early on, maybe a couple months after this happened. We got to spend a while on the phone and share and swap our stories and relive the whole thing. I think that was therapeutic for her to be able to talk about her fear and how it impacted her. It was really helpful for me. I felt like she saved my life and was a hero. I think I told her, "I hope you go home and tell your family that they need to buy you a cake and give you whatever you want tonight. You're a hero." She was so lovely and kind, just as much as she was the night that helped me as the night we reconnected, but certainly calmer. We could actually have a conversation, which was great.

Scott

I could imagine from her standpoint, it's like 911 operators, they're on the call and then they hang up when the police arrive. So they may not always know how a situation ends up or how it turns out. She's probably in a similar situation. I know a lot of the calls they get are probably false alarms, but being able to talk to you after such a traumatic experience and hear your voice and know that you survived and that she had a hand in that. That had to be pretty gratifying for her.

Kira

I hope so. It certainly was for me, granted I have a different perspective. I really hope it was. I hope someday she can hear this and go, "I really did impact somebody's life." Genuinely, I'll never forget her or her voice, she's a permanent part of my story. She's just got such a little spot in my heart. She's one of the heroes of this story, there's not a lot of them. I cannot say enough nice things, she'll be with me forever.

If you're interested in the Noonlight app, it's available free for both iPhone and Android. You can get more information at Noonlight.com.

And as I mentioned at the beginning of this episode, this discussion of fear was a big topic recently in the Facebook group. This is the kind of thing we talk about, and we'd love to have you join us there! Right now we have over 900 podcast listeners in there, and we'll have 1000 pretty soon. You can join us there at WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook.

So, I asked the question, "What's the most scared you've ever been?" and this is what people had to say:

Voicemail Audio

Anne

Hi, my name is Anne. The most scared I have ever been was when I was taking a shower and heard a noise. I threw on a towel to go investigate and found a strange man in my apartment with a crowbar in his hand. I screamed and he took off. I was very luckily unharmed. However, it terrified me and it took quite a long time until I felt comfortable being home alone. I will never forget that feeling and hope to never experience it again. Thank you.

Erin

My name is Erin. The day that I was most afraid was the day my sister was murdered. Her ex boyfriend was still on the loose and I was afraid that he would find the rest of us and do the same. Luckily, the police caught him 3 days later at his mom's house.

Jennifer

Hi everyone, or What Was That Like podcast, my name is Jennifer. If you're a fan of the show you might have heard my story in episode 1 where I shared one of the scariest times in my life, still to this day. That night and many moments after that pertaining to that situation. But I wanted to share something that was a little bit more light hearted. When my husband and I were first married, we had just come back from our honeymoon, and we were awakened in the middle of the night by a very loud sound. We thought the window was breaking. We jumped out of bed and ran in the closet and called 911. I remember the operator talking to my husband and saying all the things like, "Calm your wife down. Try to be quiet. The police are on their way, they're going to help you." They asked about our pets and I started crying thinking they may have hurt our pets. Finally the operator said, "The police are there and it's safe to come out." So here we were in our early 20s, very newly married and I'm walking behind my husband, who was embracing a tennis racket, which was the only weapon he had to defend me. We were walking to the door and in came the police. I burst into tears with relief. They said, "Your home is secure." Then out of nowhere we heard this, "Boom boom boom." Everybody kind of jumped, including the police officers. Then we realized it was a 'Welcome Home' balloon that was causing this. It had become wrapped up in the fan and it sounded exactly like broken glass. So of course, the dogs were barking, I was crying, the police officers were shocked and laughing with us. That is the story of something that was very scary but actually turned out to be nothing. It's a great story.

Jennifer

Hi, I'm Jennifer Smith. I'm calling about a time where I had to make a difficult decision. I was pregnant with my third child and I was having some health issues. I went to the hospital. I was having a little trouble breathing, my oxygen went down and I was fainting. They were rushing me to CT because they were worried I had a pulmonary embolism. They had asked me, "You have to decide right now, if we can only save one of you, you or your child, who do you want to save?" With 2 other children, I wanted to save myself. As much as I wanted that third child and would be devastated to lose her, I couldn't leave my other 2 children without a mother. So I said, "Save me." Well, fortunately I did not have a pulmonary embolism. They could not tell me or find out why I was having trouble breathing or why I was fainting. They kept me in the hospital, put me on oxygen and I improved. Everything was fine and I went to full term with my child, gave

birth to her and she is almost 9 years old now. It was very difficult to choose that. I thought being asked that question I would always choose my child, but I just could not choose to leave my children without a mother. Thankfully it all worked out ok.

Cathy

My name is Cathy. The most scared I've ever been was when at age 11 my father started waving his pistol around telling my sister and I that he wanted us to watch him shoot himself. I grabbed my sister's hand and we went into the bathroom where we crouched down in the bathtub, my thinking being that if the gun went off, the bullet would ricochet off the tub.

Lily

Hey Scott, this is Lily calling. Lily from Islip, New York. I'm responding to your question on Facebook about the scariest moment I've ever had. What comes to mind is the day that the World Trade Center bombing occurred. I worked 3 blocks from the World Trade Center. When the second plane hit the World Trade Center, at the moment I knew it was a terrorist attack, that had to be the scariest moment for me.

Female Voice

The most scared I remember being is in the recent past from 2018. I was out on State Road 60 in Brandon and I had missed a turn heading east on 60. I turned onto a side street to head back east and the traffic was really piled up. It's a 6 lane traffic state road. I remember thinking to myself, "Just turn right and make a U-turn." I didn't listen. A woman in a Toyota Corolla was heading east and was crossing traffic to get onto the side street which I was on, which was to the north. 2 lanes of traffic were stopped for her to go, the third lane of traffic was not stopped. A Dodge Magnum plowed into her, pushed her Toyota Corolla into my VW and pushed me all the way over off the street. I remember seeing it happening, I remember thinking something bad would happen, and it did. I remember hearing the tires squealing and being trapped in my car. That's the most scared that I remember being in the recent past.

Linda

My name's Linda. I was 16 years old working my first job as a receptionist for a very sketchy floor cleaning and limo service. This was in 1982 in southern California. One day at work, just out of the blue, our office was raided by a SWAT team that barged in with their guns drawn. It was so scary. I knew the owner was dealing very large quantities of cocaine but I was so terrified to say anything. I wasn't arrested, just questioned, and they released me. So I went home and never said a word to anybody about it.

Female Voice

I was in university, renting a basement apartment and about to leave for class, when I heard the dog upstairs go berserk and a loud metal clanging. I knew the woman who lived upstairs alone was at work, but it sounded like someone was throwing the pans and dishes out of the cupboards. At first I didn't think much of it, but the weird thing was that I didn't hear any voices. It kept going on for over 10 minutes. I got really scared because I thought there was a robbery going on upstairs and the dog was trying to alert me. I grabbed a kitchen knife and my cat and locked myself in my room and called the police. They showed up within minutes and searched the upstairs but didn't find anything. They did see the dog's bowls overturned. We figured the dog was just spooked by something outside the window and was banging his dishes around. I hope that's all it was. I felt pretty dumb for calling the police, but it turned out the policeman lived across the street. So, basically, I just gave him an excuse to take a long lunch.

Female Voice

In 2002 I was pregnant with my second child I planned to name Emily. At 36 weeks my water broke, and I began hemorrhaging large blood clots. Luckily we lived just 5 minutes from the hospital. We raced to the hospital as quickly as we could. After we arrived, I could see the fear in the eyes of the hospital staff as they began assessing me. They brought the ultrasound machine in so they could hear the baby and hear her heartbeat. The nurse put the wand on my belly and it was total silence in the room. I was terrified. Finally, after a terrifying 30 seconds or so, we heard the heartbeat. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. My doctor arrived and I was rushed to the OR. I can still remember how fast the gurney was moving. My doctor was running alongside it. It looked like a scene from a movie, but this was no movie, this was real life and this was me and my baby. I had no idea if my baby would survive. I was bleeding so heavily I didn't know if I would even survive. I was placed on anesthesia and the next thing I remember was waking up in a hospital room. I opened my eyes and with a croaky voice whispered, "Emily?" My husband said, "She's ok. She made it." We later found out I had had a placental abruption. Most baby's do not survive this. 18 years later, I still call her my miracle baby.

Nicole

Hi, my name's Nicole. The most scared I've ever been was back in May when my husband and I both had Covid-19. My case was moderate, it was pretty terrible, but I didn't need to be hospitalized. My husband, age 45 with no pre-existing conditions, needed to be hospitalized. About a day into his stay there, he called me because he had come to terms with death and thought he would die, and called me to say goodbye. Thankfully, he made it. The doctors gave him Nitric Oxide instead of intubating him and putting him on a ventilator, and that worked for him. He's still here, for which I am very grateful, but that was very scary and still dealing with the psychological fallout months later. I love him and I'm glad he's here.

Female Voice

A couple months ago I was home with my 6 year old and my 3 year old while my husband was at work. It was about 10:30 at night, the kids were in bed and I was also in my bedroom upstairs. I heard our sliding glass door open downstairs. I assumed it was my husband coming home from work and listened for the sounds of him coming in and coming upstairs, but I didn't hear that. So I started to get a little nervous. I called him and said, "Where are you?" He said, "I'm on -" and named the road it takes to get home. I said, "I just heard somebody open the door downstairs." He said, "Do you need to call the police?" I said, "Yes." I hung up on him and called 911. I told the dispatcher, "I'm home alone with my kids and I think somebody just came into my house." I was in a full panic at this point. I told the dispatcher that this was my worst nightmare, somebody coming into my house when I'm alone with my kids. My hands started to go numb and I was just absolutely freaking out. It probably took the police about 10 minutes to get here. During that time I swore I heard footsteps downstairs. The dispatcher was saying, "Everybody is on the way. Just lock yourself in a room." I didn't know what to do about my kids because I didn't feel like I could safely and quietly get them out of their rooms and into the bathroom with me. I just left them in their rooms and hoped to not draw attention to them. I don't know if that was the right decision or not. Eventually the police got there and I saw them outside with their flashlights. They looked all around the outside of my house. They looked inside the windows. Eventually the dispatcher told me it was safe to go downstairs and let them in. I did, and they looked all around the inside of my house and basement. They didn't find anyone. Eventually they left and my husband came home. I calmed down enough to go to sleep. The next morning, inside my sliding glass door, I saw a package from Amazon. I felt kind of stupid causing all that drama for an Amazon delivery, but who expects Amazon to deliver a package inside your house at 10:30 at night. So that's my only defense.

Rhonda

Hi, my name is Rhonda. I guess the scariest time that I can remember in my life was when I had to have some vertebrae fused in my neck because of some disks that collapsed in my cervical spine. When I first woke up from my surgery, the surgeon happened to be there and the first thing I can remember him saying was how sorry he was. For that first minute, all I could think of was that I was paralyzed. I guess he saw the fear in my eyes because he then explained that he was apologizing for the extreme bruising that was done to my shoulders during the surgery, the actual surgery went well.

Female Voice

My son was about 15 months old at the time and he was my only child then. We had just gone out to lunch with my best friend and when we got home I put him down for a nap. I heard him waking up and I went in to change his diaper. All of the sudden his eyes rolled back in his head and he started seizing. His eyes glazed over and his whole body was just jerking over and over again. I put him on my bed and called 911. As I was giving them my address and telling them what was happening, his lips started turning blue. He was breathing but he wasn't breathing right. It was noisy and you could tell that it wasn't right. I remember saying over and over again, "I don't know why this is happening." I also remember my hands started going numb from that fight or flight response. The paramedics got there really quickly, I think it was under 5 minutes. I don't remember exactly the moment he stopped seizing, but by the time the paramedics came in the house, the jerking had stopped and he started breathing a little more normally. They took his temperature and I was surprised when they told me he had a fever, because he had been completely fine before I put him down for a nap. They had me get his carseat to put him in the ambulance. During that time he was fully coming to. In the ambulance he started crying and that was a huge relief. By the time we got to the hospital he was acting mostly normal. They evaluated him at the hospital to see if there was any treatable reason for the fever, and there wasn't. They said it was just a virus and that was pretty much it. They told us he had a virus and they sent us home. What I know now that I didn't know then, is that febrile seizures are very common in young children. A common misconception is that they're caused by a high fever when really it's a quick spike to the fever. The whole time he had that episode his fever never got above 102. My son is a rare case in that he was eventually diagnosed with epilepsy. I've witnessed more seizures since that day, and even though I know what's happening and why, they're still always very very scary. Thankfully now he's doing really really well.

Shelly

Hi this is Shelly from Darby in the UK. When my son was around 8 months old we'd put him to bed for the night. I was sitting on the couch with my husband when we heard him cry through the baby monitor. We had a couple seconds of the usual, "Oh it's your turn to go to him." Until I heard a change in his cry which terrified me. I ran upstairs to his room as fast as I could to find him purple and hanging from his neck in his crib from the cord that ran up the back of the Roman blind. I let out the most ungodly sound which frightened his dad so much that he froze, unable to come and check on us. I picked up my baby, took the cord off from around his neck and saw the color instantly return to his face. With a cuddle he stopped crying pretty quickly too. That night we tore the blind down. With me checking on him very often. He just thought it was playtime with a big smile on his face whilst his dad and I had experienced the most terrifying time of our lives.

Sue

Hi Scott, it's Sue. The most scared I ever have been was during my skydiving accident. As I was descending to the ground my parachute didn't open appropriately. I wasn't sure whether I was going to live or die. I saw my daughter's life flash before my eyes. Well, I lived, but that was the most scared I was.

Female Voice

I used to work in a remote and coding center for the Post Office. Basically a gutted out grocery store and they had all these desks in there. You could probably fit about 400-500 people at all the desks. One night while we were working, I worked the night shift from 5:30-11 or 12, when all of the sudden I heard one of the supervisors yell, "Gun!" I could see her and she went running through another door. Other supervisors started coming around the floor telling us we needed to get under our desks. So we did. I remember the girl next to me, she was smaller and she climbed under her desk and was pulling her chair in with her. I was thinking I was kind of exposed because I didn't know if I could fit, plus I tucked my chair in before I got down. She actually did fire her gun. She never made it inside the building though even though it was all glass doors. She didn't shoot at the door, she shot into the ceiling of a patio covering that was outside. The police were called and I think somebody told her they had called, so she took off. There's a mobile home park kind of behind where we were. It was thought that she had run back in there. It took the police a while to find her, but they did finally find her and arrested her. Turns out she was somebody who had worked there before. She quit and tried to come back and they wouldn't hire her back. So she was really upset.

Female Voice

The most scared that I've been was when a stranger at work attacked me when I was 17 weeks pregnant. Out of the blue while I was walking on my way to the office. I didn't look pregnant but I had to be rushed to the hospital. They thought I miscarried because they couldn't find our baby's heartbeat. After a few tests and a few hours later, they found her heartbeat. The attack was scary and the possibility of losing our miracle baby was terrifying.

I hope you enjoyed that. And I love hearing from you! If you'd like to call in and leave a voicemail for the podcast, you can do that by calling 727-386-9468 anytime day or night.

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