

## **Episode 159: Danna was attacked by yellow jackets**

One of the things I really try hard to avoid is any flying, stinging insect.

When I was a little kid, we lived in a pretty rural area in central Ohio. We had a big yard so my brothers and I were outside playing all summer. And of course there were bees. I was old enough to know not to mess with them, but my next youngest brother, Steve, hadn't really learned that yet. So sometimes I would show him that nice little flying thing – a regular honey bee – and encourage him to go and catch it in his bare hands. And he did. The funny thing is, I don't remember him ever getting stung when he caught them. And whenever I saw something like that flying around, like a wasp or a hornet, I quickly left the area and found someplace else to play.

Steve did get stung in a few places once when we were camping though. He happened to step on a bumblebee nest in the ground, and they weren't too happy about that. He got stung a couple of times on his face so he was swollen up for a few hours. No allergic reaction though.

My guest today is Danna. She can tell you about getting stung. And it wasn't just her – her two kids, and their large dog were the targets of some pretty angry yellow jackets.

They're all okay now, but it was an afternoon of chaos.

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**Scott**

Have you ever been stung by a wasp or a bee or anything prior to this?

**Danna**

I have not.

**Scott**

I guess when you try something the first time, you just jump right in and go big, huh?

**Danna**

From head to toe, apparently.

**Scott**

I want people to be familiar with who were involved in this story - your family members. Who was there at the time?

**Danna**

My husband, Nick, was there. My son, Logan.

**Scott**

And Logan is how old?

**Danna**

Logan is 16.

**Scott**  
Okay.

**Danna**  
And our daughter, Aurora, who is 11.

**Scott**  
You also had a dog, Rocket.

**Danna**  
Rocket was with us.

**Scott**  
I love that name - Rocket. What kind of dog is Rocket?

**Danna**  
Rocket is a Goldendoodle.

**Scott**  
So, pretty good sized dog then.

**Danna**  
He's 70 pounds.

**Scott**  
Wow, okay. That's a good-sized dog. Aurora is Nick's daughter and Logan is your son, but you're all just one big family now.

**Danna**  
That is correct.

**Scott**  
And I understand, from what you told me, you're all in good shape and active. You guys run 5K races and you go hiking. So you're sort of an outdoorsy kind of family, it sounds like.

**Danna**  
We are. We're all very active. Nick and I and Logan have run 5Ks together. Logan plays soccer recreationally and for his high school. Nick and I both work out in the gym. I'm a personal trainer. And Aurora is just eleven, so she has the bottled energy of a yellow jacket, if you will.

**Scott**  
All right. Now you all live in Louisiana, but what we're talking about happened in North Carolina.

**Danna**  
Yes.

**Scott**  
Who's there?

**Danna**

My father, Tom, and his wife, Karen live there. It's very rural. They live in a small town outside of Asheville, North Carolina. It's a small plot of land that my stepmother, Karen's family has owned since her grandparents, great grandparents. It's been in the family for years, and it's a small little plot of land on a picturesque mountain right smack dab in the middle of nowhere. It's amazing.

**Scott**

It sounds amazing.

**Danna**

It is.

**Scott**

It's a 12-hour drive from your place to Tom and Karen's house on that mountain, and Nick left earlier.

**Danna**

Me, Logan, Aurora, and Rocket left on Saturday, following Nick who left earlier the Friday prior on his motorcycle and took off-road treks all the way there. So it took him two days and it took us 12 hours.

**Scott**

So he left before you, but he got there after you?

**Danna**

He actually beat us there by about an hour.

**Scott**

It sounds like he kind of had his own adventure before the family adventure started.

**Danna**

He sure did, and he absolutely loved it. If you knew him at all, you'd know it's just like him. He had a blast.

**Scott**

You guys left early Saturday morning and got there Saturday evening. Just take us through what happened then.

**Danna**

Saturday evening, we got there around 6 pm. Of course, everyone was, "Oh, hey, great to see you. Haven't seen you." I haven't seen them in over a year. We went out for dinner to a pizza joint and it was wonderful. We got back home Saturday night, kicked back a couple of beers - us adults - and then we went to sleep that night. Sunday was Nick and my one-year wedding anniversary, and my dad's 64th birthday.

**Scott**

So when you guys got married, did you— obviously you must have planned that, "Let's get married on my dad's birthday."

**Danna**

No, we didn't at all. We said, "Okay, this date works out. Does this date work out for you? Does this date work out for where we want to get married? Can we have everything ready by then?" And then I was like, "Oh shit, that's my dad's birthday." So I'll never forget my dad's birthday and I'll never forget our wedding anniversary.

**Scott**

All right. So you guys are celebrating. And what did you do that day?

**Danna**

We went shopping and went around. They have a small outlet mall. We just walked around the outlets. We went and ate sushi because my dad was adamant, "I want sushi for my birthday dinner." So we went to this small little sushi place that's in, like, this random shopping center. I think it had a Walmart in there and it was wonderful. We were all full to the gills. We went back home. We had been sitting around their house for maybe 15 or 20 minutes, when my dad said, "Hey, do y'all want to go hike up to the waterfalls behind the house? It's about a mile hike one way if you go all the way to the top." So we're like, "Oh yeah, fantastic. That's what we came here for. Let's go hiking." So we geared up and headed out the back door - my dad, me, Nick, Logan, Aurora, and Rocket ready to go.

**Scott**

What time was this? I mean, was it getting close to dark, or still had lots of time?

**Danna**

It was about 6.30 PM. It's the end of the summer, so it wasn't getting dark until around 8 or 8.30 at that point. Walking out the back door, you can get up to the top within about 25 to 30 minutes, depending on if you're walking at a normal pace or you're trying to keep up with my father, who is a machine.

**Scott**

Okay, good for him.

**Danna**

He is something else.

**Scott**

And how old is he again?

**Danna**

He turned 64 that day.

**Scott**

Can you describe this place that he called— you said it was called "the Falls."

**Danna**

Yes.

**Scott**

Can you describe what exactly— I mean, obviously it's a waterfall, but what is it? What's it like?

**Danna**

Once you arrive at the bottom of the falls, it's like a large, flat, slate-looking gray rock that water comes down in like a flat sheet, almost. Then, there's almost a cave where you can hike up behind that, underneath the waterfall. One of the guys that lives on the property has actually put a small wooden bench up there that you can go sit on underneath the waterfall.

**Scott**

That sounds like an amazing place to sit.

**Danna**

It is quite amazing. It'll give you chills and it's very cool there. Of course, you're up on a mountain anyway, but it's very cool. You've got the water just raining down in front of you. I mean, I've just never seen anything like it in my life.

**Scott**

So you guys all got geared up and did everyone go?

**Danna**

Everyone but Karen. My stepmom was nursing a small broken bone in the top of her foot. She normally would have come with us. So it was my dad, Nick, me, Logan, Aurora, and Rocket. So we went out the back door of my dad and Karen's house. Their backyard is grass. Off to the far right - which would kind of be looking like south - there are grassy trails that kind of go off. You take one of them and it turns to a dirt trail and you start to kind of go up, and then you arrive at this small pool. It's probably like a 10x10 foot pool that's about a foot deep and there's large gray rocks that you can walk out onto into the middle of this pool, where another waterfall kind of trickles down the side of, like, a wall - a rock wall. It's not an actual waterfall, if you will, but that's where it creates, kind of, the pool right there.

From there, if we hiked up a few more, I would say, maybe about 20 feet— and it's steps from there. It's like tree roots that are creating natural steps. So we're all just stepping up these steps. Then, you arrive at the bottom of the big waterfall with the large gray rock where the water spills over and rains down. You have the cave and the wooden bench right there. That's from where we could hike up and go up underneath the waterfall to the small bench. That little jaunt takes about two minutes to get up from there. I did not have my device on - my watch on - to show the elevation, but it is a trick. To get up on top of the waterfall, it's straight up. At some points, you've got to be on all fours to get up to that one.

We were standing at the bottom looking at the falls and my dad was, "Hey, let's go underneath it to the place where the little bench is." So we all go up there and we're there and we're looking out. At one point, I was down because they all went first. I wanted to get a picture. So, I took a picture of everybody except me. I don't think Rocket Rocket was with me. Take a picture of them. Then, I went ahead and hiked up. Then, from there, my dad said, "Let's go all the way to the top." So we're like, "Yeah, let's go all the way to the top." So we just start going up and it's, you have to go single file. There's not really a trail. So you're kind of trekking through brush and trees and there's these large ferns that are grown like you would kind of see in the Northwest. It almost looks like, I don't know, Oregon or something like that is kind of what I would describe.

So we were just going straight up. We got up to the top and then we were standing over looking down at the waterfall where we were just underneath it.

**Scott**

When you wrote this to me, you said you guys all got to the top and it was an emotional moment for you. Why is that?

**Danna**

I love the beach. I have an entire beach-sleeved nautical-themed tattooed arm. The beach is normally my happy place. We decided that the kids would have more fun if we went to see my dad and go hiking in the mountains. So just to be there with my husband and our children and see them just having so much fun enjoying nature, someplace that they'd never be able to see where we live, it was heartwarming. It almost made me cry. I was just so excited to see them having such a good time and being together with my family. It was just very heartwarming at that moment.

**Scott**

And then things changed.

**Danna**

Then things changed.

**Scott**

What was the first indication of a problem?

**Danna**

I felt something like a sting on my right hip, and I was like, "Ouch. Okay, I must've been stung by something. Obviously, we're in nature. Okay. I expect there to be stinging things here in the mountains, especially because this is, like, uncharted territory. We're not even on a trail up here." Aurora, at the same kind of moment, was like, "Yeah, something stung me on the shin of my leg." Okay. Again. Oh, well, you're not dying. I'm not dying. We're fine. We'll just keep rocking with it because my dad has no quit. He's like, "All right, y'all ready to go back down?" So we're like, okay.

So we started going back down. Since we were at the top of the falls where you had to basically crawl on all fours to get up there, we're now sliding down from there and we get down to the Big Falls where the bench is underneath of it. We're there. Okay, cool. Ready to go on back down. We got 20-30 feet back down to the pool where there were large gray jutting rocks everywhere. You can walk out onto it. It's wonderful.

Again, me and my dad, he's lived there since I was like - I don't know - 17. I've done this hike a million times -, well, not a million, but a lot. So we're letting the kids and the husband and the dog explore because my dad and I have done it all. So we're standing there and we're just kind of watching and I'm just again thinking how happy I am that my family's here and they're getting to see this because there's just nothing like this where we live.

**Scott**

I was thinking this must be like heaven for Rocket, the dog because he could just go exploring anywhere.

**Danna**

Yes. He's very well trained. I only walk him on a leash when it is stated that you have to. Otherwise, he walks right beside me. He's never a problem on trails. He will go and explore, but

not far. He doesn't ever go far, but he's jumping around these rocks and he's smelling all of the things and he's just in heaven. If you're a dog, I imagine that was heaven.

So my dad and I were standing there. He's kind of looking at me. "I'm so glad y'all came." I'm like, "Me too. This is wonderful." Then something hits my ankle and it stings. And I was like, "Oh my gosh." Well, I looked down and I saw a flash of - I don't know - black and yellow. I thought, "Okay, it should be okay, whatever. Didn't sting me." Immediately, to my right, Rocket started to sneeze and flail. I don't even know what he's doing at this point, but he's shaking so frantically and sneezing and batting at his face. I'm like, "Oh, maybe he's being stung by something." And then I'm like, "Oh shit, that's not something. That is a cloud of black demons sent here to kill us. We got to go."

Nick even confirmed after I asked him— I didn't say audibly. I just grabbed Rocket and took off running and took the swarm with me. I didn't know what they were. I just knew they were flying, stinging insects, stinging my dog, and "How dare they!" Now, they're stinging me and we're running full sprint down this treacherous trail that we had to do the big step-ups and stuff to get out. It wasn't an easy trek in the first place.

**Scott**

How are you running with him? You weren't carrying him, right?

**Danna**

No. So he wears a harness. He doesn't wear a collar. So I had his harness in my right hand and I was dragging him because he's still trying to get them off of his face, whatever it is. I was swatting them away from my head, but yes, I was dragging him by his harness, being stung all in the meantime also.

**Scott**

So that's got to be confusing for him. I mean, he's having the time of his life and then, all of a sudden, you're dragging him down the mountain and he's got to get this stuff off of him

**Danna**

And I'm swatting at his face. He's never been hit before. So he's like, "Why is mom hitting me? What is happening?" So he just keeps slowing down and cowering down. In the meantime, he was still trying to swat at his face. Then, I was swatting at his face. And he's just like, "You know what? I'm dead." He just laid down. At that moment, he was dead. He was going into anaphylactic shock. I have killed my dog. In the meantime, I am on fire. I know he's being stung by something, but it never really occurred to me that I'm being stung too. All I could think in my mind at that time was, "I'm on fire." What do you do when you're on fire? You stop, drop, and roll. I just dropped to the ground and started rolling. That did nothing for me, but it was all I could think of.

Then, here comes my husband. "Get up." And I was like, "Oh, okay." So I got up and he was like, "They're not going to leave you alone. We got to run." And I was like, "Okay, where are the kids?" And he was like, "They're coming." In the midst of all that, Rocket still won't get up. So I was calling for my dad, the mountain man, because surely he's going to know what to do. He came over there and he was like, "Come on, buddy, get up." We finally got him up. He still won't really run. I was still having to drag him.

It's kind of at that point where I was like - Nick and the kids have caught up with me and Rocket at this point - "Nick, you have to carry him. You have to carry this 70-pound dog. I'm freaking out because his legs aren't working. He can't walk. He's about to die. You got to carry him." So Nick scoops him up and carries him and all that's happening. I still can't really think straight because I still can't really grasp— like I know we're being stung, but we're still being stung. We're far away from where it all started. Why are we still being stung? My daughter, Aurora, was screaming. She's saying, "He's going to die. He's going to die." I think she just kind of fed off of my fear because I was afraid for my dog.

Then, in the middle of her just screaming out words, she's shouting too. Oh, she's being stung.

I didn't even think about it in the chaos. I didn't even realize my kids were being stung. A dog - okay. My children? What have I done? I left them. I took off running and left them. My children are being stung. Aurora's got them embedded in her. They're just all over her in her hair. She had a ponytail. It's down now. I mean, I don't even know what to do at this point. We kept running, I guess. Like, how long before we outrun whatever this hell is that's chasing us?

I have the dog leash - I always have it just in case. I have the dog leash in my hand. I begin to just recklessly flail this flimsy dog leash around. Like, what's that going to do? I didn't know. So I was kind of like rodeo rounding it above my head and it's doing nothing except the metal buckle clanking me in the face every time I try to hit something with it. So that does no good. I chucked that.

**Scott**

It sounds like all of your initial responses were the wrong things to do.

**Danna**

They were wrong. They were so wrong. At one point, I thought, "Maybe I need to run back up to that pool and just jump in the water," even though I knew in my mind that it was, like, a foot deep. Every scenario I came up with was absolutely 100% wrong, which can better attest to the fact that I have never been stung by anything before. I had absolutely no idea what to do. No clue. It was just complete chaos in my mind.

**Scott**

What about Logan? Was he being stung too or not?

**Danna**

I didn't even know who Logan was at that point until we're finally kind of back down at this point. Nick was carrying Rocket and Aurora's screaming. It just felt like electrical zaps. I was still being zapped all over the place. I kind of turned because I've accounted for Aurora, Rocket, and Nick. Where's Logan? I turned and Logan was kind of lazily jogging behind us almost with a smirk on his face, like, "Why is everybody running?" He just kind of sees everybody take off running and I guess he kind of starts to jog too. Then, there's my dad behind him just lazily jogging too, like, "Okay, let's just run back to the house."

**Scott**

So you get back to the house. What's the first thing you do?

**Danna**



We ran back to the house. We got back to the grassy area of the trail, and I sent Aurora— she's the smallest, most agile. I also feel like they're stinging her. She needs relief sooner than all of us. She's the youngest. She's more scared. I scream, "Aurora, run." She calls Karen "Mimi". "Run to Mimi and say Benadryl. She'll know what you're talking about." Karen's grown up on this mountain. She knows. She ran to the house, got inside the house, and found Mimi. Mimi doesn't have any Benadryl. So Aurora came back out the door. "She doesn't have any."

By this time, we're coming up on the back deck - all of us - and we got inside the house. Karen was looking at me like, "What happened?" We were all kind of shouting there. "It was bees. Bees were stinging us. They chased us." And she's like, "Okay. Aurora is thrashing on the floor at her hair." We didn't know the gravity of what was actually happening to her and she has long hair. If she is standing, it goes down past her elbows. She has really long pretty hair. They are all on her scalp. They're all stuck in her long hair. So, Karen and I begin to go— I've already forgotten about the other people in the story at this point. I'm just focused on Aurora now because she seems to be the one who's in the most distress. Rocket's now lying down next to us. So we're trying to get the bees out of her hair. Every time we free a bee from her hair, Logan and my dad are killing them because they're flying in the kitchen area where we're standing.

**Scott**

How are they killing them?

**Danna**

My dad has a shoe off. Logan has a shoe off. They're swatting at them. They're flying in the kitchen. They're flying on the walls. They're killing them as they see them. There were probably about 15 or 20 inside the house that 1) followed us in and 2) were on our person already when we came in.

**Scott**

It seems like it may have been better to do this outside on the deck instead of bringing them inside, would it?

**Danna**

I don't know. Every decision I'd made at that point was wrong, so I didn't know. I felt like my dad would have known best, but I didn't know to do anything except to come inside because I was also thinking of who was allergic to this. One of us is bound to be allergic to this, especially Rocket. Rocket got all of these little allergies, so I was afraid mostly for him. I feel like those little suckers chased us all the way to the back door. They don't have a screen door but, like, a storm door - it's like a glass door along with the regular door - they were on the back glass door, like, waiting for us to come back out there. They had chased us. My dad actually went back and clocked from where they started stinging us all the way back down and it was a quarter of a mile. They had chased us a quarter of a mile down a mountain, back to my dad's house, and we're now lying in wait on the back freaking door. It was just crazy.

**Scott**

You seriously pissed them off.

**Danna**

Oh Rocket— God loves him. Rocket pissed them off. The time that we were standing there, there's no telling how long he was just kind of standing over their nest. They probably would have left us alone had we recognized what was happening and just gotten the hell out of there,

but we were just kind of hanging out. Those little guys were like, “No, you're not. You're getting the hell out of here right now or—” yeah, they unleashed hell on us.

**Scott**

I would imagine if they're killing these things with their shoes— you guys weren't hiking in flip-flops.

**Danna**

No, we all had on heavy-duty trail shoes. They're knobby on the bottom. They're big trail shoes. And it rained a couple of days prior, so there's also mud being flung everywhere inside the house. Karen and my dad are, like I said, mountain people. We weren't really concerned about that. They're not really picky when it comes to things like that. Plus, we're in the middle of chaos. We're just slinging mud and bees everywhere.

**Scott**

You've got a triage. The most important thing gets taken care of first. They all finally got out of Aurora's hair?

**Danna**

We got them out of Aurora's hair. They're not in my hair anymore, but they had stung me on my head too. My hair's not nearly as thick and long as hers, so I guess they were able to sting me and then go, but they were stuck in her hair. Again, I'd never been stung by anything and I know what she was going through because I felt it. It felt like we were still being stung even after they were off of you. The effect still felt like, almost every time your heart would beat, you felt the sting again. So I know she was feeling that.

She and I both had little fanny pack type things on, so there was a couple that had gotten in there. They were on her little fanny pack. They kind of stung her on her back. So she chucks that - it's got her phone in it. Mine's got my phone in it. I've chucked mine. That point was when I thought, “Okay, everybody needs Benadryl. Karen doesn't have any, but I brought Benadryl.” For the dog's weight— he takes it on a daily basis just because he's so allergic to things. So, I gave the dog his rations. I popped a pill into each kid's mouth, popped one into my mouth, and then I could finally think straight for a moment.

I think this might've been the smartest decision I'd made for this whole time now. There are plenty of bathrooms with showers. So I told both the kids, “Both of you go - I don't care how bad it sucks - get in a cold shower.” Because the thing I'm thinking at this point is to close out those pores and let everything constrict and they won't hurt as bad. That was a great decision. I just had a stroke of genius with that. Both kids came out and they felt a hundred times better after they'd taken their cold shower.

**Scott**

How did Rocket do? Did Benadryl take care of him?

**Danna**

The Benadryl— it seemed to do okay. I think he was just still really scared. In hindsight, we didn't really let him go to the bathroom before any of this happened. So after, I sent both the kids to their shower - I was standing in a joining hallway that's between these bedrooms and bathrooms - I looked down and there was poop on the floor, and I recognized, “Okay, that's Rocket's poop.

He's definitely in an anaphylactic shock because he couldn't hold his bowels. He's really going to die now." So I was on hyper-alert and looking around, "Where is Rocket?"

Logan came out of his shower at that point and he nonchalantly went, "Oh yeah, he pooped in the kitchen too." "What? Rocket hadn't had an accident since he was a puppy. He's almost five years old. What are you talking about?" So now, I was like, "Where's Rocket?" Logan said, "Oh, well, Nick took him out the front door. Go out the front door opposite where the yellow jackets are lying. I was still a little nervous to go out there. So I went out front. Nick has poop all down the leg of his pants where Rocket literally, I guess, had the shit scared out of him and had just not been able to hold his poop anymore. It just let it go. Nick said he kind of came up to him and didn't know what to do. He sat on Nick's foot and just pooped. It was all down the leg of his pants and it was all down the back of Rocket.

If anybody knows what a Goldendoodle is, you know what kind of fur that is. So it was just this huge mess. I was just like, "Oh my gosh, what have I done? What have I done to my family? My dog's shitting uncontrollably. People are being stung. People were stung. I just delivered them to hell. It was hell."

### **Scott**

You had not yet benefited from a cold shower. What kind of shape were you in at that point?

### **Danna**

Once I saw how Rocket was reacting with the pooping, all of my senses kind of turned off at that point because I was worried about Rocket, which is what I was worried about from the get-go. The kids seem to be fine. So I was like, "Okay, well let me clean Rocket up because the last thing I want to do is keep him outside. I want him to be inside." So Karen brought me some soap that is for dogs, for sensitive skin. Like, she just had everything except the Benadryl ready to go.

So we go over to the hose, we're washing off his backside. At that moment, I realized there were still bees embedded in his fur. There was no other way to get them except to grab them with your hand and pull them out of his fur and I got terrified again because I was like, "God, we're going to get stung again." I think it was kind of that point that - whenever Karen was helping me or inside the house with Aurora, in those few moments in between all that - was when we realized they were yellow jackets, which I'd never encountered ever in my life. Karen, being who she is, just like she was inside the house with Aurora's hair, she just started grabbing them out of Rocket's fur. They're all in his fur. They're underneath in his underbelly. They're all in his tail. He has a big long flag-looking tail. She's just pulling them out with her hands like it's nothing, and she's like, "Well, there's one. Okay. There's one." Just pulled them out like it's nothing.

I was looking at her terrified, like, "How are you even doing this right now?" We went inside. Everybody went back inside. That's when I said to myself, "Okay, I need a cold shower now." That's when it really set in. My whole entire body is on fire from my scalp down to my ankles. I was on fire all the way, so I jumped in a cold shower. I think, at that point, I'd waited too long. I did not get the same benefit that the children got from being in the shower. I came out and I still felt on fire just as I had before. All of this time passed has probably been about 20 minutes, which I feel is enough for the allergy medicine to kick in, and I still had no effects from that either. I was still just on fire. I was being struck by lightning every time I took a deep breath, I felt like.

**Scott**

And where were you stung?

**Danna**

I was stung - I don't even know how many times - on my scalp, right at the crown of my head, in particular, right behind my left ear on my scalp, like on my head right there. Then, I was stung on my side - kind of on my rib cage - and all over my butt and the backs of my legs. I mean, I counted 16 just between both legs, one on my side, and then 17-18 behind my ear. I don't even know how many times on my scalp. There's just no way to count those.

**Scott**

So if you were seriously allergic like some people are, even taking that Benadryl may not have been enough to combat all those stings.

**Danna**

No. That's kind of what I was thinking because I've had my cold shower and I was thinking, "Okay, I should be feeling some relief at this point." And I wasn't. I started to almost feel feverish and everything calmed down. I think the adrenaline wears off. We're just all kind of sitting in the living room, kind of retelling what happened. I think I have a fever and I was starting to feel really bad, and I was like, "Okay, I must be allergic. This must be what it feels like to have an allergic reaction." Thank God I took the allergy medicine when I did because who knows how bad it would have been if I hadn't.

**Scott**

Have you since determined that you are allergic? You can test for that, right?

**Danna**

I have not tested for it. I did not give myself a chance to be tested for it outside in any way, shape, or form after that or since then. So maybe, that's something I should maybe look into - getting an allergy test, getting a panel done to see.

**Scott**

Yeah, probably would be a good idea. It's funny how we pick out certain things to find amusing. I thought it was kind of funny when you said, "I saw poop on the floor and I could tell it was Rocket's."

**Danna**

It was Rocket's.

**Scot**

Who else's poop would be on the floor?

**Danna**

Is Aurora uncontrollably shitting herself now? Is Logan shitting himself? Who pooped on the floor? Has to be the dog. Logan said, "Oh yeah, he pooped in the kitchen too" like it was nothing. I went in there. Karen has already cleaned it all up and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry." She's like, "It's fine." She just cleaned the poop up too like it's nothing. Like, she wasn't just getting yellow jackets out of Aurora's hair in the kitchen 10 minutes before. I guess Aurora and I were the only ones who were just freaking out and, at that point, she's feeding off of me because... daughters to moms.

**Scott**

Later, you guys are all kind of sitting around telling your own account, your own perspective of what happened. Can you kind of give us each person's view of what went on?

**Danna**

Logan was just kind of talking about how he saw everyone take off and he began to just kind of run behind us. He said at that point he was stung a couple of times, but nothing too alarming. He kind of found it a little comical why were we all running like that when he couldn't see any intimate threat at that point. Like I said, I looked back at one point and he's kind of smiling. Aurora - sheer terror, blinding white fear - couldn't really remember anything at this point, and it's only been about an hour. She remembers coming into the house, getting them off of her, and taking a shower. That's kind of when her wits came back to her. She was just, like I said, blinding fear. She was scared to death. Then, Rocket is our beloved dog. She was really scared that something was going to be wrong with Rocket too. So there's that.

Then, there's Nick who saw me darted off out of the corner of his eye and he was saying, "Yeah, I was just standing there and I just saw you run." He said, "Instinctively, I started to run too." Then, he was like, "Wait a minute. What about the kids?" Still not really knowing why I was running until he kind of looked around, saw the swarms, and was like, "Okay, all right, guys. Let's go. Aurora, go catch up to Mom. Let's just get the heck out of here."

Then, my dad, who was kind of, like I said, jogging behind us, he only got stung, like, once or twice. He really had no idea what was going on until that point that Rocket laid down and I screamed for him. "Well, help me get Rocket up." That's when my dad kind of realized what was happening.

Then, on my account, I remembered every little detail at that point. I was sitting there still at that moment. Everyone else was chatting and having a good time. My dad and Nick were enjoying their beer and I was sitting there. I can hardly drink my beer. My hand was shaking. I was still feeling like I was on fire and, like, I got a fever at that point. This is probably, like I said, a good 30 minutes to an hour after everything had happened, and we're all calmed down, showered, sitting around, and talking about it.

**Scott**

Does Rocket have any lingering effects from this?

**Danna**

Rocket just laid down and he doesn't pant unless we've been playing outside or anything like that. He doesn't really pant unless he's got to go outside and go to the bathroom. Well, we already know he did that. He's just laying there and he's just panting, and I know it's because he's in pain, and there's really nothing I can do about it. He would get up every few minutes and just kind of pace around. He normally would have his tail kind of up. He's always got it up. He's a very happy dog, so he always wags his tail and always has it up. His tail was just falling limp behind him. I thought at that point too that he lost control of the use of his tail because he just wouldn't raise it up. He wouldn't wag it. I think he was just in pain.

**Scott**

Did you think about maybe putting him in a cold bath or shower also?

**Danna**

We did. We had the soap when he had shit all down the back of his legs. So he got wet with outside hose water, and that's straight mountain water out of the mountain. So we did have that over the majority of his body. Maybe that did help him in hindsight. I hadn't thought about that until you said that, Scott. Maybe that actually helped him too at that point.

**Scott**

Were you able to sleep that night?

**Danna**

I slept like I had been awake for five days - we all did until the next morning. Everyone said it's the adrenaline rush from, first of all, just the hiking. It's a trek. So of course that's going to take energy getting up there, coming halfway back down, and then sprinting the last quarter mile, and then being stung by bees. For me, it was the most amazing sleep I ever had.

**Scott**

I'm picturing your dad the next morning saying, "Hey, let's go up to the Falls." That wouldn't have been a popular idea, huh?

**Danna**

No. God loves him though. He is such a machine. He's like, "Let's go float the river the next day in Asheville, the French Broad River," or I don't know what y'all have there but, here in Shreveport, Louisiana, we have the mighty Red River that comes, shoots off the Mississippi and comes through here, and you do not want to float that river. But this river, the French Broad River up there, it's all picturesque kind of going through the mountains. We're in a little rural area where you get on the tube and you float down. So that's what he wanted to do. Had he said he wanted to hike up to the falls, I probably would have told him to kiss my ass. Sorry, dad. You're going alone this time.

**Scott**

So you weren't too excited about going back into the woods. How did everyone else react as far as being traumatized?

**Danna**

Aurora was a no. I was kind of a no. Dad, Nick, Logan, they had no qualms about it. They were fine with it. I think they just didn't get stung as much as Aurora and I had been stung, so they weren't worried about it at all going back up into it, because we did hike two more times on different trails after that.

**Scott**

Well, that's the way you face your fear, right? That's what you got to do. I mean, what are you going to do? Just never go out in nature again?

**Danna**

Exactly. I mean, you fall off the horse, you got to get back on, and we're there. This was the first full day we were there. We have all these other hikes lined up that we're going to do. Am I just not going to go? So we both just had to swallow our fear and just go.

**Scott**

How was it different though that next time you went out?

**Danna**

Every time something brushed my head, I heard something flying in the distance, the chills and the fever automatically came back. It was like my body reacting in a PTSD way. I have never had anxiety. I've never been a really nervous person in my entire life. Now, I sympathize with those people who have anxiety and are nervous about things or worry about things because I never did. Now I get it, and it was from yellow jackets of all things.

**Scott**

Well, lots of them.

**Danna**

Lots of them.

**Scott**

Any lingering effects on you and the kids like nightmares or anything like that?

**Danna**

No. The lingering effect— I think I am the only one that really has that from then on. We sit outside a bunch despite it being the hell hole of the United States here in Shreveport, Louisiana. It's very hot here, and it was very hot this summer, so we just sat outside. We like to be outside. So Nick and I sit outside in the backyard and maybe listen to music and Rocket's out there with us. The kids pop out occasionally and talk. We just kind of sit on the patio. Well, I could not just sit anymore on the patio. I was on high alert at this time. We've got crepe myrtles in the backyard. The big bumblebees are all buzzing around and I couldn't even focus on any kind of conversation because I'm so worried about one of those bees stinging - not him or anyone else - stinging me. I'm worried about them stinging me.

**Scott**

And Rocket is back to normal?

**Danna**

Rocket's back to normal. He's fine. He's out in the yard amongst all the flying, stinging insects like it doesn't matter. He's fine. I'm the only one that has any lasting trauma from that.

**Scott**

Well, definitely a hike to remember.

**Danna**

One for the books, I tell ya. I will say that we did float the river. We also went down. If anyone knows about Asheville, North Carolina, we went down the famous sliding rock which is where a river comes over this rock that's about the size of a motel and you can slide down it. We went on two other hikes - one really big hike that was about six miles - and we made it up and down those hikes with no worries of any flying and stinging insects or anything like that. And we rounded out the vacation in just a really great way. We had a great time despite that. For anyone who's never been to the mountains, I would absolutely encourage you to go and experience it for yourself. It's just something that you can never experience anywhere else except in those kinds of mountains up there.

**Scott**

You may have discouraged a few people from trying that too.

### **Danna**

No, I don't want to. Well, my hope is that because everyone, Nick, my husband grew up in the country. They would stab hornet's nest in the ground for fun and run from them. Like, it's what they did. I don't want to say I hope, but I feel like almost everyone else in their life had maybe been stung by something before and would know what to expect. So maybe, I don't know, I hope I haven't discouraged anyone, but I certainly would understand why someone would not want to go hiking.

### **Scott**

If you'd like to see pictures of Danna and her family – and Rocket of course – just check out the episode notes at [WhatWasThatLike.com/159](http://WhatWasThatLike.com/159).

And I really have to say something here – I post every podcast episode on Instagram too, and the name there is `wwtl_podcast`. But if you just search for the podcast name you'll find it. Anyway, on one of the recent posts there, someone commented "You know, I really wish you could post pictures to go along with these podcast episodes!"

And I'm here to tell you, I do post pictures with every episode! You won't see them on Instagram, but you can always see them on the website page for that episode – just go to [WhatWasThatLike.com](http://WhatWasThatLike.com), followed by a slash, then the episode number. They're all there, go check 'em out!

If you liked this episode, you might like our other animal attack episodes – we've done stories about attacks by dogs, an alligator, an elephant, a shark, a grizzly bear, a monkey, and a rattlesnake. I think that's all of them, there may be another animal attack episode in there I'm not thinking of. Always looking for new ones though – so if you ever get chased down and attacked by a rhinoceros, drop me an email so we can hear about it!

### **Female 1**

Hey Scott, I just wanted to thank you for putting out that podcast with Stephanie who was raped. I went through a similar situation in college. Luckily I did not end up pregnant, but I feel her guilt and her blame for herself, and there's definitely something that continues to go on. I have yet to go to therapy about it because of the embarrassment, even though it was quite a few years ago. I mean, we're talking 8+ years ago. And I still have yet to address it. It took a lot to even convince myself to listen to that episode because I don't think I was mentally prepared to hear a similar story. I still don't think I was prepared to hear a similar story, but I did it because I needed to make sure that my experience was equivalent or right online with somebody else's. Now, I do know it was. Unfortunately, I didn't report it either because I thought I'd probably be judged because I was underage and I was drinking and I'd probably be judged for what I did or how I was dressed, or anything like that because I was in college.

It was just a very heavy episode for me and I just really appreciate you putting something out like that, that the few of us, unfortunately, can relate to, and that's just great. Thank you again, Scott. Keep up the good work. Bye.

### **Scott**

If you haven't yet heard the episode the caller was talking about, it just came out earlier this month – it's titled "Stephanie was date raped" and it's episode 155.



Graphics for this episode were created by Bob Bretz. Full episode transcription was created by James Lai.

And now we have this week's Listener Story. We get such a variety of stories, and this is how we end every episode. A listener, just like you, records a 5-10 minute personal story and send it in. I know you have a story too, and we'd love to hear it. You've been thinking about recording it, haven't you? I knew it. Just record it on your phone and email it to me – [Scott@WhatWasThatLike.com](mailto:Scott@WhatWasThatLike.com).

For this Listener Story, a content warning – there is discussion of suicide. But there's a happy ending that I wasn't expecting.

Stay safe! I'll be back here a week from today with our next Flashback episode. And on that same Friday, just a week from now, Raw Audio 37 goes live. Lots of stuff coming up! I'll see you soon.

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(Listener story)

My father has an older brother, my uncle Steve, and he's married to my aunt Pamela. They had three children - 2 boys and a little girl. Their middle child - his name was Chris, and he was, like, just a stud. He was so very handsome growing up all through high school and college - Mr. Popularity - and just really intelligent. My uncle is a well-known physician in his area and Chris was well on his way to becoming the same. He's just a really bright guy. He had a lot going for him, but he did suffer from depression. In college, he also started taking really heavy drugs a lot, which of course made his depression even worse and he started to spiral.

One night, he just couldn't handle life anymore, so he ended up taking his own life. He did use a gun. To make matters just horribly worse, he shot his girlfriend before he shot himself. The bullet grazed her and she survived. She was fine, but he did attempt to do that, which makes matters all the more awful. Of course, my aunt and uncle were just overwhelmed with grief. The death of a child is always horrific. Adding onto that, death from suicide is just another layer of heartache. So unnecessary. So many questions that go through their minds.

Anyway, 18 years had gone by since this had happened and life goes on - it has to. There are two other kids who are adults now with their own children. Around this time, my cousin, Jamie, gets a Facebook message out of nowhere, really, and it read, "Dear Jamie, this is Jack. I'm writing to you because my mother promised me that, when I turned 18, she would let me know who my father is. It turns out that my father is your brother, Chris." Jamie couldn't believe it. She went to his profile page and it was like she was looking at Chris all over again. This kid, Jack, was a spitting image of her brother who had passed away so long ago, and he was also such a good kid, such a sweet kid.

Jack flew out to see the family immediately and met with everyone. Of course, my aunt and uncle were just completely overwhelmed with emotion upon seeing this grandchild. They didn't know about a piece of their son right there - someone that looked exactly like their son. It was like having Chris back again. Jack now visits them every holiday and they're very close. It's just amazing that they had such a miracle happen so far after this horrible tragedy and so many

years of grieving. They had this boy who was just like their baby, Chris, and I really appreciate Jack's mother for letting him know.

I understand why she waited until he was 18. The circumstances of what happened to his father and what he tried to do to her were obviously something that needed to be told to somebody who could handle it at a certain age. She did say that Chris did not know she was pregnant and she didn't know she was pregnant when the incident occurred that night. So, no one knew until 18 years later and they got reunited. It just helped my aunt and uncle, my cousins heal in a way they never thought possible to have a piece of their son and their brother there, just looking exactly like him - the same mannerisms and everything else. It's just a blessing that they're so close. So it turned out to be something really beautiful in the end.

It took a long time to get there and a lot of grieving, but I'm just really so happy for them that they had this grandson that they didn't know about, and cherish the memories of the son that they lost.