

Episode 131: Jacqueline was attacked by dogs

It's hard for me to imagine not loving dogs. But that's the way some people are, and it's usually pretty easy to spot someone like that.

I remember one time we were visiting my parents and of course we brought our two little Yorkies with us because they like to go everywhere we go. They are Lilly and Fenway. And Fenway is a little guy, only about 7 pounds, and he is the social one. He just loves to meet new people, and of course he just charms everyone with his cute little face.

Well, not everyone. This time we were at my parents' house, and they had some friends of theirs over at the same time. The man was sitting on the couch, you know, everyone was just chatting. And Fenway just goes over and jumps up on the man's lap, like he does with everyone. Now, if that happened to me, I'd love it, because "oh cool, this dog likes me!". But this man didn't have that reaction. He kind of froze, he pulled his hands back, and the expression on his face was "um, okay, what do I do now?". I just found it kind of amusing that someone could react to a friendly little dog that way. But I went and picked Fenway up, and he was probably a little confused because that's not the typical reaction. But I understand, not everyone loves dogs like we do.

My guest today is Jacqueline, and she's like me – a big fan of dogs. In fact, she was working as a dogsitter, and she loved doing that because she got to meet new dogs all the time. So dogs were a big thing in her life.

But there was one day, when the thing she loved so much almost cost her her life.

Scott

How have you always loved dogs?

Jacqueline

I have - since I could remember. I would basically just say that I was born to love dogs because, when I was young, my dad had a golden retriever and I was told that I would just sit up, stare at her, and lay on her. I was about a year and a half when she passed away. Ever since I saw her, I was mesmerized by dogs.

Scott

I think a lot of people are that way. I'm a dog person too. My listeners may get tired of hearing me say that, but it's just true. I love dogs. So let's talk about when this happened. What was your life like at the time? You were almost 22, right? What was going on?

Jacqueline

I was just finishing up another semester of college at UT Dallas - I was studying supply chain. I was actually looking for an internship because it's required to graduate and it would be great to get that hands-on experience. I was really just focusing on school. My side job was dog-sitting and I've been doing this for seven years.

Scott

Was that as an employee of a company or just a side hustle that you started on your own?

Jacqueline

No, I actually started on my own.

Scott

How did you find clients for your dog-sitting business?

Jacqueline

From the word of mouth around town to the recommendations on the local Facebook group that we have. People would post, "Hey, I'm going out of town. I need a dog sitter. Get me recommendations of someone you know," and someone would either tag me in the comment and say, "She's great," or I would just take that step and message that person, "Hey, I saw your post. I'd love to help you out and dog-sit for you."

Scott

Yeah, personal recommendations for that are incredible because, I mean, you don't want to just hand your dog over to a stranger who you don't know anything about. But if someone has used you before and they can recommend you, that makes all the differences.

Jacqueline

Exactly.

Scott

You were hired for a dog-sitting job for these people. You went over and met the dogs previously. How did that go?

Jacqueline

I did. This is just something I always do with every client - it was what I call the "required meet and greet" - and it went well. I met the dogs and the owner, and we discussed the routine and everything. I was set to start on December 23rd.

Scott

And what kind of dogs were these?

Jacqueline

One was a Boxer mix and the other was a German Shepherd mix. There was another that I'm not sure of the breed, but that was not one that was attacking me.

Scott

So, two pretty big-sized dogs then?

Jacqueline

Yeah.

Scott

When you were there, did you have any concerns at all about their temperament or anything?

Jacqueline

Absolutely. That's what surprises me because they were so friendly and just sitting on the couch while I was talking to the owner. They weren't doing anything that would stark a concern at all.

Scott

Yeah. If there was a concern, I'm sure you would've probably brought it up.

Jacqueline

Absolutely. For sure.

Scott

You said this happened on December 23rd. As we record this, we're in January of 2023, so it's only been a little over a year since this happened. So the job that you were going to go back and do to dog-sit for these people— was it just for a few hours or was it going to be overnight?

Jacqueline

It was going to be a whole week.

Scott

Oh, okay. What happened on that day?

Jacqueline

On December 23, I had just gotten back from a vacation with Nathan, my boyfriend, and his family. We were discussing what we were going to do that night. We were going to do an early Christmas celebration with his family that evening after I checked on the dogs. So I left my house, went over to check on the dogs, and that's when everything happened. When I opened the door, two of the three dogs immediately attacked me. My glasses were thrown on the floor. My purse, my phone, my keys, and everything was knocked out of my hand. I was actually trying to call anybody on my watch, but I couldn't because the dogs were on top of me.

As things were happening and I was being attacked, I realized that they were literally tearing off my clothes. Every piece of clothing was off of me, probably, within three minutes - I'm not sure exactly how long but it was pretty quick. Then, they dragged me through the house from the front foyer to the living room. I was really in and out of consciousness and I do remember being attacked. I remember the day, for sure. But what I remember the most is just losing all hope of survival. What I was feeling while laying on that rug was, "I'm not going to see my family again. I didn't even get to say that I love them."

I don't know how much time had passed when I saw emergency lights reflecting on the wall as I was lying there. I suddenly stopped my excessive breathing and tried to conserve my oxygen. I heard a commotion outside. Officers or paramedics— I didn't know who it was. I just knew that, after seeing the lights, I was going to be rescued because, before they arrived, the neighborhood was completely quiet and I did not think that anyone was going to find me.

Scott

Did the attack continuously happen or did the dogs stop or get distracted by anything?

Jacqueline

They did get distracted once, I think. Because the front door was left open, the alarm was triggered and the owners got notified that the door is open. They were concerned about the dogs, so they called their neighbor and she went over to check on the house. Well, I guess, when she went to open the screen door, kind of, one of the dogs attacked her and that hurt in two places. The other time they were distracted was when the paramedics and police arrived.

They were barking out the front door and were less involved around me, I believe - I'm not sure because, at that point, I was losing a lot of blood and I just wasn't sure what the timeframe was.

Scott

With two good-sized dogs like this, it would be difficult for anyone to defend. I mean, you had nothing in your hands - you had nothing to fight with or anything. You are somewhat of a petite person to start with, so it was definitely an unfair fight at all. How did you try to defend?

Jacqueline

I was trying to scream. I didn't know how loud I was screaming because there was blood in my ear canals. It was like I was wearing noise-canceling headphones because I couldn't actually understand how loud it was with everything going on. I think I tried to fight them off with my arms and tried to pull them away from my face because once, they were tugging at my face, I was really concerned. They were tugging at my ears. I didn't realize that they ripped off my ears, but I remember them messing with my ears, for sure.

Scott

In a situation like that, there's a lot of adrenaline and, sometimes, adrenaline kind of shuts out the pain. How much pain were you feeling while this was happening?

Jacqueline

I was in a lot of pain. I remember, when they were attacking my left arm - which got a lot of damage - I thought my arm was broken. Little did I know they actually punctured an artery. So I was just lucky to still hang on to my arm and not have bled out. So I did another thing in pain, especially when they did certain places on my body that was very sensitive.

Scott

So the neighbor was able to get away and she called 911? Or did the alarm system alert the police when she ran back home?

Jacqueline

Luckily, she could get away. She told her husband to call 911 immediately for a dog bite. I'm not sure if she knew whether or not I was there. I think the owners might have said the dog sitter could be there. So when the police and paramedics arrived, there was an investigation of getting me out and dealing with the dogs. So yeah, the neighbor's husband called 911.

Scott

Once police arrived, it was another 30 minutes or more before they could get into the house because of the dogs. How did they finally get in or how did they finally rescue you?

Jacqueline

I believe they were distracting the dogs in the front, and I think they found a way to corner them - maybe put them in the kennel - I'm not certain. I know two or three of the paramedics were out in the backyard trying to get in from the back patio - that's how they were able to drag me out - through the back door.

Scott

And you were awake at that time?

Jacqueline

I was in and out of consciousness but, yeah, I think I understood that I was being put onto the gurney. I remember them talking to me to keep breathing. The last thing I remember before waking up in the hospital was being in the ambulance.

Scott

When you were taken to the hospital, you went straight into surgery, right? What was the priority surgery to save your life?

Jacqueline

They were trying to close up my face. They reattached my chin. There were a ton of wounds. I know that they did a ton of stitches and staples and probably did a lot of MRIs and x-rays, making sure that I didn't break anything, and that there was no brain damage. The main thing was just keeping me alive and stable because I was actually resuscitated four times.

Scott

How much blood did you lose from this?

Jacqueline

I believe I lost 30% of my blood. They put me in a medically-induced coma to help with the pain and also keep me stable, especially because my face was so messed up. I don't think they wanted a risk of causing an infection, somehow, by messing with my face when I was in pain. I was in for 8 days. When I woke up, I could barely see and I couldn't hear very well. Because I knew what had happened to me - I did not forget - I thought that the dogs messed up my eyes, my sight, and also my hearing, so I was really concerned. I think my nurses and my mom were telling me that you're okay. They were afraid to tell me what happened because they didn't know that I remembered. It was kind of a rollercoaster of events at the beginning because my family really didn't know how to handle it - knowing what had happened, knowing the severity, and not knowing how I would handle it.

I came to realize that my ears had sponges in them because my ear canals were messed up. There was scarring and contraction involved. What that means is, when something contracts, it tightens and closes up. They were trying to prevent my ear canals from closing up. However, my ear drums were not messed up. So the main thing was just keeping my ear canals open so that I could still hear. There was no issue with that regarding my eyes. There is no damage to my eyes. They had to continuously put gel and antibiotics in my eyes. My eyes were very swollen. I could barely see because they were swollen. The gel did not help because it caused blurriness and I did not have my glasses,

Scott

So they were still swollen 8 days later.

Jacqueline

Yeah.

Scott

What's it like to wake up and realize that more than a week has gone by? Was that pretty freaky?

Jacqueline

Yeah, it was because I was still convinced that it was still 2021. I had no idea that it was January. I think I was trying to tell my mom— I couldn't talk because I was on a ventilator. I was signing because I took sign language in high school for 2 years. So, ironically, I took a language that was actually helpful during this time. So I was signing to my mom, "Is it December 27th?" or something like that. She was like, "No, it's January, 2022." I was like, "No, it's not." It was just crazy to realize that I lost over a week since that happened.

Nathan

I got the news about the attack when I was at my aunt's house. We were planning on having an early Christmas dinner to celebrate with them.

Scott

Jacqueline's boyfriend, Nathan.

Nathan

I hadn't heard from Jacqueline in a while, so I was hoping that it was just that her phone had died. But when her sister called and told me that she hadn't heard from Jacqueline in a while, I began to be more worried because that meant that she wasn't at home or with her sister. When we had all sat down to eat dinner - my family and I were about to start - I received a call from Jacqueline's mother. She told me that she and John had just been visited by the Coppell police and was told that something had happened. She was on her way to a local hospital. From there, I got the address and went there that night. I went to visit Jacqueline in the hospital several days after she was admitted. When I went in, she was still in a coma, so I wasn't able to interact with her.

When I went in and saw her, her entire head was wrapped in bandages and casts, and it was really hard for me. I only knew what the plastic surgeon had told us at the time of her admittance on the night of the 23rd. Going in and seeing her— I was distraught, but I went in, took her hand, held her hand, talked to her, and read to her. I think I spent about 1.5 or 2 hours in the room with her. The memory is still very vivid to me. I remember how she was laying. I remember the sound of the EKG monitor - hearing the constant beep of her heartbeat. It was a very difficult experience, but I'm glad that I went in when I did and saw her.

Scott

As far as the extent of your injuries, you lost both ears, your nose, and your lips. How did they break that news to you?

Jacqueline

Once I was away from the coma, they had already created the foundation of my new nose, and that was bandaged up.

Scott

How did they do that?

Jacqueline

They took a skin flap from top of my forehead, turned it around, placed it where my nose was, and they created the foundation of it. It was a very flimsy piece of skin, so there was definitely work to be done there. I had no idea that had happened. So, to answer your question about how they broke the news to me, I don't think I processed it right away that I lost my nose. I thought that it was damaged, so I don't think I realized I actually lost my entire nose until I was probably

in rehab in the hospital. So, that was the last two weeks of my stay. Once my nose was uncovered and everything like that, that's when I realized, "Okay, that's new and different." So I think that's when I processed it.

Scott

Knowing that you had so much damage to your face and your head, were you nervous looking in a mirror for the first time?

Jacqueline

I was because I knew that I lost my ears, I lost my nose, and my cheeks and top lip were gone. I had no idea what I was going to look at - what was damaged and what was still there - so I was nervous. My family had discussed that they were all going to be in the hospital room when I decided to look. So they were all in there. They gave me a mirror. It was funny because I kind of made it comical. There was a yellow bandage on my nose - that's the first thing I noticed - so I said, "Wow, I look like I'm from Sesame Street because of that yellow character from Sesame Street." They just started laughing. I think that's when they knew that I was okay because I was still trying to be witty and funny, and trying to make light of things.

Scott

Is that how you often deal with serious situations - through humor?

Jacqueline

I think so. I think I kind of lean on that probably a little too much, but things happen.

Scott

Well, it's a good coping mechanism, I think. So they were able to take some skin from your forehead and put it on your nose to start the rebuilding of that. What's the plan for your ears?

Jacqueline

We talked to an NF-tologist that my surgeon recommended. We met with her and we found out that we didn't just have to start from the beginning, from scratch with a random ear lobe or something that looked more like nine years that they looked at pictures. So I think my dad had the idea of molding my sister's ears. In that initial appointment, we actually molded my sister's ears that day. So that's how we came to start the process at the ears.

Scott

So you and your sister are twins, in a sense?

Jacqueline

Yeah. We call it ear-twins.

Scott

Ear twins... I never heard of that before. I didn't even realize that is one of the options for dealing with something like this. That's a good idea though.

Jacqueline

Yeah. I mean, there are a ton of medical things that I had never known in the last 20 years that I was alive, but things changed in the last year. I definitely learned a lot and I don't regret learning any of this because it's very good information. I just wish this wasn't the circumstances.

Scott

You'd rather learn it from a textbook, right?

Jacqueline

For sure.

Scott

How has your sister helped you with this?

Jacqueline

she and I are really close in age, so that helps a lot. She has been through a lot of it. We laugh and hang out a lot and we just had this special dawn that I don't know how to explain. It's really just— what I call it is sisters by chance and best friends by choice because I'm just so lucky to call her my sister and be related to her. But the main thing is she is my best friend and I probably couldn't have gone through this as well as I did.

Scott

Now you have her ears too.

Jacqueline

Yeah. I'm really excited about that.

Scott

Can you talk about what's the plan for the reconstruction of your lips?

Jacqueline

They already did the surgery in July, 2022 for the foundation of my top lip and cheeks. In December, just last month, they also did the debulking surgery on one side of the skin flap. What that means is taking tissue out that is no longer needed because they added a lot more than they knew that they needed just to have something to work with. So the next step is to debulk the other side. Then, there will be shaping and contouring involved that comes a little bit later. The problem is, right now, I cannot connect my bottom lip to my new top lip at the moment because of the way I had to get my chin reattached - it kind of tie down my bottom lip, if you will.

So they'll have to go in the next couple of surgeries and kind of fix the bottom lip as well as, at the same time, helping with the top lip to kind of go further down. So eventually, I'll be able to seal my mouth shut again and close it. But he told me that the muscles in my chin and bottom lips need to be used a lot and exercised so that I can focus on making sure I can still do that once that surgery is done.

Scott

Yeah, it seems like the priority would be function and then, once that's taken care of, appearance. Is that kind of the way they're looking at it?

Jacqueline

Yes, for sure. And my surgeon is so good. He is a head and neck surgeon. He dealt with a lot of face cancers, so that's why he's very qualified to do reconstructive face surgeries. So I was very fortunate to meet him and be able to work with him because, just a side note, my initial surgeon

who was there for over a month of my hospital stay actually passed away after one of my surgeries a week later, so I had to get a new surgeon.

Scott

I want to ask you about your boyfriend, Nathan. When you first learned about your extensive injuries, were you worried that he was going to leave you?

Jacqueline

I was, and I was actually upfront with him. I was like, "Do you want to still be with me after all these changes and everything that I'm going through?" His response, which I'll never forget, was, "I'm not going anywhere. There's no place I'd rather be."

Scott

He had some health issues of his own and you stuck with him through that. Can you talk about what happened there?

Jacqueline

In 2020, he realized that he had a mass near his hip area and he told me about it. I said, "Okay, we need to get this checked out." So he went to his doctor and got surgery to get it removed, and kind of found out it was a synovial cell sarcoma, which is a rare type of cancer. That was a really hard diagnosis because, at that time, he was 22 years old. We had been dating for almost 2 years at that point. That was a lot to take in. I didn't know the prognosis. I had no idea what was to come. He started with radiation. Then, in 2021, he started chemo and I was there, basically, in every appointment that I could. I was doing online school because of the pandemic, so that helped me be able to be there for him. I think that our relationship has just taken to a whole new level of comfort and support for each other.

Scott

What intense loyalty you guys have for each other...

Jacqueline

Yeah.

Scott

And not just Nathan, but your parents - both your mom and your dad - and your sister have all been pretty big supporters throughout this

Jacqueline

For sure. My mom- I'll start with her. She was basically my 24/7 nurse when I didn't have my home health nurse come because the problem was- the home health nurse was great because I had a qualified nurse coming out and everything, but my mom had learned and kind of learned in the hospital how I need to be taken care of - my wound care, everything. I already felt comfortable with her - she's my mom. It just felt really good to be able to get taken care of by her because I've been taken care of by her for 23 years now. So it was pretty great. She is the most down-to-earth person in the world. My dad is a great support and he's been such a great help with everything. We've always had a really special bond and I really cherish that.

Scott

How many surgeries have you had now in the past year?

Jacqueline

I've had 18.

Scott

Have they given you any idea of when this will all be completed?

Jacqueline

In the very beginning, they said 1-3 more years. So, at this point, I would assume 1-2 more years of surgery.

Scott

Have you lost any friends because of this?

Jacqueline

Yes. I lost one of my closest friends that I had since high school, and it really breaks my heart because we were so close. We would laugh all the time. We had a bond that I just didn't have with anyone else. I don't know what happened, but the main thing is I don't blame either of us for the fallout. I think it was hard on both of us in different ways through the trauma and I think there's just room to grow. Maybe, one day we will reconnect.

Scott

I've heard people talk sometimes about— if someone gets diagnosed with serious cancer - like terminal cancer - sometimes, they never hear from their close friends again, which just sounds incredible. But I think people just don't know how to deal with it. They don't know what to say, and it's easier just to be absent. Does that sound like, kind of, maybe, what happened?

Jacqueline

For sure. It's just so unfortunate that's the reality of things when something really traumatic happens. I mean, even with what I went through with Nathan, he was afraid that I was going to leave too. When you have such a bond with somebody, whether it's a friend or a partner, you know whether or not you're going to be there to support that person. I think I would just always want to stick by that person's side.

Scott

That's when you need people the most.

Jacqueline

Exactly. I knew that I didn't always have to be strong for him, but being strong for him was also being strong for myself. I felt that if I could help him through it, I can help. We can all help each other through it. So I feel that's how we got through it - just pushing together.

Scott

What's it like when you go out in public now? How do people react when they see you?

Jacqueline

A lot of people - at least, around town - kind of recognize me. They'll either come out to me and say, "Hi, how are you doing?"

Scott

Because they've seen you on the news...

Jacqueline

Right. And there was a local fundraiser earlier last year, so our community came together and people got to meet me and talked to me and everything. The people who connected with my story and got to meet me keep a close eye on my story and how I'm doing, which I really appreciate in this community. Another thing is, when kids around, like, maybe, 12 and younger see me, they don't really know how to be sensitive, so it's a little difficult to deal it with because I'm an emotionally sensitive person. I don't blame the kids for being insensitive because they're still learning and they need to grow and everything, but I'll be asked something like, "What happened to your face?" or "What's wrong with you?" It just kind of catches you by surprise when someone says something in that way. I don't blame the kids for that.

Scott

When a child asks you that, do you have a standard response? How do you handle that?

Jacqueline

I stay very generic and I just say, "I had to have surgery on my face." The main reason is that if they have a dog at home or any pet, I don't want them to be afraid of that animal. I'd rather talk to the parent of that kid and be like, "Hey, this is what happened to me if you didn't know. I just want you to be able to explain that to your kid the way you want to so that I'm not the reason that they're scared of something."

Scott

Really, a parent should see that as an opportunity. It's a teaching moment on how to handle dealing with people in public - to be sensitive about that - because that's how kids learn.

Jacqueline

For sure.

Scott

Have you gotten therapy or counseling to help you deal with this psychologically, mentally, and emotionally?

Jacqueline

Absolutely. I am a huge advocate for therapy. I was already diagnosed with depression and anxiety before all this happened, so I was already seeing a psychiatrist, taking medicine and everything. Before that happened, I was more in the boat of, "Why do I have to take medicine? What's wrong with me?" Things like that. That's a lot of people's mentality. But I came to realize that, just because I have some type of chemical imbalance, that doesn't mean that there's something wrong with me to the point of people don't want to be around me and I did something wrong. That's the main thing. You can't blame yourself for something that you are born with or that you developed. So, after the attack, I continued going to therapy and I gained a lot of support because it was a certain type of therapy called EMDR. It's a way of processing emotions.

Scott

You're seeing me smile. I've had several past guests who have been through trauma, and they've all benefited greatly from EMDR therapy.

Jacqueline

That's great news.

Scott

Yeah. For anybody that hasn't tried it yet, give it a try. It's amazing.

Jacqueline

Absolutely.

Scott

December 23rd, 2022 was the 1-year anniversary of when this happened. And you made a YouTube video. Now, a lot of people who are thinking, "Okay, what should I talk about in this video?" could talk about all of the things that happened to you and how your life has changed and all of that. Your theme was gratitude. You thanked the first responders, the surgery teams, and everyone. That really says something about your outlook on this.

Jacqueline

I really just wanted a way of showing my appreciation. There are other ways that I was showing it. On my Instagram lives, I'll talk about it and everything. The main thing is I wanted something permanently out there to explain how I feel a year later and everyone who's helped me get through the last year. That was the main target. Who helped me in the last year get through this insane year of my life, and so I think that was the best way to tell everyone.

Scott

Your outlook is so positive. Have you always been like that or did you learn that from this experience?

Jacqueline

I was personally never this positive. I feel like I definitely dwelled on the negativity surrounding me. My brain was telling me, "That's how things go." Your brain tells you certain things that you don't want to hear that you believe, and you kind of just don't really want to believe what other people say, like compliments or something better than what you're telling yourself - whatever it is.

What I've learned from this past experience is I'm just so lucky to be alive and I got a second chance at life at 22 years old. I just want to live to the fullest because I don't feel like I was living to the fullest before. I feel like I was kind of dwelling on something that I shouldn't have and realizing that I could focus on much more important things. It has really helped my mental health because I'm happier and I'm helping others and it makes me happier to see that other people are learning from this as well.

Scott

Your nickname is "Tiger". How did that come about?

Jacqueline

I was still in the hospital. I actually still couldn't talk at that time. My dad and my sister were in my hospital room. My dad was talking to me and I would sign back, so my sister was kind of interpreting for my dad because he didn't pick up on any sign language. He was saying that I had the heart of a lion. After I heard that, I kind of gestured too, "No, I had the heart of a tiger." When I signed, I kind of put up a notion like a claw and I signed "Tiger". He knew exactly what I was saying when I put up that claw. So, ever since then, it was just kind of our thing of calling

me "Tiger" once it was established that I had the heart of a tiger. So my dad's best friend would text me every day and say, "Hey tiger, how are you?" and everything. So it just kind of became a thing. So, then I was "Tiger" Durand. So now, I don't really go by that publicly. I mean, people can call me Tiger and I'll answer to it. That's really just, like, a way of seeing me - like, my logo has a tiger and it says "Tiger" Durand and stuff. So I think that it's really just sending a message of, "I want you to know who I kind of am as a person without talking. "

Scott

Someone that doesn't give up. When faced with a challenge, you're going to fight.

Jacqueline

For sure.

Scott

What's next for you? Finishing school career? What do you have in mind?

Jacqueline

Actually, as we speak, a week from today, I will be starting school again after a year. I'm really anxious and really excited because I haven't really used my brain in an educational way in a whole year, so I'm really just excited to feel normal again being a college student and getting through it the way everyone else does.

Scott

Do you have plans for what you want to do after college?

Jacqueline

I definitely want to get my supply chain management degree back on, but I want to be a therapy dog trainer.

Scott

What's involved with that? ,

Jacqueline

It kind of starts out as obedience training. If a dog needs to be certified as a therapy dog, it has to pass the obedience training, which is ironic because, before this happened, that's kind of what I wanted to do - train for obedience and the basic stuff. So it made me feel really good when I found out that was the first step of becoming a therapy dog. I actually came in contact with a dog trainer who wanted to help certify me, and so I'm currently getting certified to be a dog trainer.

Scott

That would really be full circle from being attacked by dogs to now working with dogs as a job. But that sounds like it would be your dream job.

Jacqueline

I've always loved working with dogs. I've worked at kennel and training places before I was never able to be a trainer there. Now, I just get to follow my own path. My main goal is to do in-home training. I'll definitely be mindful of the breeds I come in contact with, but I plan on either breeding dogs or adopting dogs and sending them out to people who need therapy dogs.

Scott

Any plans for doing any public speaking about this or, maybe, writing a book?

Jacqueline

I do plan on writing a book. I've actually drafted a couple of chapters here and there. I do plan on doing that because I think that's the best way to tell my story and a way that people like to hear stories regarding public speaking. I would say that I could start doing that because my main goal, when I'm doing Instagram lives, is to help motivate people, tell them that it's going to be okay, and I'm there for them. Things like that. I would love to say the same thing, explain my story and how far I've come to a bigger audience. So, I do believe that I could start public speaking from this experience.

Scott

Well, you're starting with a big audience right now, that's for sure. What's the main message you want to get out from this story to everyone that hears this?

Jacqueline

There are a lot of things. The main thing is, "Whatever you're going through, you're not alone. I would love to be a person that supports you. No matter where you are in the world, no matter what you're going through, just know that I'm in your corner. If no one else, I'm in your corner. I hope that with all the strength you have in you, you'll fight through your pains and your issues that come up in life."

Scott

You've mentioned Instagram. You're on Instagram. That's probably your primary social media - is that right?

Jacqueline

For sure, yeah.

Scott

Okay. You've also got a YouTube channel. We'll have links to those in the show notes for this episode. The other thing is 18 surgeries. I mean, a lot of times, just one surgery is incredibly expensive, but 18 surgeries and still several more to go is just incredibly, unbelievably expensive. You've had a GoFundMe set up for you, so if anyone would like to contribute to that, I'll have the link for that as well and people can help and be part of your story.

Jacqueline

Yeah. Thank you so much.

Scott

If you want to see pictures of Jacqueline, before the attack and after, you can check out the show notes for this episode, at WhatWasThatLike.com/131.

And I want to thank Rachel, a What Was That Like listener, for contacting me about a year ago and letting me know about Jacqueline's story, because she thought it would be a good fit for the podcast. And she was right! So thanks, Rachel.

One of the questions I asked Jacqueline was if she had lost any friends because of the dog attack. And that might have seemed like an odd question, but as you heard Jacqueline say, that's what happened.

And it's unfortunately a common reaction. Jacqueline was injured so badly and her life was changed dramatically – if something like that happens to someone you know, what do you even say? How can you possibly help them with this huge problem they're facing?

Well, the fact of the matter is, they're probably not expecting you to solve their new problems. They know you're not going to fix it. They just want you to be there. You don't even have to say anything. Just the fact that you're there is enough. It's your willingness to listen.

That's really what I do here. A lot of the guests I have on have been through something really tragic or traumatic. And many of them have told me after our conversation that it was really helpful for them to tell the story. And what do I do? I just listen to them. I'm just another human who wants to deliberately sit and listen to them tell the story of what they experienced. And that's really all you need to do. That's what they need from you.

So if you have a friend who goes through something really terrible, don't just be absent. Listen to them. That's when they need you the most.

If you liked this episode, I've actually done several episodes about animal attacks. We've done stories about attacks by alligator, rattlesnake, grizzly bear, a shark, and even a monkey. Just look through the past episodes and you'll see them all there.

Graphics for this episode were created by Bob Bretz.

Full episode transcription was created by James Lai. And I highly recommend both of them if you need those services.

And now we're here at this week's Listener Story. If you have a story that you can tell in about 5 to 10 minutes, record it on your phone and email it to me. You just might hear your story in a future episode! My email is Scott@WhatWasThatLike.com.

And guess what – I have another bonus episode cooked up for you, so I'll see you back here in one week.

(Listener Story)

My boyfriend wets the bed almost every night - he has a kidney disorder - and he can't help it. But he also doesn't do anything to lessen the damage besides wearing adult diapers at night that don't work for him. We almost had to get rid of our couch and my mattress from a month's worth of damage. He's a great guy and everything's perfect except for this.

He had this problem since he was young. He doesn't seem to mind sleeping in his own urine or going places smelling like it, let alone having me sleep in it and smell like it. I'm almost always the one to clean it up, even after asking him to do it. All of our clothes smell like pee even after washing. I had to beg him to get the diapers, and he's too stubborn to buy a different brand even though the ones he has isn't so great.

When he doesn't sleep on the couch, 9 times out of 10, I would wake up soaked in his pee. Every time I mention it, he gets defensive or embarrassed. I thought I could handle it because, when I was spending the night at his house, it was only a few times that happened, but when he recently moved in with me, I realize it was almost every night. I don't know what to do and I feel like I can't tell anyone about this because I don't want anyone to see him differently and I love him. But this issue is putting me in a really tough spot.