

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF
A MASS SHOOTING ON A BROADCAST JOURNALIST

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank my family and friends for assisting me throughout this process, especially my parents, Jim Leary and Lori Yacone, and my brother, Dylan. Their support was what kept me going. I couldn't have made it this far without them.

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the impact of the Aurora, Colo., movie theater shooting on first-responding journalists, focusing on their professional lives and reporting techniques. The research was completed using a qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews and discussions with six broadcast journalists, from the local NBC and ABC affiliates in Denver, who were on the scene of the shooting. Each interview was coded using the constant comparative method to find a better understanding of trauma reporting. By examining this shooting and its effects on journalists, this research attempts to define the emotional toll that can be associated with journalists during crisis situations. By examining this topic through an array of interviews and other research, the findings ultimately lead to a better understanding of how journalists define the impact of reporting on trauma in hopes to bring more attention to journalists as first-responders to crises throughout the world.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On April 20, 1999, in Littleton, Colo., twelve students and one teacher were murdered at Columbine High School. Two students entered the school and opened fire in the cafeteria and the library. In the months after the massacre, many unanswered questions left society searching for reasons why the two shooters decided to murder fellow students and take their own lives. The tragedy sparked debates about gun control laws and firearm availability in Colorado and throughout the United States. The familiar saying, “We Are All Columbine” adorned walls of restaurants, bumpers of cars and makeshift memorials on the high school grounds as those who lost loved ones dealt with grief. Thirteen years and three months later, yet another massacre rocked the suburbs of Denver, Colo. James Holmes entered a midnight showing of a movie in Aurora, Colo., and opened fire, killing 12 and injuring 58. Yet again, the same community was grief stricken and those who lost loved ones searched for answers. Gun control became an issue yet again. Police officers were honored for heroic acts in the minutes following the shootings. However, journalists were also on the scenes of both massacres, witnessing the aftermath of the tragedies unfold. Journalists were reporting, giving firsthand

accounts and sharing information with the public. Journalists also witnessed tragedy's aftermath during both events.

This research examines the psychological impact of a crisis on journalists as first-responders in the wake of catastrophic events. Television journalists in the Denver area were interviewed regarding the impact of reporting on the Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colo., and the movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colo., among other tragedies they have witnessed in their careers. The interviews detail journalists' coping mechanisms after witnessing the crises from the front lines. Interviews were analyzed to find how crises affected their careers. A media representative from the

Federal Bureau of Investigation was also interviewed for this research. He was asked about his perspective of journalists at a crime scene. From a theoretical perspective, the research analyzes journalistic theory as it pertains to the emotional well-being of television reporters. Interviews were individually coded and compared to other responses to ultimately find a working solution to help journalists rebound after witnessing trauma.

The purpose of this qualitative research is to develop an understanding of the emotional and professional trauma television reporters face after witnessing the aftermath

catastrophic events. In light of an increasing number of tragedies, it is important to look at a cumulative effect that crises have on journalists. This research aims to find the lingering affect of covering a traumatic situation and journalists' opinion on how they continued day-to-day life.

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), compassion fatigue and other emotional issues stemming from witnessing a traumatic event have been thoroughly studied in academia of the journalism world, as has preparing and dealing with a crisis in a newsroom (Lowery, et al., 2010, Dworznik, 2011, Hight & Smyth, 2003). The Columbine High School massacre led to academic research in relation to the press coverage (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). The Aurora movie theater massacre is more recent. No academic research regarding press coverage has been published about it thus far. This research is unique because it focuses specifically on each individual journalists' characterization of their mental stability in coverage of mass shootings in Denver, Colo. This research is unique and ultimately undiscovered.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Compassion Fatigue

PTSD is defined as an anxiety disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) that can develop after a person encounters an unexpected extreme trauma; such as an assault, being kidnapped, a natural disaster or a severe car accident when the person does not think they have control over the situation (Javidi & Yadollahie, 2012). Severe anxiety, amnesia, poor concentration and sleep disturbance are a few of the symptoms that can develop after a traumatic event. PTSD symptoms can be divided into three categories, including intrusive symptoms, avoidance symptoms and arousal symptoms, according to the American Psychological Association (2000) and First and Tasman (2004). Intrusive symptoms can include re-experiencing the traumatic event in dreams or flashbacks, which can instill panic in the witness and resurface raw emotion from the day of the event. Avoidance symptoms are when a PTSD sufferer literally avoids thoughts, places, people and sounds associated with the event. A PTSD sufferer with avoidance symptoms can also circumvent remembrance of the event by refusing to participate in discussions about the incident. Arousal symptoms include the witness' sleep cycle being disturbed by graphic dreams and flashbacks of the event. Hyper vigilance is another

arousal symptom, which is also described as someone being highly alert in any situation – scanning the scene for anything reminiscent of the original trauma. Hyper vigilance can also lead to increased anxiety. The symptoms discussed in this research are simply the most common PTSD symptoms. However, there is a wide range of mental and emotional setbacks one can face after experiencing trauma and suffering from PTSD. PTSD can lead to constant struggle for those suffering in personal relationships, social situations and in the work place.

PTSD is frequently studied in veterans and others who have experienced war. Coping strategies and resources for those struggling with the disorder are widely discussed, as noted by Gilbar, Plivazky & Gil (2010). There are multiple factors that are involved with a PTSD diagnosis, including education about the disorder, time since the event, perception of the trauma and social support. According to the National Institute of Health, to be diagnosed with PTSD, a person must have at least one re-experiencing symptom, at least three avoidance symptoms, at least two hyper arousal symptoms, and symptoms that make it hard to go about daily life, all for at least one month. Coping strategies and resources for those dealing with PTSD are imperative to the survival of victims in the wake of trauma. (Gilbar, Plivazky & Gil, 2010). Those suffering from

PTSD are treated with psychotherapy, medication, or both, depending on the patient and the mental health care provider.

PTSD is not the only emotional damage one can have from experiencing a catastrophic event. A secondary psychological trauma some deal with after a traumatic situation is compassion fatigue, or the emotion one feels after caring for others with an emotional pain after a crisis (Figley, 1995). Compassion fatigue can also come from other sources including, “job commitment, social support, perceived work pressure, and gender” (Dworznic, p. 28, 2011). Compassion fatigue can range from lack of motivation and lessening of compassion on the job, to the inability to focus and the development of feelings of incompetency and doubt in ones ability to succeed (Figley, 1995).

Journalists put themselves on the front lines of traumatic events to serve the public, leaving them at risk for experiencing after-affects including symptoms of PTSD and fatigue syndrome (Backholm & Björkqvist, 2012b). Further investigation has led to research on depression development after witnessing trauma on the job. Findings show work-related traumatic events are a direct influence of PTSD and feelings of trauma-related guilt. Those findings conclude the possibility of PTSD is directly related to the frequency of experiencing work-related crises (Brown, Evangeli, & Greenburg, 2012).

This research examines the mindset of journalists in the days after a traumatic event as well as highlighting a newsroom's responsibility to have resources readily available for reporters struggling after covering trauma.

Preparing for Trauma as a Journalist

Academia continues to investigate psychological issues journalists face in the wake of traumatic events. One study suggests the best way to prepare journalists for traumatic events is training. It is important to provide learning experiments to put journalists in mock traumatic scenarios to prepare journalists for the worst possible situations (Lowrey et al., 2007). However, journalists interviewed for this research all consider real world experience to be the best training for any traumatic situation. The biggest problems for journalists during traumatic situations include a “lack of coordination between PIOs (Public Information Officers) and journalists, lack of resources for appropriately evaluating information and disseminating it efficiently, and a difference in perception of PIO's and journalists toward each other's role during emergency situations” (Lowrey et al., p. 1, 2007). However, if journalists simply adhere to being journalists and do not take on any other role, such as a Public Information

Officer or an Emergency Responder, the emotional effects should be minimal because journalists should be able to compartmentalize emotions (Cote & Simpson, 2006).

Training for trauma doesn't just prepare journalists for specific situations, it "prioritizes the needs of local television news industries for dramatic crime and accident news and victim advocates' which calls for more active victim participation within news based storytelling on crime" (Rentschler, p. 454, 2010). Rentschler believes trauma reporting is a response to economic conditions. He discusses the use of disasters and victims for profit, concluding the popular mantra for journalists is, "if it bleeds, it leads." However, Steffens et al (2012) argue the opposite point noting, "whether the focus is disasters or terrorism, government and the news media share a common goal: save lives and mitigate property and societal damage in the short and long run" (p. 12). Television reporters have to be able to compose themselves for a live report in the field during a traumatic situation. Despite the journalistic mentality debate, Killeen (2012) argues newsroom responsibility is of great importance while preparing journalists for trauma. To successfully prepare journalists and camera crews, newsrooms should give a fair warning about the severity of the traumatic event before a reporter enters a scene. Each subject interviewed for this research mentioned the severity of a situation is not always known

when reporters are called to the scene. It is common for very little information to be known at first. For example, during the Aurora movie theater shooting, the only information known in the first hour is that there was a shooting at a movie theater. There were no details on the extent of the injuries or the fatalities. According to Kevin Torres, a reporter for KUSA, journalists showed up to the scene, many of them believing a few people were injured. Torres also mentioned law enforcement officials did not understand the gravity of the Aurora movie theater shooting for hours after it had happened.

Although there are differing opinions about journalistic missions before and during a crisis, a wide range of resources are available for those who struggle after a crisis occurs. This will be discussed further after the following section, which details what happens after the training (or lack there of) when journalists report on traumatic situations from the front lines.

Journalists During Trauma

As the world of journalism develops concurrently with technology in today's society, research continues to discover the impact traumatic events have on broadcast journalists. There is no average day on the job for journalists. Responding to house fires, car accidents and shootings on the streets are just a few of the traumatic incidents

journalists come across on a daily basis. PTSD and compassion fatigue have been measured in television journalists in relation to their every day job. Thus the type of some stories journalists report on strongly correlate with the possibility of PTSD (Dworznic, 2011). This can be related to the beat a journalist is assigned. For example, Anastasiya Bolton is the Crime and Justice reporter for KUSA. Bolton, one of the subjects for the research, says she sees more crime than a normal reporter because of the beat she reports on daily. Researchers created the “Journalist Trauma Exposure Scale” to measure and categorize the level of stress a journalist is under while reporting in the field. The scale surveys participants about certain events in the field and each event’s emotional intensity. The scale also measures the frequency of exposure to trauma, the range and intensity of exposure. (Pyeovich et al., 2003). Scores are calculated by adding up the number of “Potentially Traumatic Experiences” (PTE’s) a journalist has experienced. PTE’s include, “natural disaster, accident, war zone, life-threatening illness/injury, traumatic death of family member/friend, kidnapping, physical assault, sexual assault, or other life-threatening event” (p. 326).

Although there is a wide range of research analyzing in-depth preparations and guides for journalists detailing how to react and work through a crisis, traumatic events

still occur frequently. This establishes a need for further research on journalists' perspective. Countless lives were changed forever on September 11, 2001. After a plane hit the second World Trade Center tower in New York, journalists rushed to the scene to report on what was happening. Little did most journalists know, they were witnessing a terror attack. After the dust settled and the death toll heightened to almost 3,000 people, research commenced in a multitude of different academic fields. PTSD was studied among emergency and disaster workers, concluding the disorder was prevalent in workers following their search and rescue efforts in New York after the attack (Cukor et al., 2011).

Academic research has also tried to determine how journalists reacted to September 11. (Riegert & Olsson, 2007; Sylvester & Huffman, 2002). Journalists' decision making was analyzed, determining journalists "took the roles of psychologist, comforter and co-mourner" (Riegert & Olsson, p. 267, 2007). That research argues journalists strayed away from compartmentalized thinking on September 11, which can keep journalists in the correct mindset to complete their job if trained correctly (Cote & Simpson, 2006).

One academic study compiled the personal accounts of women journalists at Ground Zero on the morning of September 11 (Sylvester and Huffman, 2002). 24 women were invited to write reflections on the morning of September 11. Journalists in Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., and New York City from a wide range of local and network television stations, radio stations and newspapers shared stories of what happened that morning. The women shared accounts of what they were experiencing throughout the morning as they tried to grasp the severity of the situation. A WNYC radio journalist's suffering after September 11 was described in the book, which noted:

[She had a] curious form of survivor's guilt, causing her to relive those days over and over and ask herself questions with no answers, 'how could I have stayed down there longer? What if I'd gone left instead of right? Were there more people I could have interviewed (p. 28)?

Her account continues to say she began to think differently while covering trauma after her experience on September 11. A photographer from the Associated Press described her work on September 11 after she had outrun the collapsing World Trade Center towers:

most people didn't notice [me] or [my] camera ... I do clearly remember when I was photographing a bunch of people running toward me after the first building

fell and it was very quiet ... [that night] I was lying in my bed with my eyes wide open. I just wasn't sleepy. I wasn't tired, I wasn't freaked out, I wasn't scared. It was just a restless night because I was charged up (p. 66).

The Associated Press photographer continued to say being "charged up" was her body's reaction to experiencing trauma as a form of adrenaline. This being said, journalists' personal accounts from September 11 can be used to hypothesize about Denver journalists covering mass shootings in Denver. Similar reactions were noted in the interviews completed for this research.

As noted, multiple studies were completed regarding journalism on September 11, 2001. Research was also conducted after September 11, analyzing journalism after the terrorist attack. Zelizer's (2002) research focuses on the aftermath of September 11. It offers insight on how the journalism world reacted to the tragedy and, more importantly, how the journalism from September 11 didn't just impact the journalists, but the viewers at home, watching the coverage of September 11. The study focuses on the increase of agoraphobia, or the fear of being in public places, in the general public after September 11. It is also important for journalists to remember they are not the only ones dealing with

trauma—victim advocates identify news interviews as sites of re-victimization if reporters don't treat victims and witnesses with respect (Rentschler, 2010).

As September 11 came and went, other tragedies throughout the world unfolded. Journalists took to the front lines to put together the stories of the victims and the trauma. Backholm & Björkqvist (2012a) completed a study about a school shooting in Jokela, Finland in 2007. A teenage gunman entered Jokela high school in Finland, killing eight, wounding one and eventually taking his own life. Backholm and Björkqvist (2012a) found the shooting left 43 percent of journalists who covered it with some kind of personal reaction to the trauma, including shock and guilt. Instead of citing the personal reactions, journalists surveyed discussed work-related issues with the shooting in lieu of personal trauma. “Two groups emerged: issues regarding (1) general choices on what material to publish; and (2) how to approach victims on the scene” (p.184).

After a day of reporting in the field, journalists have to make a transition to their family, their friends and their personal lives. If a traumatic situation occurred during a day of reporting, it is possible for a journalist to head home with emotional baggage (Backholm and Björkqvist, 2012a). The following section analyzes coping strategies and compiles helpful resources for journalists after witnessing trauma.

Coping With Trauma as a Journalist

After a murder, sexual assault or car accident the crime scene is examined, evidence is picked up and witnesses have to move on to the next day of their lives. However, it is also possible for PTSD to develop in the mind of those who saw trauma firsthand (Javidi & Yadollahie, 2012). “The culture of silence” is a phenomenon in the journalism world. Some believe the culture of silence makes it difficult for reporters to deal with psychological trauma on the job. Instead of turning to professional help in the greatest time of need to learn how to cope, journalists lean on family members to deal with raw emotion. The case is similar for emergency responders and those who serve in the military. As noted by Jelinek (2008):

Thousands of troops are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with anxiety, depression and other emotional problems ... Roughly half of those who need help are not seeking it ... Despite efforts to reduce the stigma of getting treatment, officials say they fear generals and other senior leaders remain unwilling to go for help, much less talk about it, partly because they fear it will hurt chances for promotion. That reluctance also is worrisome because it sends the wrong signal to younger officers and perpetuates the problem that leaders are working to reverse.

The case is the same for journalists (Killeen, 2012). A majority of journalists surveyed in 2009 did not feel comfortable reaching out at their news organization for the help they needed. Instead, emotions were buried and the day-to-day reporting went on in the newsroom as though nothing traumatic had occurred. The role of a newsroom is imperative while dealing with traumatic situations. It is each newsroom's responsibility to check on the well-being of each and every journalist who covers trauma (Killeen, 2012). Research concludes newsrooms need to let journalists know what resources are available to them to deal with the emotional toll (Greenberg, Gould, Langston & Brayne, 2009). Resources can include psychiatrists and psychologists hired to be in the newsroom in the days following a traumatic situation. Based on research completed by Himmelstein and Faithorn (2010), journalists have a strong sense of self, which includes:

[A] positive assessment of one's own character and behavior, both in one's personal life and in a broad social context. Sense of self is directly tied to these reporters' professional success ... Many top reporters share a conviction that their work has purpose, specifically that they can help their audience gain greater insight into the larger social meaning of the events they report (p. 546).

This research concludes the best way for journalists to cope with a traumatic event in the field is to have knowledge of human psychodynamics in order to better understand their emotional functions after a catastrophe.

Along with an understanding of psychodynamics, or the psychology of mental and emotional processes, numerous resources are available to assist journalists in coping after witnessing emotionally damaging events. The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma is a global network of journalists and journalism professors that focus on ethical news reporting during times of trauma. It started as a project at Michigan State University as a program to help student journalists report on violent crimes with sensitivity and respect. The organization eventually expanded to different states around the Midwest, including Oklahoma and Indiana. Eventually, the program spread to the University of Washington in 1999, where curriculum was developed for newsroom ethics while covering traumatic events. The project is now a project at Columbia University's School of Journalism. The center now serves as a resource for journalists across the world. It has a comprehensive website available with resources for journalists throughout the world (dartcenter.org). The website has an online chat available along with articles, personal accounts and tips on coping after trauma. The highly cited list of tips includes, "know

your limits, take breaks, find a sensitive listener, learn to deal with stress, and understand your problems may become overwhelming” (Hight & Smyth, p.7, 2003). In other words, it is important for the journalist to be aware that his or her mental stability should be considered during traumatic situations.

From a firsthand perspective, Smyth, a fellow for the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, was part of the original pilot project for the center after surviving in Vietnam as a Prisoner of War. Ricchiardi (2000) summarizes Smyth’s use of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, noting:

Smyth has found relief through a national movement aimed at helping media professionals deal with trauma. Part of the goal is to break down the traditionally stoic newsroom culture, where journalists tend to shy away from admitting to psychological stress or emotional fallout from doing their jobs. (p. 14)

Coping after a traumatic event is different for every person. However, other research has concluded journalists have common struggles returning to normalcy after being on the front lines. This can include, “family relationships, juggling a private life, finding support for dealing with traumatic events and the impact of reporting on traumatic events on relationships” (Stevens, 2011, p. *ii*).

As discussed, a large amount of research has documented trauma in the journalism world. September 11 and the Jokela school shooting are only two crisis situations in which academic research has been conducted. In the following section, Columbine High School research will be summarized.

Columbine High School Massacre Research

The April 1999 mass shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. was a pivotal point in regards to school safety in the United States. More than ten years after the shooting that took thirteen lives, progress has been made in regards to school safety as noted by Trump (2009), who said:

Administrators and boards have reduced access to schools, implemented visitor management systems, improved communications capabilities, boosted the number of surveillance cameras, and taken security into account with new school design and remodeling.

The high school shooting was eye opening for schools throughout the United States, as school security measures were questioned, and in some instances, school security was changed to better protect students during dangerous situations. Additionally, new police maneuvers were established to assist law enforcement with dealing with an active shooter

situation in a public place (Trump, 2009). The tragedy left the city of Littleton, Colo. picking up pieces and searching for answers. As questions surfaced, so did research hoping to answer them. A study conducted in 2012 concluded the most common theme observed in more than 260 news articles about disaster was the attribution of responsibility. In other words, news articles searched for someone, or something, to blame for the shooting. The research found the natural emotional process while dealing with trauma is to find the reason why the crisis occurred (An & Gower, 2012). This is important to note because there is a possibility that journalists dealing with trauma also default to the same question.

In regards to Columbine High School massacre research, Chyi and McCombs (2004) used framing analysis to categorize *The New York Times*' coverage of Columbine in the month after the tragedy. The research found the newspaper used a variety of frames over time to keep the story fresh, highlighting *The New York Times*' ability to frame perspectives of the shooting to report evolving details. Framing and agenda setting are not only a natural progression of journalistic ability; they alter society's perspective of each and every event, controversy and even crisis that occurs. This framing analysis is an example of how large of a role a journalist has in society. This makes it even more

important to study the journalists' perspectives of the traumatic event. Journalists are dealing with their own trauma, but they are also altering society's opinion of the event by framing or focusing on certain perspectives of the trauma.

Rentschler (2010) also completed research on the Columbine High School tragedy, discussing the documentary called *Covering Columbine* in great detail:

Several [journalists] cry openly in the video as they report from the suburban streets of Littleton, Colo. In one scene, a local television reporter stands in the spring rain on the day after the shootings, her face marked with red splotchy streaks from the tears she cannot hold back. She weeps so powerfully that she is unable to continue speaking (p. 2).

Kathy Walsh, a reporter for KCNC, the CBS affiliate in Denver, is the reporter who openly cried during a live report in the documentary.

There were at least four or five kids here. There were four or five over there.

There were two or three over there. We saw one going up in a helicopter. (pauses to cry) The emotion was incredible. It's really hard for a parent to see this.

The anchor back at KCNC's studio responded to her crying, saying, "Kathy, take a moment. Take a moment," and switches to a different reporter in the field to give Kathy a moment to compose herself.

Rentschler's research concludes journalists have a psychological relation to the scenes they cover, which negates many theories about journalists being detached and emotionally unavailable.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Ethnomethodology, the study of how people use social interaction to maintain an ongoing sense of reality in a situation (Silverman, 2010), played a key role in the theoretical framework of this research. The research focused on individual abilities to construct reality in day-to-day life. As Silverman notes, “ethnomethodologists primarily aim to understand how people go about doing things in their every day lives by creating meaningful categories for themselves and others” (p. 106, 2010).

Grounded theory was also an instrumental methodology used throughout this research. Introduced in 1967, grounded theory has become an important method in regards to most qualitative academic research. As noted by Hall, et al. (2013):

Grounded theory is a research method used for developing theories that are derived from data and explain human interaction. Rather than a strict set of procedures, it is a way of thinking about and conceptualizing research information ... rather than a rigid set of rules and procedures, grounded theory is a way of conceptualizing data.

Grounded theory enables researchers to find and discern social patterns and structures of a specific group by comparing subjects. Grounded theory was used in this research to

code interviews with Colorado journalists in this study as witnesses of the Aurora movie theater shooting or the Columbine High School shooting. Information was systematically gathered in order to find similar patterns and ideals to make conclusions about journalists' mentality. Grounded theory was ideal for this research as it focuses on broader aspects of a topic. It allows the researcher to delve into detailed analysis to find theories and concepts inside of each interview.

After each interview was completed and transcribed, the research was color-coded and categorized based on approximately 15 different categories that repeatedly surfaced during the interviews. After 15 main categories were determined, the interviews were sorted through multiple times to ultimately come up with seven final categories that each of the journalists brought up during their interviews. The interviews were then printed out, cut up into sections, and put into the seven categories based on their content. The sections of interviews that did not fit in the seven categories were placed on the side. The full transcriptions of the interviews can be found in the appendix of this research.

Chapter 4: Method

This research is a compilation of semi-structured interviews and in-depth analyses regarding the emotional state of six television journalists from the Denver, Colo., television market. Television journalists were chosen as opposed to newspaper, photographers or radio because of the on-air aspect of their reporting. There is a visual element when it comes to the nature of television journalism. Television lends itself to having live elements of a crime scene broadcasted in real time. Immediately after learning information, television reporters are expected to compose themselves to report during live broadcasts, which is different than allowing time to develop an understanding of the event in between reporting and gathering the information. The immediacy of reporting during trauma can be related to “a clash between inner feelings and outward expression” (Murphy, p. 34, 2001). Flight attendants, trauma care workers, police officers and 911 operators are required to “manage, negotiate and turn-off their emotions” (Murphy, p. 34, 2001) when necessary while working. Television journalists are also expected to be composed on air during traumatic experiences.

Six was an ideal sample size as it allows for many different backgrounds and perspectives but also limits the amount of data that will be later analyzed. Seven

journalists were used in a study regarding PTSD in 2012 (Brown, Evangeli, Greenburg, 2012) to analyze the impact of exposure to work-related trauma among journalists. The 2012 study probed each journalist's work-related experiences of trauma and PTSD symptoms, finding the more work-related crises a journalist experiences, the higher the possibility of PTSD (Brown, et al.). This being said, because of Brown, et al.'s similar study with seven subjects, six journalists were deemed an ideal sample size in relation to the Colorado shootings.

The six journalists were selected using the criterion sample strategy. It was important for each journalist selected to have been initial responders at the Columbine High School shooting, the Aurora movie theater shooting, or both shootings in the Denver metro area. The original plan was to have two journalists from KCNC, the Denver CBS affiliate, two from KMGH, the Denver ABC affiliate and two from KUSA, the Denver NBC affiliate. However, the news director at KCNC declined to be a part of this study. Instead, two journalists were interviewed from KMGH and four were interviewed from KUSA. Four of the journalists who participated in the research are well known in the Denver community as they have each been reporting, anchoring and producing in Denver for more than 20 years. Adele Arakawa is a KUSA-TV reporter and

anchor. She started at KUSA in 1993, but started her career in 1974 as a disc jockey in Tennessee. She won a regional Emmy for Columbine coverage during and after the event. Mitch Jelniker is a reporter and anchor for KMGH. He was a reporter during the Aurora movie theater shooting and Columbine High School shooting. Jelniker also was on the scene of the Oklahoma City bombing. He graduated from Colorado State University in 1982 and began his career in Denver in 1995. John Ferrugia is an investigative reporter for KMGH. Ferrugia was the first reporter on the scene at Columbine High School. He also spent time in the Middle East as a foreign correspondent for CBS. Ferrugia graduated from the Missouri School of Journalism in 1975. He began working at KMGH in 1992. Kim Christiansen is an anchor and reporter for KUSA in Denver. She is originally from the Denver area, and started her career at KUSA as a writer for the morning shows. Christiansen became especially close with the victims of the Columbine High School shooting because she grew up in that school district. She is also heavily involved in breast cancer awareness. Her sister was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005.

The other subjects for this research also work in the Denver television market, but they have less experience reporting in Denver. Anastasiya Bolton is the Crime and Justice

Reporter for KUSA. She began working at KUSA in 2006 after working in Texas and Alabama. She graduated from Southern Methodist University in 1999. She was on the scene of the Aurora movie theater shooting throughout the first day. Bolton won an Emmy award in October of 2007 for coverage of a shooting at a Denver grocery store. Bolton is also highly involved in the reporting of the murder of Jessica Ridgeway. Ridgeway, a ten-year-old girl from the Denver suburbs, walked to school on Friday, October 5, 2012, and never returned. She was kidnapped, killed, sexually assaulted and dismembered by a 17-year-old in her community. Kevin Torres, another reporter from KUSA, will be the final subject interviewed for this research. Torres was one of the first reporters on the scene after the Aurora movie theater shooting happened. He was interviewing witnesses and walking around the parking lot searching for details as the tragedy unfolded. He also played a key role in the reporting of the case of Dylan Redwine, a boy who went missing in southern Colorado in November of 2012. Redwine's remains were found in June of 2013. He is originally from New York, and graduated from the State University of New York – Oswego in 2006. He joined KUSA in 2009.

Each of the interviews was conducted in the journalist's newsrooms to ensure a comfortable environment. The six journalists provided individual perspectives on the Columbine High School shooting, the Aurora movie theater shooting or both as it relates to their journalistic ideology before and after each tragedy. Each journalist was individually selected because of diverse backgrounds to create varied results to answer the research questions.

In-depth interviews were appropriate for this study because interviews allowed the journalists to reflect on their personal experiences without the limitations of "yes" or "no" answers in a simple survey. Open-ended questions allowed the interview to be directed toward any angle the reporter wished to discuss. This led to a variety of different responses. The flow of each interview resulted in follow-up questions and additional conversations. Ultimately, each journalist provided different insight in regards to the Aurora movie theater shooting and the Columbine High School shooting. Each journalist's responses led to important conclusions regarding the emotional and professional impact of covering two of Colorado's most well known tragedies.

Each individual interview was transcribed and analyzed using grounded theory. The responses of each journalist were categorized into seven frames, or main ideas:

proximity to the event, being one of the first journalists at the scene, immersion into the crisis, emotional response to the event, exhibiting emotion, avoidance of emotion after the crisis, reaction to events that follow crises, and the preparation each journalist had before covering a traumatic situation.

The constant comparative method was used to compare each journalist's reactions with his or her colleagues. After each interview was analyzed with open coding, selective codes were used in order to come up with the most prominent categories for the six interviews. It is important to remember, as noted in Silverman, "every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing" (p. 238, 2010). In other words, it was essential to be careful how categories were used to ensure important information was not left out.

This research and the methods that were used are similar to a study previously mentioned by Backholm & Björkqvist (2012a). That research was done on the Jokela, Finland school shootings' impact on journalists. Although the Jokela research was a mixed methods study, the qualitative portion can be compared to the Aurora movie theater and Columbine High School shooting research. The Finnish researchers asked open-ended questions to gather responses about the psychological impact of covering the school shooting. Backholm & Björkqvist state, "an open question was included to allow

journalists to describe their experience of working with the incident ... The general wording of the item was intended to allow respondents to be free to choose what they wanted to comment on” (p. 180, 2012a). The open-ended questions were used for the same reason in this research. Frames comparable to those in Backholm and Björkqvist’s research, surfaced in this research, including, “participants’ individual crisis reactions (feelings of shock, sadness, numbness) ... and accounts of pre-crisis trauma training.” (Backholm & Björkqvist p. 180, 2012). Backholm & Björkqvist’s research of the Jokela shootings served as an outline for this research.

Chapter 5: Findings

The following section will evaluate and analyze the results of the study. The data collected for this study can be described using seven central themes relevant to all reporters interviewed: proximity to the event, being one of the first journalists at the scene, immersion and time spent at the scene, emotional response and exhibiting emotion, avoidance, subsequent events and personal beliefs, and finally the preparation each journalist had before being put in difficult situations. Each reporter interviewed has experienced a number of traumatic events during their time as a reporter.

Homicides, mass shootings, a natural disasters and fatal accidents are just a few of the types of trauma each reporter interviewed had witnessed in the field. Subjects were on the scene immediately after major traumatic events occurred, including the Oklahoma City bombing, the shooting at Columbine High School, and the shooting at the Aurora movie theater. Every journalist also was affected by more localized events, including the murder of Jessica Ridgeway and the disappearance and death of Dylan Redwine. Events that were not necessarily mass casualty situations affected the journalists just as much, if not more, than nationally covered crisis situations. Each subject brings a unique perspective to this study, based on his or her career.

Proximity to the event, personal relationship with victims

Personal proximity to crises being covered is a topic that surfaced in each of the six interviews conducted. This research concludes that proximity to catastrophic events plays a role in a journalist's mindset while reporting on a crisis. Anastasiya Bolton lives in Aurora, Colo., with her family. Bolton frequently went to the movie theater James Holmes entered during the Dark Knight Rises, killing 12 people.

Actually, my husband wanted to go to that movie opening that night, and I told him no because I had a bunch of things going on right at the beginning of Friday morning. I could've been in theater nine or ten ... I was the lame wife and I said, no, we're not going to go, and that may have saved our lives.

Bolton's personal connection with the Aurora movie theater changed the way she covered the shooting. As Dworznik (2011) noted, "the type of some stories journalists report on strongly correlate with the possibility of PTSD." Bolton discussed her proximity to Aurora during the interview:

This was my beat, my people, and my community. I had to remember to separate myself from who I was covering. Compartmentalize ... I still have a hard time

separating myself from the Aurora people because I've spent the last year covering them.

Bolton's reflection brings up another point. She is aware that she had to separate herself from the shooting while at work. One year later, Bolton still lives in Aurora. She still has the connection with the Aurora movie theater shooting simply because it was her neighborhood and her movie theater. On top of that, Bolton has formed deep relationships with victims and families of victims that make the tragedy even more difficult to comprehend.

I relate to people based on who they are. So Sam Soudani [father of Aurora victim, Farrah, who survived the shooting], he's very similar to me. He's very forward and he's very jokey. He deals with grief in a different way, by joking. So he was very sarcastic and very jokey as his daughter was in the ICU. He had to share that with people. He also had to share her with people. He dragged me into her ICU room and I still have that image in my head. She survived and she's beautiful and she's doing well ... when I did a follow up story, I had to see her. All I had [pictured] her in my mind was what [he] showed me on the 21st of July.

Bolton's perspective on Aurora, Colo., demonstrates a journalist's personal connections to tragedy and highlights the impact of each journalist's proximity to the events covered on a daily basis. Similarly, Adele Arakawa had a personal connection with the Columbine High School shooting. Her son was in a different high school in Littleton, Colo., the same town where the shooting occurred, when the massacre happened.

It impacts you personally, sure. The night of Columbine, I didn't get home until 2 a.m. ... My son had school that day and he was asleep, obviously, but I went into his room ... and I hugged him. He woke up and he said 'mom, what's wrong?' I said, 'nothing.' I said, 'I just wanted to hug you.' That's how it impacted me. As a parent, it did affect me pretty deeply I guess because of that. When you send your kids to school, you don't think they're not going to come home. You don't think they're not going to come home because somebody shot them. I guess that's kind of the shock factor of it.

Arakawa mentioned the Columbine High School shooting "made her second guess [her] whole perspective [on life]." This being said, Arakawa experienced proximity to the event because she had a son in high school in the same city. This differs from Bolton because it was not her son's high school, but it was still a situation she could relate to.

Kim Christiansen's personal connection with Columbine High School came from the fact that she grew up in the area.

I was a student in Jefferson County Public Schools. I grew up in Jefferson County Public Schools [the same district Columbine High School is in]. I went to Arvada West. We played Columbine High School. To me, it was like, this isn't happening. This doesn't happen in Jefferson County Public Schools ... When the sheriff's spokesperson came out with the numbers [of those dead], it was if I stopped breathing for a minute. No words could have come out of my mouth at that moment. I will never forget that moment.

Bolton, Arakawa and Christiansen had ties with the community in which they reported in, in which they worked in. Not only was it their job to report on the shootings for those affected, the communities they were reporting on were their communities. Christiansen noted, "The lessons I learned, with all of those media, the mainstream media, they all left within a week. We still live here ... there are all of these ripple effects that continue to haunt, and be a part of this community." Ripple effects include following up with victims and families who lost loved ones during a shooting, covering the anniversaries of a

tragedy, or, in the Aurora movie theater shooting case, covering the trial of James Holmes, which is scheduled to begin in February of 2014.

John Ferrugia, an investigative reporter with KMGH, brought up his experience covering war as a journalist and its impact on his perspective while reporting during crises. Proximity, in his situation, was his firsthand experience with warfare and being on the front lines of battle. He was a CBS correspondent for ten years and traveled to Beirut during that country's civil war.

Having been in a war, a war in Beirut, in the Middle East, your institutional knowledge is far greater than others who walk into this same situation ... I understand a great deal more than most people understand. That's not saying I'm better prepared, worse prepared, it's just knowledge I have. When I think about the six-year-old Veronica Moser-Sullivan from the Aurora shooting being shot and killed, I have a whole different image. In Beirut, I saw what James Holmes' weapon does to a child, to a woman, to a man [in real life]. Literally, it would take your arm off.

Ferrugia's experience demonstrates proximity because he understands what a war zone looks like. Ferrugia noted, during his interview, that he considered the Aurora movie

theater to be “very much a war zone, in its own kind of way.” He has taken past experiences with him and put them to use in other situations. He had a better understanding of what happened in the theater in July 2012, which he was able to share with his viewers to allow them to have better perspective.

Ferrugia is also unique in that he was the first journalist on the scene during the Columbine High School shooting, which will be discussed later in the analysis. Ferrugia was told to get in the KMGH helicopter and head to a drive-by shooting in Littleton, Colo., on April 19, 1999. When he arrived on scene, he realized right away that there was more than a drive-by shooting happening at the high school.

All at once, I see two cars in a ‘V’ ... and I can tell these cops are behind these cars firing and there are rounds coming out of the windows. I look down and I see one person down on the sidewalk, I see one person against the wall ... and I’m sitting there, I’m on the radio going, “this is no drive-by. There’s a siege going on. I’ve got three people down at least” ... there was a lot of fire coming out of that building.

Journalists who arrive first on the scene to a traumatic situation have a physical proximity to the event. They see the situation unfolding, which can affect someone more

than hearing second-hand reports of what occurred. Ferrugia witnessed Columbine High School victim Rachel Scott's last moments before death. He saw the police officers cross Scott's arms, close her eyes and put a blanket on her body in the front lawn of Columbine High School. Ferrugia said Scott's last moments still haunt him.

One of the most difficult things is that her parents didn't know [what had happened during her last moments] ... If I was Rachel's parent, I would want to know my daughter was treated that way ... I called [her parents], and in a very private conversation, I talked to them [about what I saw that day]. They were very thankful.

Ferrugia also mentioned Emily Keyes during his interview, the high school girl killed by a gunman at Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, Colo., in 2006. A 53-year-old gunman entered a classroom at the high school, taking six female students hostage. He sexually assaulted them and eventually let four of the girls go. Keyes and one other girl were not released. As the SWAT team stormed the classroom, the gunman used the girls as human shields. One hostage escaped while the gunman shot Keyes in the head as she attempted to get away.

That story, about Emily Keyes, had a tremendous impact on me ... I never met her, but I have a picture of her in my office that's on the wall. What she went through and her own self-sacrifice, and the emotional impact that it had on the SWAT team, on everybody involved, is incredible.

The events that have affected him the most, based on his proximity to the event and his personal connection with victims, demonstrate the impact of crisis journalism on reporters.

Kevin Torres, a reporter for KUSA, was on scene just an hour after the Aurora movie theater shooting happened. His experience on the scene will be discussed in detail later on. However, he took his experience from Aurora and used it to change how he dealt with families grieving.

Only a few weeks after Aurora, Jessica Ridgeway was murdered [the ten-year-old girl who was kidnapped, dismembered and killed in Denver suburbs]. I know reporters from competing stations went right after her family and threw their microphones and cameras in front of her parents' faces. I wouldn't do that. After seeing what happened at Aurora ... seeing families grieving during a horrible time

kind of reiterates the reason not to do something like that. I'm actually a person, not just a journalist.

When asked about personal connections he has had with his stories, Torres first mentioned how he would want his family to be treated if they were ever involved in a traumatic situation.

I've been fortunate enough to not have to deal with a lot of tragedy in my personal life. I've often wondered, or I think to myself, I have two young nephews, and what if anything ever happened to them? How would I feel about that if something happened to them and some reporter tried to stick a microphone in my family's faces.

Torres, again, brings forward the concept of self-identification journalists tend to have with victim's families. He identified with how they might want to be treated, which highlights his sensitivity toward victims. Self-identity, when dealing with victims of any situation as a journalist, also plays a role with proximity to an event. Torres identifies with victims when children are involved because of his nephews. Journalists self identify with stories based on their backgrounds, their personal lives and their emotions. Each

subject's proximity to varying events demonstrate a journalist's ability to relate their own lives to stories they cover professionally.

Torres is also known in the Denver television market as one of the reporters who grew closest to Dylan Redwine's family. Dylan Redwine went missing in November of 2012 while visiting his father in Southern Colorado. His remains were found in June of 2013. Torres wears a rubber bracelet on his wrist every day that says, "Justice for Dylan Redwine."

I started covering the Dylan Redwine story pretty much since day one. I became close with his family ... Dylan's mother Elaine gave me a "Hope for Dylan Redwine" bracelet. I've never taken it off since then. Up until recently, when ... his remains were found, that switched from "Hope for Dylan" to "Justice for Dylan." The only time I had it off was when I switched it from "Hope" to "Justice." I'll continue to wear it up until there is an arrest made and somebody's found guilty of his death. The family put a lot of faith in me and trusted me a lot ... It's one of those things that means a great deal to me ... I think it affects me emotionally when I look down at the bracelet every day.

Torres' relationship with the Redwine family is an example of proximity, as well as forming a personal relationship with victims. As he noted, even though the bracelet makes him emotional, he continues to wear it every day. Torres' actions tie back into a study conducted by Riegert and Olsson (2007, p. 267). The study notes, "journalists take the roles of psychologist, comforter and co-mourner if put in the right position."

Mitch Jelniker, a reporter and anchor for KMGH in Denver, noted individual stories where he knew more about the case have affected him more than mass-casualty situations. Jelniker said he has covered a few stories where he has identified with the victims' families, especially when children are involved, because he has two children of his own. Identifying with families that have children in difficult situations is another aspect of proximity. A particular story in Oklahoma City stood out in Jelniker's mind.

We couldn't even put on the air half the things this guy did to this little boy, this cute little boy. That thing haunted me more than some of those bigger stories because I talked to the mom, I talked to the dad, I was in their house.

As Jelniker stated, he had made a personal connection with the family of a boy who was sexually assaulted walking home from school in Oklahoma. He also noted:

I did a story once on a support group here in town for parents of children who have died accidentally ... They invited me to the group to share what they do and when I got there and started listening to these people's stories, it was unbelievable. There was a couple there who said, this takes a huge toll on your marriage ... The [father] said, ... 'when our daughter died at age 8, I wanted to keep her stuffed animal because it had her smells on it.' And the mom said, 'I want to take it and put it in the casket and bury it with her.' I was like, oh my God. Can you imagine a family having to think about that? The rest of us wouldn't even imagine thinking about that. It was years ago and I can tell you exactly where I was sitting in the room.

Jelniker said he identified with sources in this story because he is a father himself.

Christiansen identified with the mother of Columbine High School shooting victim Anne Marie Hochhalter in the weeks after the shooting. Hochhalter was eating lunch with friends outside of the high school when she was shot and paralyzed during the shooting.

Christiansen said Hochhalter's mother was struggling with the fact that her daughter would no longer walk again.

In Anne Marie's case, it reminded me of what my mother would be like. Her mom was really fragile. Her mom was just trying to get her head around what was going on. That her daughter, this beautiful, smart girl, wasn't going to walk again ... Her mom was quiet, but I kept thinking, wow, I could tell she's struggling. We followed her for a while and then it became time for Anne Marie to be released and that is when she really started struggling ... She did not feel they were ready to have Anne Marie in the house. People redesigned the house so she could get around. She was just overwhelmed with all of the needs Anne Marie would have. So she walked into a gun shop, bought a gun, and shot herself. Right there, in the gun shop. That was in October [1999]. So from April until October, this girl loses the ability to walk and then loses her mother. And just the other day, I saw on Facebook, she posted a picture of her with her mother when she was a little girl and she said, 'this would have been my mother's birthday.' I lost it. How does somebody go on? She has. Those were the stories that just keep me going back to that day.

Journalists' experiences discussed in this section demonstrate proximity to stories they cover. Proximity, as noted, can be physical or emotional closeness to a story.

Additionally, the journalists' responses illustrate the impact of covering crises, on any level; can affect reporters for their entire careers.

Being one of the first journalists on the scene

Being one of the first journalists on the scene of a traumatic event can impact reporters in the same way law enforcement personnel are affected. Witnessing death firsthand is part of a journalist's job. However, being on the scene of a mass shooting soon after it occurred changes journalists' perspectives. As mentioned by Javidi & Yadollahie (2012), it is possible for PTSD symptoms to develop in journalists who saw trauma firsthand.

John Ferrugia was the first journalist on the scene during the Columbine High School shooting. Ferrugia saw Dylan Klebold on the roof of the high school, firing shots at officers. He witnessed live gunfire exchange and witnessed high school students being shot on the front lawn of the high school.

The thing that I remember, so clearly, I saw Rachel against the wall, Rachel Scott. She was there and I saw her arm move. I knew she was still living. The other people that were down, it was pretty clear, especially from the blood surrounding them, it was pretty clear that they were ... dead. They weren't moving ... they

went in [like] a wedge trying to get Rachel. When they got to her, you could see from the helicopter, they had to drag her because they had to stay down, had to keep their weapons out ... all at once they realized she was dead. You saw people throwing their helmets off, you saw them raising their arms ... And then there was the most poignant moment when an officer knelt down and made sure her legs were together, he took her hands and put them across her chest, he got a blanket, he put it over her. He was very reverent, and then covered her. It was a very poignant moment to see.

During this interview, 15 years after the Columbine High School shooting, Ferrugia became extremely emotional while re-imagining what he had witnessed. Journalists who arrive on the scene of a crime soon after it is committed display PTSD symptoms and emotional trauma (Javidi & Yadollahie, 2012).

Jelniker has also been one of the first journalists on the scene of many traumatic situations, including the Edmond, Oklahoma post office mass shooting in 1986. A postal service office employee opened fire, killing 14 postal service employees and injuring six others, before taking his own life. Jelniker was also on the scene the 1995 Oklahoma City terrorist bombing which killed 168 people and injured more than 600, during his time as a

reporter in Oklahoma City. When asked about his experiences as a journalist on the scene of a traumatic situation, he brought up the families on the scene of the events:

Often times, families of people who may be victims, they're not sure, show up at the scene. Parents of kids at Platte Canyon, parents of kids at Columbine, spouses of workers at the building in Oklahoma City. They're standing there, just off camera, within arm's reach of you, hanging on your every word. Even though I wish I could tell them more. Is there another bomb? Is there another gunman? Is he shot and killed, did he kill himself? If I don't know the answers to anything ...

I don't want to go down the wrong road.

In those incidents, Jelniker experienced the aftermath of a crisis and was also a witness to frantic, emotional people arriving at the scene, worried about a loved one. Arakawa also mentioned the people who show up to a crime scene, looking for information.

Families of the victims, families of the survivors ... come, and ... they want information. They see you as an information conduit. They kind of hang around, listen to what you're saying on the air, they actually come up to you and ask if you've heard anything else, and what's the latest in the investigation.

Arakawa mentioned the people at the crime scene make it more important to report the correct information and to quickly get the most recent information out to the people affected by the crisis.

Torres arrived at the Aurora movie theater shooting a little more than an hour after it happened. After working for the 9 and 10 p.m. newscasts in the hours before the shooting, he went home to spend time with friends. He then started seeing tweets and Facebook posts about a possible shooting at a movie theater in Aurora. He went to KUSA and headed out to the scene with a photographer.

No one knew exactly what was going on ... [We were told to] swing by Denver Health [hospital] first because we were thinking maybe they would have started to bring patients there. We swung by Denver Health and didn't see anything at all. We were wondering why ambulances weren't coming there ... We didn't realize at that point that there was a shortage of ambulances and response wasn't what it should've been at that point, that police were trying to get victims to hospitals as fast as they could in their cars. We called the newsroom and they told us to get over to the theater, so we did.

When reporting live, there are other activities going on at the scene that can be traumatic to a reporter, as Torres discussed:

On the way over to the theater, we had heard on the scanner that there may be bombs in vehicles in the parking lot. So of course, being in the parking lot, you're wondering in the back of your mind, what exactly is going on ... Adrenaline just goes rushing through your body and all you're focused on is telling the story and trying to gather the facts as fast as possible.

Torres' response to a crisis situation, along with Ferrugia and Jelniker's perspectives, can all tie into the Journalist Trauma Exposure Scale, used to measure and categorize the stress level a journalist is under while reporting in the field (Pyeovich et al., 2003). Scores are calculated by adding up the number of Potentially Traumatic Experiences journalists come across in their careers. When asked to list the traumatic events each of the journalists had experienced, no one could come up with an exact number. Each mentioned the fact that, on a weekly basis, they are covering car accidents, life-threatening injuries, traumatic deaths, assaults and natural disasters, all that are part of the scale (p. 326). Subjects' responses to the scale demonstrate the large amount of trauma each journalist will see in their career. Each subject interviewed for this research has a

unique list of traumatic events they have experienced throughout their careers.

Additionally, each journalist has stories that impact them more than others. As previously mentioned, Jelniker has two stories he often thinks about, the little boy who was sexually assaulted and the family debating on whether or not to keep their little girl's teddy bear when she passed away. Those stories were not heavily covered, mass casualty situations, but they affected him more than others he has covered. Jelniker's example demonstrates that the Trauma Exposure Scale could be difficult to calculate for veteran reporters who have seen potentially hundreds of stories and spoken with hundreds of grieving families about the loss of a loved one.

Additionally, Torres mentioned that he has put himself in dangerous situations as a journalist who arrived at an active crime scene in attempt to find the most recent information. Torres discussed how he was not thinking about himself and his safety during his initial coverage of the Aurora movie theater shooting.

The back of my mind, I think to myself, if it was a still a very dangerous scene, people wouldn't have allowed us to go over there. I tell myself that, but police were occupied themselves and were having a difficult time dealing with

everything else on their end. So, it's kind of a defense mechanism that you put up for yourself. You're not really thinking about yourself, your safety.

Torres' description draws a parallel to previously mentioned research completed by (Backholm & Björkqvist, 2012b). Journalists put themselves at risk and on the front lines of traumatic events to serve the public, leaving the journalist at risk for experiencing after-effects including PTSD symptoms and fatigue syndrome.

Immersion, time spent on story

Once an actual crisis situation is over, the hours and the days after the event can also impact journalists. This can best be described as "immersion" because journalists covering the crisis are stationed outside, for example, the movie theater, or the high school, where a shooting happened, for days afterward, to report on information when it is released. Victim's stories are told and society's questions are answered.

As each of the subjects interviewed mentioned, their role as a journalist is to inform the public, which is a large task, especially when little information has been released about tragic events. Rumors circulate quickly during crisis situations, especially on social media. Journalists are responsible for reporting accurate information in a timely matter. Accuracy is one aspect of reporting that law enforcement officials wish

journalists would strive to perfect, according to an FBI media representative who was interviewed for this research. His perspective on accuracy and expectations of journalists during emergency situations will be discussed in a later section. Accuracy is a responsibility that weighs heavily on the subjects interviewed for this research.

Anastasiya Bolton described her days at the movie theater in Aurora after the shooting happened:

The long hours didn't take a toll on me for a while. Because when you're in it, you're not thinking. You're just thinking what's your next step, who do you need to call, how can you move the story forward, right? You're kind of going through this, it didn't matter to me when the next break was, you don't think about food, you don't think about any of the normal things you do on an average work day, like what's for lunch. You just kind of go from, I knew I had to be on TV at 2. I knew I had a [live shot] at 5 and 6 and ... 9 and ... 10. So what am I going to do for each of those so it means something to people. The realization of what happened came after. Like on, maybe, Monday night. When I did a 7a.m. to 6 p.m. shift and not a double [shift]. I went to court for [theater shooting suspect]

Holmes. After that, you get home and you're like, wow, that happened. And then, on Tuesday, is really when I allowed myself to feel something.

Bolton's responses were similar to the other subjects' thoughts about covering an event for an extended amount of time. Christiansen said, "I kept thinking, why can't I sleep, I've been working nonstop." Ferrugia used an analogy that relates to the idea of being immersed in an event for weeks after it occurs. He said he would go on air, get off, make calls, and go back on the air, in a continuous cycle – until there was no more information to report.

I can tell you, my immediate thought was, when I got the call ... was, we're starting down that long, dark tunnel again. So that kind of emotional attachment to an event, I likened it to going into a dark tunnel. For three weeks, we did nothing but try to dig into this. [We were] under deadline pressure every day ... We would cover Columbine, working 15, 16, hour days, go to sleep, come back, you were just in a cycle of, you know, as I was coming into the Aurora shooting, I'm thinking, we're going back in the tunnel. You're doing nothing, but focus, focus, focus, and trying to figure out questions that you're trying to answer as you

go through the day. It's deadline, after deadline, after deadline. It's exhausting.

Your adrenaline level will stay up for hours.

Bolton and Ferrugia's descriptions of covering breaking news situations highlight how television journalists are immersed in stories for days at a time. The public is searching for information – whether it is the latest number of the injured or dead, or the latest on the suspects involved in a shooting. The public expects television reporters who are live in the field to deliver the most recent information. Adrenaline, as both Ferrugia and Bolton noted, keeps the reporters alert and able to do their job. That adrenaline draws similarities to athletic events, where adrenaline helps athletes stay energized and able to reach the end of the game. The end of the game for reporters happens days after a mass shooting occurs. It happens after there are a smaller number of updates and the newest information is being released at a slower pace. Journalists and law enforcement personnel are working together to keep the public up to date. Journalists slow down coverage when law enforcement officials reduce the number of press conferences they are having, perhaps from being hourly, to being daily, to being weekly. Journalists stop covering the event continuously once there are no more developments in the story happening every hour.

Immersion is common with any large story in local television. For weeks after the incident, reporters cover stories of survival, of grief and of courage of victims trying to put their lives back together.

Jelniker offered a solution to get out of the “dark tunnel,” during his interview, noting his old employer would pull a reporter and a photographer out of the mix of doing a story about the large incident, and assign them to a city council meeting or a sporting event, “to try to give the journalists time to breathe.” Jelniker also mentioned, he does not access his cell phone, his laptop or television news during his time off when crises happen to take a mental break from the events.

Immersion can also be related to the every day job of a journalist. Every newsroom is filled with press releases and information that needs to be shared with the public. Arakawa noted that journalists see more information than the normal person, especially relating to “heinous crimes.”

We do see [and] experience things that most people do not, and frankly should not have to. There are things that we don’t put on air because we should not share those with our viewers. We’re exposed to it and we see it and you can’t think that doesn’t impact you in some way.

Backholm and Björkqvist's research (2012a) details that journalists often struggle with what material to publish (p.184). Bolton, Jelniker and Arakawa brought up the debate between what the public should and should not know during their interviews. Bolton related that debate to information released about the 2012 murder and dismemberment of 10-year-old Jessica Ridgeway. "Details were released, that even I didn't want to read. Things were so gruesome in that case. An average, every day murder really doesn't phase me anymore." It was similar to information that surfaced about the Columbine High School shooting suspects in the months after the event. Christiansen mentioned the debate in the newsroom when the infamous VHS tapes were released. Klebold and Harris had filmed themselves in Harris' basement, wearing trench coats and discussing their hatred for humanity, even naming some students they wanted to kill.

We had a lively debate about the value about releasing [the tapes] on TV. We played about 10, 15 seconds of it. It wasn't going to serve anyone, it wasn't going to advance the story. They had built bombs in their basements, they had gone to shooting ranges. They had planned this horrible things for months and months. They're demons on tapes... it re-traumatized people to see that stuff.

Regardless of the event a journalist is covering, the subjects conclude that it is easy to get immersed in an event or learn more details about a crime that are difficult to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

Emotional response, exhibiting emotion

Reporters are expected to deliver timely, accurate information every day. Each reporter is paid to work as a watchdog, to hold people accountable for their actions, and to keep the public up to date on the latest occurrences in the community. On-air reporters are expected to deliver the information professionally. Although there are differences in opinion regarding the level of emotion television reporters are expected to have on-air, the subjects interviewed for this research all mentioned emotion cannot get in the way of covering the news. Emotions need to be controlled, especially during a traumatic situation, because the public is depending on those journalists for information. As noted in research done by Heider (2005), the community in which a journalist works is expecting a public forum for citizens to enter as well as being a watchdog, being unbiased, accurate and fast while reporting breaking news. Despite the long hours, the adrenaline highs and the constant need to report and look for information, emotion

surfaces eventually, according to the subjects interviewed for this research. As Bolton noted:

You take on other's people grief. I don't know how other reporters deal with situations like this, but I say to people, you can't report on people's tragedy and not feel it. When you write it, it doesn't come across right. It comes across as dry. That's now what their personal stories are about. You have to allow yourself to feel in order to tell their story to a viewer in a way that comes across emotional, and comes across right.

However, Bolton also mentioned, it is difficult to feel that emotion and to truly understand what it feels like to "have a loved one be gone in an instant." Bolton tried to address Aurora movie theater shooting victims with respect and understanding by interviewing a man who knew tragedy too well. John Michael Keyes is the father of Emily Keyes, the high school student killed at Platte Canyon High School in 2006 after being taken hostage by a 53-year-old man who entered her classroom. After the Aurora movie theater shooting happened, Bolton spoke with Mr. Keyes about how to deal with those in the middle of the grieving process.

I called him up and said, “listen, would you talk to me? Because I think you have something to offer people.” Obviously, the people in the hospital aren’t watching but maybe their loved ones, their friends are watching. Somehow, your message of how you get through something like that. I don’t think they know how.

Bolton interviewed Mr. Keyes that day, asking him to give tips to those at home dealing with the trauma of the Aurora movie theater shooting. Bolton’s reaction during the Aurora movie theater shooting mirrors findings from Backholm and Björkqvist (2012a), that found, instead of citing personal trauma, journalists focus on work-related issues, including “how to approach victims on the scene” (p.184). Bolton mentioned the realization of what had happened at the movie theater in July 2012 came after she spoke with Mr. Keyes. When asked how she deals with the emotion, she said, “my husband gets the brunt of the crap. A shrink helps you deal with that. That’s who you go to. But you, you sort of have to come to a realization that that’s who you have to go see.” Bolton called Dr. John Nikoleti, a psychiatrist known in the Denver community for dealing with traumatic situations, to do an interview with her for a story about how viewers should be coping with the trauma associated with the Aurora movie theater shooting.

I'm like, "hey, would you come talk to us about how people need to deal with this, what precautions they need to take, what they should look out for." I'm like, "I'll be honest with you, somebody told me I should make an appointment with you and I'm not there yet." He says we should talk after the interview. He comes to do the interview ... and after I talked to him that day, he sat down with me off the grid, he said, "come see me." I'm like, "I don't know, can I afford you, you probably cost too much." He told me to talk to human resources and they'll take care of it. And I did. I went to see him a couple of times and that helped because I really, I could start crying at the drop of a hat.

Bolton's comments relate to the "culture of silence" discussed in the literature review.

Some believe expectations in the newsroom make it difficult to deal with psychological trauma on the job. Instead of turning to professional help, journalists lean on family members to deal with emotion. Ferrugia mentioned he has discussed highly emotional days on the job with a professional.

I started seeing, especially after Columbine, not PTSD, but something like it. I couldn't get [Rachel Scott's face] off my mind. I couldn't stop. You have to be able to come down. At one point, well after the fact, I had to figure out, is this

normal? Okay, yeah, you're fine. Even today when I talk about Rachel Scott, it's very difficult. The thing that gets you about these things is that people weren't involved in any reckless behavior ... These people were doing nothing but going to school, going to a theater ... They were totally innocent.

Ferrugia's reflection corresponds with findings that show work-related traumatic events are a direct influence of PTSD, and the fact that the possibility of PTSD is directly related to the frequency of experiencing work-related crises (Brown, Evangelini, & Greenburg, 2012). Ferrugia said most newsrooms he has worked in have had resources available for those who want to speak about traumatic incidents that happen on the job. Christiansen went to a counselor who came to KUSA after the Aurora movie theater shooting to figure out how to answer questions her 11-year-old son had about the incident.

The biggest thing for me was that I had become a mom since Columbine. So [the Aurora movie theater shooting] was a really hard day. My son's old enough to text me and say, did they get the guy for sure? ... I kept thinking, what am I going to tell him? When they offered up those counselors who came into the building, I met with them. I had some questions answered about how to answer [my son's] questions. He was going to continue to ask questions about Aurora. Plus, every

time we go somewhere, other families, or sometimes strangers, say stuff to me and he's right there. He's got like four ears when something comes up that I don't want him to hear. I wanted to be able to answer questions the right way. I did talk about it with him a little bit. I tried to assure him that I can't say for sure something like this won't ever happen again.

Christiansen also discussed how it was a lot harder to find closure with the Aurora movie theater shooting as compared to the Columbine High School shooting. Klebold and Harris took their own lives once the shooting was over at Columbine High School. Holmes, however, was arrested outside of the Aurora movie theater after the shooting. He also booby-trapped his apartment with multiple explosive devices. Holmes is expected to go to trial in February of 2014. He faces a total of 142 criminal charges in relation to the shooting.

I still haven't figured out what my feelings are ... It's so different when the bad guys are dead. There are all of these questions that haunt me about Columbine, but the shooters are gone. In [Aurora's] case, there are still all of these questions, but he is still here. It's a very different dynamic about where you put your anger, where you look to with questions.

Christiansen's search for answers can relate to the study mentioned in the literature review that concluded the most common theme observed in Columbine High School coverage was the attribution of responsibility. In other words, it is a natural emotional process to find someone, or something, to blame (An & Gower, 2012).

Jelniker mentioned his television station in Oklahoma City forced each employee to sit with a professional after the Oklahoma City bombing to discuss emotional issues and psychological trauma journalists may have experienced. He said it was helpful, even for those who did not believe they needed to see someone. This is an example of what Killeen (2012) deemed important in her research on crisis journalism. Killeen's research found the role of a newsroom is imperative while dealing with traumatic situations and it is each newsroom's responsibility to check on the well-being of every who covers trauma (2012).

Bolton said it is difficult to not be emotionally involved with victims of a crime. However, Arakawa said, it is easy for her to separate herself from the emotion of the story she is covering in order to do her job.

It is not hard to separate myself from the emotion when I'm on a level in the field.

A lot of people are depending on you. It's not just your viewers. It is your camera

crew, it's your engineer in the truck. It's your producer. A lot of people are depending on you to kind of be that cornerstone. You set the tone and you kind of are driving, pretty much. If you cannot do your job, they can't do their jobs either.

The reality of being a journalist, as noted by Arakawa, is that crises mean journalists will be put in difficult situations. Despite being able to contain her emotion to do her job, she said she understands that there are victims of each and every crime, and empathy is a trait that you have to have as a journalist. When asked for an example, she brought up the Columbine High School shooting.

The station said, 'do you feel comfortable approaching the parents of some of these children?' All of us were asked that. I said, 'no, not really.' I'm not the kind that goes knocking on doors to say, 'hey, how do you feel?' I know damn well how they feel.

Arakawa said it is difficult to reach out to a grieving family immediately after a crisis situation happens. "You reach out to these people and you realize they're human. You realize that they need something to hang on to that gives them ... a tie to the person they lost." Arakawa detailed her relationship with Columbine High School victim Kyle Velasquez's family. Velasquez was a 16-year-old with special needs who was killed in

Columbine High School's library during the shooting. Arakawa said she reached out in a subtle way and formed a life-long bond with Velasquez's parents, who send her a birthday card every year.

Some of the things we report are just inhumane. And how you keep that in perspective is knowing that behind this heinous act, there are people who are true who still know what it is to be human. Who have a sense of community, a sense of family.

Christiansen also said the importance of remembering the people behind the difficult stories.

While it's difficult to report on a lot of the things we report on, we have to realize there's family behind that story ... We owe it to them to ask the hard questions, why this shouldn't have happened. That's our job now. It's not just stating the facts. It's about the people behind that story.

Jelniker brought up a different perspective on the emotion he has experienced during his career. He discussed emotions at work make him live his personal life differently.

Some days it's really heartbreaking to do those things but any emotion I'm experiencing is like one-one millionth of what a victims family, or a victim

themselves, may be suffering ... And I also, this may sound bizarre, but when you go to a scene like that that are really, really heartbreaking, and tense, and dangerous, and violent, you also see the best of humanity. Now, all of the sudden, people who don't even know each other are helping one another.

Jelniker also discussed that his profession has allowed him to raise his children with a new perspective on life, noting that being a journalist "makes you happy for what you have" in your day to day life.

My daughter once said, 'I can tell when you've had to cover something that wasn't very pleasant because you hug us a lot.' That's kind of cool ... Tragedy makes you stop and say, wow, okay, I don't care that the garage door isn't working, or that my daughter got a C- on an algebra test. All of those things seem so insignificant. It really does remind you of what's important."

Avoidance and numbing

As mentioned in the literature review, PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop after a person encounters a traumatic situation. The most prominent PTSD symptom brought up by subjects interviewed for this study was avoidance, one of the

three categories mentioned by the American Psychological Association (2000) and First and Tasman (2004).

Avoidance symptoms include circumventing places, people and sounds associated with a certain event. Symptoms can also include avoiding the event by not participating in discussions about the incident.

Subjects related avoidance to immersion when discussing traumatic situations. After coming out of the “dark tunnel,” Bolton’s emotions began to set in. As mentioned previously, Bolton became emotional on her way home from speaking with John Michael Keyes about how to deal with victims at the Aurora movie theater shooting.

After I lost it with John Michael [Keyes] (father of Emily Keyes) ... John [Michael Keyes] is calling me saying, “are you okay? I know you’re not okay. You need to go see someone. I’m going to call [a psychiatrist] for you.” I’m like, “don’t, don’t do that yet. I’m not ready. I’m not ready to go see someone. I’m not there.”

As Bolton said, she was not ready to deal with the trauma she had witnessed. This relates back to avoidance. Christiansen had a delayed reaction to the grief after the Columbine High School shooting like Bolton.

For me, I think it was ten days after or eleven days later. I was going to an event in Boulder that I was emceeding. It was for a charity. I had no idea what it was, I had cried many, many times with these families and shared in special moments and struggled to sleep. I lost it on the way to Boulder. I mean, uncontrollable sobbing. I was like, I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know how I am going to even get the event. I think it all just caught up with me. It was, I've never done that in my whole lifetime ... I realized now that I was probably suppressing that for a while. I just lost it at that moment and I can't say it got a lot easier, but I did feel better. I had this incredible relief knowing that I had been apparently living with this. I slept a little bit better.

Avoidance can also relate to the idea of not seeking professional help. A majority of journalists surveyed in 2009 did not feel comfortable reaching out at their news organization for help (Killeen, 2012). This is when the role of a news station becomes important, as mentioned by all six subjects. Jelniker's employer in Oklahoma City made each reporter, photographer and producer see a professional counselor after the bombing, even if they did not believe they needed to. Arakawa said that KUSA in Denver did the same thing after the Columbine High School shooting.

Whether or not a reporter is ready to see a professional to deal with trauma, each of the six subjects dealt with the emotion once they returned home. Arakawa said, “If you’ve got to cry, you go home and cry. You don’t cry when you’re doing your job. You try not to. It’s very emotional sometimes.” Ferrugia said he thinks of home as a place where he does not have to think about the trauma he covered:

When I go home, I don’t want to talk. I just want to be quiet. My family knows that, I just don’t want to talk. I’ve just been immersed in it all day. I don’t want to have to explain it to somebody else. I just don’t have the emotional toll, the energy to do that after working so many hours.

Jelniker also mentioned avoidance, noting that he does not “want to come home and emotionally barf on the family. My wife knows I just start hugging everyone more because I appreciate what I have.” Despite the avoidance that occurs, Ferrugia discussed how the long hours had an emotional toll on him, but he did not let it get in the way of covering the events at hand.

Another aspect of avoidance is gallows humor, as noted in research done by Watson. The research mentions, “gallows humor is humor that treats serious, frightening, or painful subject matter in a light or satirical way. Joking about death fits the term most

literally, but making fun of life-threatening, disastrous, or terrifying situations fits the category as well.” (p. 27, 2012). Jelniker mentioned it during his interview.

I think a lot of reporters joke and are sarcastic during difficult situations. They aren't able to grasp what's actually happening around them so they make jokes about the dead body in the middle of the street. It's a defense mechanism. So many journalists laugh at things just so they don't lose it. Just so they can keep it together to do their job.

Jelniker also mentioned a “macho” mechanism is another defense mechanism he has seen in the field. “A lot of people say ... ‘I'm tough, I've been to murder scenes, I've seen dead bodies.’ No, you really need to sit down and talk about it.” Talking about it is something many psychiatrists recommend (Killeen, 2012). Each of the subjects interviewed noted it is important for newsrooms to have resources available for those who have witnessed trauma. But in the end, each subject said it is up to the journalist to face the situation and make an appointment.

Torres said he feels “numb” when asked about the traumatic things he has witnessed in his career, which is another factor of avoidance. (Javidi, H., & Yadollahie, 2012).

There are many assignments where I've seen dead bodies, dead children, all that stuff. Every single time, it hits you in a different way. I don't think there is a specific way for somebody to be trained and ready to deal with it. I think it just comes from experience, and, after a while, you just become numb to it.

Subsequent events, personal beliefs

After a traumatic event settles down and there are fewer and fewer stories developing out of a crisis situation, journalists begin reporting on daily events and other news stories not related to the particular event once again. It may take days, and sometimes even weeks to get back to regular reporting.

The Aurora movie theater shooting was on a Friday, and each local station had 24-hour coverage throughout the weekend. New stories were developing as more information surfaced about alleged shooter James Holmes, his booby-trapped apartment and the victims. Although it took about two weeks for regular stories to begin making it into the newscasts, it eventually happened. This section observes how the Aurora movie theater shooting, and traumatic events, affect the reporters after the fact. Each journalist was asked about his or her role as a journalist.

Ferrugia discussed that his role is only one small part of the coverage of any event. He said it was important to do his job to become a part of the journalistic coverage on every platform, including television, radio, newspaper and photography:

Any issue is a mosaic. I can do a two-hour documentary on the Aurora shooting.

It's only one piece of the mosaic. My colleagues here, nationally and internationally, newspapers, magazines, are bringing in a bigger picture. In my mosaic, I have to be one thread in the cloth. I have to make sure that I'm giving viewers the best and most honest perspective that I can.

Arakawa, Bolton and Jelniker feel strongly that the primary purpose when they are reporting on breaking news on the field is to get information to the public in a timely and accurate matter. Accuracy is increasingly important as social media plays a larger role at breaking news scenes as well. Bolton mentioned journalists are expected to be transparent, as did Arakawa, who said:

It's kind of like being a paramedic who works an ambulance shift. That paramedic comes on a horrible accident scene. That paramedic, does his or her job, to the best of their ability, the way they were trained to do it, and then if they have any personal issues, or problems or residuals after that they need to deal with it on a

personal level. While they're doing their job, they have to do their job. My job is to convey the most recent information I can give, as accurately and as quickly as I can. Therefore, my job as a journalist is to disseminate information. That's my primary function. I don't need to editorialize. I don't need to draw conclusions. I am simply there to pass along information.

As mentioned by Himmelstein and Faithorn (2010):

sense of self is directly tied to these reporters' professional success ... Many top reporters share a conviction that their work has purpose, specifically that they can help their audience gain greater insight into the larger social meaning of the events they report (p. 546).

Many believe journalists also focus on seeking professional success while reporting on traumatic events. Emmy Awards, Pulitzer Prizes and Murrow Awards are just some of the recognition journalists, photographers and news producers receive every year. Journalists and newsrooms submit content from coverage of events ranging from local news, to breaking news, to continuous coverage. The highly coveted awards are extremely competitive to receive in the journalism world.

Although journalists cover tragedies and win highly distinguished awards for coverage of crises, there is evidence of guilt when journalists win awards based on someone else's hardship. The best example of this is award-winning National Geographic photographer Kevin Carter's photo depicting the 1993 famine in Sudan. Carter won a Pulitzer Prize for a photo of a starving child in Sudan, crawling to get food, with a vulture sitting right behind the child, as if the vulture was waiting for him to die. The photo ran in the New York Times and numerous other publications. Many people contacted the New York Times to learn the fate of the small child, only to learn it was unknown if the child reached the feeding center. Carter reportedly waited for 20 minutes before leaving the scene. He chased the vulture away before leaving. However, the controversy of the photo led to Carter's suicide in 1994 (McLeod, 1994).

In relation to Columbine High School shooting and the Aurora theater shooting, both KMGH and KUSA won a wide range of awards for coverage of the shootings. KUSA won two Heartland Emmy awards for Aurora movie theater shooting coverage, including best evening newscast and a continuous coverage award for Brandon Rittiman, a reporter. KUSA's ten o'clock newscast the night of the Aurora movie theater shooting also won a regional and a national Murrow Award for best evening newscast, produced

by Will Swope. KUSA also won three regional Emmy awards for the Columbine High School shooting coverage in 1999. KMGH won an Emmy for Columbine High School shooting coverage as well. When asked about being recognized for her work, Bolton noted:

You know, that sort of, it's humbling to be recognized and it does make me smile, I'm not going to lie, but that's not why I do it ... The responsibility of keeping your word if you gave somebody your word and the responsibility of being honest and giving the full story with all of its sides. [That's why I do it.]

Torres responded in a similar fashion, bringing up Cole Rhodes, a football player from Eastern Colorado who died in a tragic car accident before his senior year of high school.

I don't think that my coverage makes me think about what awards I can win. I have friends who are reporters and would like to be on every big story possible, it gives them a face and allows them to be recognized ... [Cole's family] invited me back to do a story when his team was playing for the state [championship]. They ended up winning. And, you know, we've won a few awards for that story and we've given the awards to that family every single time. It's one of those things

where, if they trust you that much, you know you're doing your job right. You're making an impact.

Bolton and Torres both acknowledge that there is, indeed, a double-edged sword when it comes to awards for journalism. When a larger scale story occurs in the area in which a reporter works, there is always an opportunity to win awards for coverage. However, both believe, when it comes to covering a tragedy, the family and the victims come before ever thinking about an award.

The roles of journalists in the newsroom and in the field were brought up repeatedly during interviews for this research. Each subject was also asked about their beliefs and how their perspectives on life have changed since beginning their careers. Every subject said seeing, hearing, reading and learning about murders, shootings and crises every day in a journalists' career does affect their perspective on the world, in some way. Bolton said:

Absolutely (I have hardened my perspective on life). I am much more callous.

After Jessica Ridgeway, your average, ordinary murder, [this] sounds terrible, [but it is] not interesting. I know it's someone's wife, husband, kid, I know it is

sad. But after someone kidnaps a ten-year-old and dismembers her, and does other things, you just kind of like, well, that's the epitome of evil.

Jelniker had a different perspective on having a hardened way of looking at the world. He said he has covered so many tragedies, that it helps him keep things in perspective and to focus on your job as a journalist. When asked about what he believes the future holds, he said:

Unfortunately, I think there are going to be more crises, just the way the world is.

If I never cover something this big again, I'd be just fine ... It's like all of us saying we hope there are no more wars either, in reality, we know they're going to happen.

Arakawa said, regardless of what the future holds, it is important to give viewers of television news a "balanced diet" of good news and bad news. During her interview, she discussed the fact that a lot of news covered on a daily basis is "bad news," which can include a murder, a crime scene, an arrest or an accident.

I feel like [KUSA] makes an effort to balance the newscast. I used to argue, "oh my gosh, why are we wasting 30 seconds on that [story about a puppy]." Over the years, my position has kind of changed. You give them the meat, but you have to

have something to balance it out. Otherwise, your diet becomes one thing, and it's not healthy for you. You have to have a good balance.

Preparation, relationship with law enforcement

Journalists work every day to bring their communities news that could affect them. As each subject mentioned, the role of a journalist is to accurately deliver information to the public. Every journalist interviewed for this research was asked about the longevity of their career, including how to preparation for future traumatic situations. The Aurora movie theater shooting in July of 2012 changed subjects' perspectives on the community they are currently working to serve. As Bolton mentioned:

There's nothing like Aurora. Nothing like it. I'm forever changed. You ask people who have dealt with Columbine, there's nothing that could prepare you for that ... You could learn how to do interviews with cops, you can learn how to cover press conferences efficiently, you can learn how to ask questions, you can have a helpful background when you're asking the main FBI guy when they're speaking ... Emotionally, there's nothing, I don't think anybody could do; to deal with so much grief.

Similarly, when asked about possible preparation for the Aurora movie theater shooting, Kevin Torres also mentioned, “you can be on 100 different assignments and nothing can prepare you until you’re there.” Despite not being able to prepare for a crisis of that magnitude, Killeen (2012) argues a newsroom’s responsibility is of great importance while preparing journalists for trauma.

Ferrugia mentioned, as a journalist, it helps to have a positive relationship with law enforcement officials during any breaking news situation. “It’s all the work you’ve done that brings you to the level where you’re able to do this kind of work. It’s all the institutional memory you have, the relationships, the trust factors.” Previous research notes the biggest problems for journalists during traumatic situations include a “lack of coordination between PIO's and journalists, lack of resources for appropriately evaluating information and disseminating it efficiently, and a difference in perception of PIO's and journalists towards each other’s role during emergency situations” (Lowrey et al., 2007 p. 1). This relates to journalists’ relationships with law enforcement before an actual event like the Aurora movie theater shooting occurs. Bolton and Ferrugia both discussed efforts to build trust with local law enforcement and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in

Denver. Bolton participated in an FBI citizen's academy to learn more about the local FBI branch and to understand what their job is on a daily basis.

A media coordinator for the FBI, who has asked to remain anonymous, noted that the media "often get out of control. They're trying to scoop each other, putting out misinformation ... or jeopardizing [the] prosecution." He discussed the importance of being careful of what to say to the media, especially in an instance with Aurora movie theater shooting suspect James Holmes and the gag order that has been established in the case against him and his alleged actions in July 2012.

If we put out a piece of information to the public, we could jeopardize the prosecution. Before the big press conferences, we put everyone in one room -- the US Attorney, the DA, the mayor, the chief—we went through talking points. We are trying to keep the public as informed as possible without jeopardizing the prosecution. No crisis is the same. Every one has its own consequences. The conferences are about the victims. We can never drive the media to remember it is about the victims.

He also highlighted the importance of building a relationship with journalists he works with. He mentioned he respected some more than others, based on previous encounters

with individual journalists and individual stations in the local television market. Local journalists, he said, have made an effort to take him out for lunch or to send him an email to catch up. He said those relationships do indeed give certain reporters an advantage when everyone is searching for information during breaking news situations.

It's tragic that there's not a better understanding of the cultural similarities between the journalists and the law enforcement. If you don't have a good relationship with the press, it doesn't work. Building those relationships is a key component for success. I would rather build a relationship with the reporter before the crisis than try to cultivate one during the crisis. If I don't have a relationship with you, I'm not going to confide in you ... This is not a statement of disgust or disrespect. I don't care if the national media comes knocking. I deal with the local reporter ... The national reporters' reputations don't phase me. I deal with the local reporters every single day, every single week.

Regardless of preparation and the relationship journalists build with local law enforcement officials, one thing still remains -- journalists have an obligation to the public. As Arakawa summarized:

We primarily are disseminators of information and it's our job to be fair, accurate and balanced when we do that. Now, some younger generations feel like it's there job to offer perspective. I'm old school. I do not. I think our job is to present information and people can draw their own conclusions and have their own perspectives.

Every subject interviewed for this study had different perspectives based on their backgrounds, their careers and their proximity to every event. These findings explore journalists' ideals and how beliefs have changed throughout their career. Each journalist has a different personality, which plays a large role in how they act at traumatic scenes.

Christiansen is known at KUSA for being emotional and being invested in sources.

Arakawa is known for checking accuracy of each story she reads on air, and is old school when it comes to presenting the news and allowing viewers to form their own

conclusions based on the information she shares with them. Bolton is a stronger

personality. She is not afraid to share her opinion, or to jump into a conversation and

speak out when there is something she can contribute to the conversation. Torres is a

storyteller, with an eye for telling a heartwarming story from an entirely new perspective.

The pieces he produces evoke emotion for the sources in his stories. He's able to

characterize his subjects with natural sound and vivid description. Ferrugia is a watchdog journalist who is confident with his ability to get to the bottom of every investigation. And Jelniker is sensitive and compassionate about his job as a morning anchor. Each subject has a completely different personality, but their personalities allow them to be successful journalists. Bolton, Ferrugia, Arakawa, Christiansen, Torres and Jelniker have all witnessed a wide range of crises, but they are able to do their job: share information with viewers in an accurate and timely manner, in order to serve the public. Each journalist interviewed is truly passionate about what they do and about what purpose they serve in the community.

Chapter 6: Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations, including sample size and the single location. If unlimited time and resources were available, it would be valuable to interview journalists on the scene of many other public shootings or mass-casualty situations. After looking into other qualitative studies (Brown, Evangeli, Greenburg, 2012), six was deemed an acceptable sample size for this study. However, results would be more conclusive if more subjects' opinions and ideals were documented. Ideally, another study could be conducted in the future that was designed to analyze more than six journalists' reactions. The study could include a questionnaire sent out to a large number of local television stations to get reactions from different regions, different cities and different journalists who have experienced a wide range of different crises during their careers. Future research could be more conclusive of crises in general in relation to television stations throughout the country. It would be interesting to compare the ideals at stations in different regions and market sizes as well. There are many factors that change based on the market journalists work in. A future study could be divided into large, medium and small television markets to compare the difference in trauma and perspective from different sized coverage areas.

In regards to methods used, in-depth interviews limit researchers to simply analyzing answers, as well as limit the number of perspectives one study can use. A quantitative study in the form of a mass survey with short, closed ended questions would add a lot to the study, as it may lead to different emotional responses and a larger quantity of responses to study.

Adding a psychiatrist's perspective and evaluation of each of the journalists into the research would be an interesting way to expand the study. If a psychiatrist was able to examine journalists the day of a tragedy and follow them for the next year to report back to researchers about journalists' coping mechanisms, that would be another study in itself.

This research did not analyze the news content each of the reporters produced. Examining the news content from each reporter during the crisis, and comparing and contrasting news content from before and after the crisis could also expand this study. This would allow each journalist to share his or her opinion in regards to his or her professional career, and, in addition, would allow the researcher to dive deeper into the psychological impact as a third party.

Lastly, another study not touched on would be the public's perspective and the public's expectation of coverage, as well as accuracy when it comes to breaking news situations. The Boston Marathon bombing coverage in April 2013 is a good example.

Media Bistro reports:

...During the 8p.m. hour, when [Boston Marathon bombing suspect] Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was taken into custody, 68% of Boston households were watching the four local network affiliates as well as local cable outlet NECN. Hearst-owned WCVB drew the most viewership. From 7-9p.m., the Boston stations drew a combined 1.764 million viewers in a city that has 2.36 million TV households. An additional 11% of Boston households were tuned in to coverage on CNN, Fox News and MSNBC from 7-9p.m. (Knox, 2013).

Although the numbers speak for themselves, a study regarding what the public wants in breaking news coverage from journalists would be another additional study that could add to the greater good of this research project.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research leads to a better understanding of how journalists define the impact of reporting on trauma. Ultimately, this research will be of use for journalists and newsrooms in the future in relation to disasters during deadlines. It allows those interested to gain perspective on what it is like to be on the front lines during massacres and the aftermath of covering traumatic events as a journalist. Each individual adds another perspective of a journalist and the impact of trauma after reporting on the Columbine High School shooting, the Aurora movie theater shooting, and other crises throughout their careers. Journalists' responses demonstrate how reporting on crises alter reporting styles, sensitivities and ideologies in their professional lives.

Journalists are passionate about doing their job. They are aware of the responsibility they have in breaking news situations. Each subject has experienced a wide array of crisis situations that have shaped him or her as reporters. The journalists interviewed for this research have each taken experiences in the field and applied them to their own lives. This research concludes a journalist's proximity to a story emotionally affects them. Being one of the first journalists on the scene of a crime can lead to a change of perspective on professional and personal life. Covering crises weighs heavily

on the minds of those speaking with witnesses, meeting victims and finding out facts and information about a crime. Journalists' ideals are altered after covering crises.

The study emphasizes the importance of psychological help journalists may need after crisis situations. This research concludes that newsrooms should bear the responsibility of providing emotional assistance. However, there is no legal responsibility for newsrooms to do so. That being said, it is important for the news directors of television stations to be aware of situations their reporters and photographers cover on a daily basis to provide the correct support for their employees. The subjects mentioned stories that may not have made national headlines affected them more than some of the mass shootings. This brings up the importance of news directors being involved in day-to-day reporting and to make reporters aware that there is always psychological help available.

Journalism is an ever-changing field. The use of technology, social media and citizen journalism has continued to alter the role of a journalist and the way information, accurate or not, spreads throughout the world. Subjects' reactions to the study suggest that further research needs to be completed in regards to crisis journalism and its emotional impact of those on the front lines of tragedy.

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Appendix Chapter 1: Research Questions

- Describe the night the Aurora shooting happened. What was going through your mind on the way to the scene? What did you expect to see as opposed to what you saw? What was your mindset after you left the scene? What was the most difficult part about being there that night and the next day?
- What was the next story you covered after the theater shooting? Do you believe reporting on the shooting altered your reporting style and techniques? If so, how?
- What had you seen in the past in your journalistic career that assisted you in coping with the Aurora shooting?
- What training did you have before getting to the scene of the Aurora shooting?
- How did reporting on trauma impact you? How did you cope?
- Do you think you relate the crises you cover to your own life? If no, how? If there is a familiarity with the victim or circumstances of a tragedy you are reporting on, how does this change your emotional state?
- Describe yourself as a journalist on your first day at your first job and then yourself as a journalist now. What have you learned? What has changed? Have you “hardened” your perspective on life?
- What role do you think you have as a journalist?
- How do you believe broadcast journalists had to deal with this differently? Was it difficult to be composed on-air?
- Emergency responders are constantly recognized for heroic work when a disaster strikes. Journalists are recognized through awards. Being on the scene of a big story is important for the community, but it is also important for your career. Do you agree with that? Why or why not? What role do you think your career plays when you are covering a crisis?

Appendix Chapter 2: Transcribed Interviews

John Ferrugia, KMGH Investigative Reporter

I got a call probably about, around 2 a.m. on the 20th, which was Friday morning from the news director Jeff Harris. He woke me and said there's been a shooting in aurora, at least 8 people are dead, get here as fast as you can. I got up, did what I needed to do, got in probably about 2:35, I don't live far from here. I saw the video; a lot of video had already come in. At that point, we weren't on the air because it was overnight. I don't recall when we first went on the air. Of course we were on the web, and then we had stuff posted on the web, video on the web, of course. As far as broadcast, we were not on the air.

So, I got in and of course the overnight crew was here, the morning crew just had been called in. So, I immediately met with Jeff and the senior producer who was doing the work, what happened. So basically we got in quickly and I said okay, I'll get on the phone right now. That's where it started. I can tell you, my immediate thought was, when I got the call, and when I was coming in was that we're starting down that long, dark tunnel again.

I had been at the scene of Columbine, I had been one of the first people there, I was in a helicopter. I kind of digress here, but I'll give you a sense of this. I was in the newsroom at about 11:20, 11:25 in the morning and nobody was, really in the newsroom, everybody was out. Our helicopter had just landed from the morning shoot up on the roof. We had a pad up here, then we were using it. All the sudden someone from the desk came in and said, "hey, there may have been a drive by shooting out by Columbine. There's nobody here so can you jump in the helicopter?" I don't usually do breaking news stuff because we're usually doing investigations. So I said sure, I jumped in the helicopter, got down there and there was a photographer in the back. At that point, we didn't have the great gyro cameras we have now, this was stuff being shot, it was like a joystick and the whole thing.

So we got down there and we flew in from the north and came in a little bit from the west. That's where the window to the library was. The library was on the top floor. I didn't know the layout of Columbine at that point. But all at once, I see two cars in a V, kind of like this, and I can tell these cops are behind these cars firing and there are rounds coming out of the windows. I look down and I see one person down on the sidewalk, I see one person against the wall, I see another person, and I'm sitting there, I'm on the

radio going, “this is no drive by. There’s a siege going on. I’ve got three people down at least, that we know of, here they are, blah blah blah.” I mean, these guys you know, they were under, there was a lot of fire coming out of that building. You could tell that they were all really hunkered down and shooting. There wasn’t anybody there yet. People were still on their way. And in the end, you can look this up, what happened was, I looked and I saw someone on the roof in dark clothing, kind of going behind the air conditioning and all of the utilities up there.

I was on the radio going, “there’s somebody on the roof.” At about that time, the radio crackled and said, we heard the police radio saying, “there’s somebody on the roof.” We got a flare probably about a minute later thrown up. And the helicopter pilot, who was a substitute pilot, he wasn’t our normal pilot, who deals with this stuff all the time, he was on vacation. He said they want us to land. They want us to land right now. So we got on the ground, I could see very clearly that there was someone on the roof, they had an angle on these cops and they had a rifle. It was bad, it was really bad. Especially because you had a field of fire all the way out to the parking lot where other cops were pulling up, so it could be really bad. So they ask us to land and the incident commander came to us and said, “I need your helicopter.” I said, “wow, you can’t have our helicopter.” He goes, “look, I have to put someone in your helicopter because there’s somebody on the roof.” I knew their lives were at risk. So what I said to him was, it only carries three people. He says, “look, I have to have someone in the helicopter. The police have to know what’s up, what is going on.” And I realized right away, this was like a split second decision, I understood immediately that these guys could be at a terrible risk. So I said to him, I made an assessment on the fly and said, “okay, my photographer stays in, we stay in the airspace, I stay inside the perimeter.” He goes, “done.” So they put a guy in the front seat, my photographer was there, now, what my thinking was, they’re going to close the air space. But we had a cop in the front. We were going to be in that air space. We were going to be the only ones in that air space and we have a photographer. It was more important for me to have a photographer there because he could feed back live and I could see what was going on, the play by play, from the ground. And I have a cell phone and I’m inside the perimeter. I was the only journalist inside that perimeter for an hour and 40 minutes. Finally, they got me out. But that’s kind of the back drop. During that period, we saw lots of things.

We saw the swat team going in. I knew that this little girl was up against the wall. I saw her arm move at one point. I knew she was alive. By the time they got to her, the swat team, they dragged her out and she had died. Rohrbough, Mauser, Rachel,

Rohrbough and Mauser were already dead. We could see those bodies there. You're in real time here, you're looking at actual bodies.

The most poignant thing, I think, and again, I'll give you a little background here because you have to understand the perspective I had going into this deal. I was here on the scene, okay, the thing that I remembered, so clearly, I saw Rachel against the wall, Rachel Scott. She was there and I saw her arm move. I knew she was still living. The other people that were down, it was pretty clear, especially from the blood surrounding them, it was pretty clear that they were, were dead. They weren't moving.

I got down, the helicopter went back up, then you saw later, the SWAT teams then assembled, they didn't go in active shooter mode. Columbine produced the active shooter protocol. Nobody had done this before. What they normally do is, they have a swat team and they would just go in, instead of going into active shooter mode. There wasn't protocol for that. So they were doing what they normally did, but they couldn't get close because there was so much bullet fire coming out. The man in charge, who was the manager, had a group of different swat officers from different banks. They went in in kind of a wedge trying to get Rachel. When they got to her, you could see from the helicopter, they had to drag her because they had to stay down, had to keep their weapons out, they had to drag her across the grass and it kind of reminded me of a wounded animal, you were pulling her across. They thought they got her out. All at once, they got her back to this space, to this green space where she was safe. They were down on top of her, looking at her, and all at once they realized she was dead. You saw people throwing their helmets off, you saw them raising their arms like this, they were like, "ahhh we didn't make it. We didn't save her." And then there was the most poignant moment when an officer knelt down and made sure her legs were together, he took her hands and put them across her chest, he got a blanket, he put it over her. He was very reverent, then covered her. It was a very poignant moment to see.

One of the most difficult things is that her parents didn't know this. And so after it was all over, I called Dawn Anna, she was Lauren Townsend's mother. I said, look. I don't know if I should call her parents. If I was Rachel's parent, I would want to know my daughter was treated that way. She said, I think you should. I called them, and in a very private conversation, I talked to them. They were very thankful. I wanted them to know that their daughter was taken care of. So that kind of emotional attachment to an event, I likened it to going into a dark tunnel. For three weeks, we did nothing but try to dig into this. It was under deadline pressure every day, every day. We would cover Columbine, working 15, 16, hour days, go asleep, come back, you were just in a cycle of,

you know, as I was coming into the Aurora shooting, I'm thinking, we're going back in the tunnel.

It was true. All of the sudden, it was just the same. I got in, immediately start getting on the phone. When you're doing this kind of work, Dan Rather used to say there's no such thing as luck. It's preparation meeting opportunity. You've got to be prepared, you do all of that leg work, and one of these days, you're going to get the opportunity. The question will be, are you prepared? It's not just a single event, crisis coverage, the issue is, what have you done to prepare yourself for that crisis coverage. That's the tip of the iceberg. All of the prep is underneath the surface. That is, have you developed relationships with people who, first of all, are probably going to be in the field in a crisis situation. That would be law enforcement, that might be prosecutors, that might be investigators, that might be EMTs, that might be ambulance drivers, you know, whoever. That might be people from SWAT, which might be people from the coroner's office. Have you developed those relationships so that you have a relationship with people and they know that they can trust you. They know you're looking out for them in terms of the overall event. And then, do you have people not in the field who are on the analysis side? Who are kind of collating this, all of the info that's coming in, to know the big picture?

One of the most difficult things in a crisis like this is having someone who is giving you information, who is honest, they're giving you honest to God information as they know it, they know the big picture. Your interpretation to what that person says, that first person, knowledge can take you in the wrong direction. That's why you have a thread, a thread of different people, from different perspectives, that will give you a larger picture.

The other thing you have to understand is, in cultivating this relationship, the people I know who I deal with know I don't give a darn about being on the 10 o'clock news. They know I'm interested in public policy and informing people about the real issues. They know that my motivation is not, "I gotta be on TV." TV and the web are platforms from which I can help people understand the things going on around them, to help them make decision in public policy, as voters, I can do that as a subcommittee on investigations, or I can do that as elected officials, you can do it that way, but there are different platforms for approaching public policy and approaching events to put it in perspective so people can make decisions about public policy. About rescues, about the police, this is just one thread. In a crisis, there's a cultivation of people. It isn't a cultivation of, "I've got sources," it's, "I've got people who share my sensibility about

what we need to do as a community to inform people about an issue – and to do it accurately.”

The contrast between this event and the Newtown shooting is dramatic. The information that came out of Newtown is mostly wrong. It was a frenzy of information that was just wrong. If you look at the Aurora shooting and you look at all of the wire stories, we were quoted extensively. We lead all of the coverage, KMGH. We were on CNN, we were so far ahead of everybody. The reason we were is because we had relationships with people, people who understood my motivation and I understood their motivation. The other thing they knew, because of our previous relationships, is that if they were telling me something, in my sensibility, I realized, I gotta protect you first. They knew I would protect them first. Why do I do that? Some journalists would say, well that’s not my obligation. That is my obligation. They are entrusting me with information that their careers depend on.

For example, I knew within the first two hours of the shooting, after I got in, by 4:30, I knew that James Holmes had taken vicodin two hours before shooting. I couldn’t report that. Why? I knew the universe was too small. Only three people knew it. Two of those people, I knew. Should I have reported it early? Well, you’re competitive. But was it worth taking a chance? If only three people know it, it would be really easy to figure out who let that information out. We were so far ahead in so many areas that there were times where I had to wait an hour because I couldn’t report something. The universe was so small. The analysis hadn’t even gotten back to the station. I knew my sources weren’t talking to anybody else. I knew that.

Before anyone even had a clue about this, I knew how he got in, I knew that he bought a ticket, sat down, bought a ticket, half hour later, goes out, puts a door stop in the door, heads out, gets his car, pulls it around, suits up, goes in, he has three weapons, all these things, we reported first. Three weapons. He’s shooting this AR-15 and he’s shooting what’s called a snail drum, which is one of these 100-round drums, okay. They’re notorious for malfunctioning. The military doesn’t use them, nobody uses them. He did. His jammed. Nobody knew that. We knew that at that point 12 people had died, but I knew there were 36 to 42 rounds left in that drum. I knew where it was laying because people had seen it. I couldn’t report that at the time because so few people knew that. And all the people that had transited through there, there were only certain people who looked at it. Again, that’s a small universe. We reported that, we reported he was in full armor when he came out, we reported that initially the officer saw him and thought he was a tactical guy. What tipped him off? The gas mask. It was an old-style gas mask.

We reported that. We reported that he used a shot gun when he fired into the ceiling and then he started shooting at people. The other thing was, when he goes to the police station, they put gun shot residue bags on his hands, they were bagging them to test his hands, and he was playing puppets. That was bizarre. That was the first time people said, “oh my God, this guy must be crazy.” All of that stuff had to come out in a particular order because the universe had to be large enough. Think about this. If you’re taking someone to the station, you’re putting him in a room, and somebody puts GSR bags on his hands, how many people are going to be in that room? Very few. You have to wait to protect your sources. I was calling people from my cell phone from KMGH. Everybody was in the field, I was watching stuff from the field and I was doing all of the work behind the scenes.

When we went on the air at 4 o’clock, we had a lot of information. I would go on the air for 15, 20 minutes, get off, keep making calls, go back on the air, in this cycle that just kept going. That’s what I was talking about, a tunnel. You’re doing nothing, but focus, focus, focus, and trying to figure out questions that you’re trying to answer as you go through the day. It’s deadline, after deadline, after deadline. It’s exhausting. Your adrenaline level will stay up for hours.

You do that, the first day I worked until 11:30 that night, went home, went to bed, got in at 7:30 the next morning, then did it all over again.

Next day, same. Next day, same. Next day, same. I just kept going, going, going. Then, this is ten days after. We’re expanding this and we break the story about the psychiatrist. Doctor Lynne Fenton (Psychiatrist at the University of Colorado, Denver). The first story was the threat assessment team had been notified in the first ten days of June and they didn’t take any action. That created a bombshell. Then we reported she went to the campus police. That created ripples. CU, who said they did everything right, we knew they were lying. That investigative part dovetailed from the breaking news and then we started from there. Then we reported she told that person she had threatened to kill a lot of people and that by giving his name by police, she had broken confidentiality. So, therefore, under the rules, the only reason you break confidentiality is for an imminent threat. She de-facto gave his name to police, broke confidentiality, and then did nothing. But the final step was, Lynn Whitten (CU Police Officer) the officer, asked her if she wanted to put him on a 72-hour hold. And she said, no, she had nothing to hold him on, she had no warrants. She asked about a criminal record. Fenton said he’s talking about killing a lot of people. Threatening to kill people. Then Whitten asked Fenton about the hold. Whitten didn’t have authority to do that because she had no firsthand knowledge.

Fenton said no because he's going to leave the University anyway. Basically, that's what we broke. We broke every aspect.

All of that crisis work that we did was based on the legwork, the relationships we had. The thing is, especially with law enforcement, I think it's rare with law enforcement to have the kind of trust relationships with somebody in media. I think the reasons relationships existed in this place is because they understood it was important for people in the community to know things. They knew that while I would press them, there were certain things I didn't know. I was squeezing everything out of them that I could, I'm sure there might have been some things I didn't know. What they told me, they knew it wouldn't harm the investigation. Once they knew this guy acted alone, they knew there was no problem. I think there was concern that he should have been stopped. In terms of public policy, in terms of the change that needed to happen, to see the changes that needed to happen, the police's hands were tied. They couldn't hold him because they didn't have firsthand knowledge. When a psychiatrist comes in and says they're worried that a patient is going to hurt somebody and law enforcement asks about a 72-hour hold, the psychiatrist says no, you don't have any option because you don't have firsthand knowledge. He doesn't have a record, he doesn't have warrants. The police, Lynn Whitton, acted properly. The team BETA team didn't act properly. We ran a story about the matrix they're supposed to use. They violated their own best practices.

Anytime you're dealing with a breaking news crisis, whether it's Columbine or Aurora, it's all the work you've done that brings you to the level where you're able to do this kind of work. It's all the institutional memory you have, the relationships, the trust factors. You have to understand here. This was a very tough environment to report in. Once the judge, he went to court, there was a gag order. Everybody knew not to talk or they would go to jail. The people I was dealing with, they understand there is no question about what I could and couldn't know. I was trying to make it very clear that the universe is huge. That gave them a comfort level. It would be hard to figure out who was talking. I knew authorities were looking at us closely. Not one of the things we said was disputed. Unlike Newtown. As we came down the pipe, we were very, very clear.

Once you go into that tunnel and going day, after day, after day in a breaking news situation, you just keep going into that tunnel. Art, an associate producer of mine, is very good at collating information. He would figure out what questions we needed to ask and when we needed to ask them. This is A and B, but what about C? When you're working in this kind of environment, you're working quickly, you don't want to make a mistake. You need that person who's collating that information, who's tight with what's

going on. But you have to ask, who are the sources you're talking to? In some cases, the news director didn't know who I was talking to. We had to be careful.

You continually, you're using a ton of energy. The one thing you have to be aware of, you may not be, the adrenaline is so great, you may not be as sharp. You may forget something. You're trying to tie facts together, you have a plethora of facts. You have to be so careful because you're going to miss something when you get more tired. You're dealing with these facts regularly, they become familiar to you, and then suddenly the impact may be that you should be seeing of this information, that now goes later with other information.

You may not understand the psychiatrist going to the police department. If you're not researching that, not connecting all the dots, you may miss the significance of her. The implication of, wait a second, she broke confidentiality. She short-circuited the system, opened herself up to huge liability.

If you're out there eight days and you're dead tired, and it's hard to go to sleep at night, which it was with your mind working so fast. I was getting 5, 6 hours of sleep and then working 15 hours. You have to understand hey, I need to be careful here. I need to be more cautious when your tired with all the facts you've gathered.

It was tense, it was exhausting, and in the end, you just had to stop. At some point, you just have to stop. It's very difficult. When I go home, I don't want to talk. I just want to be quiet. My family knows that, I just don't want to talk. I've just been immersed in it all day. I don't want to have to explain it to somebody else. I just don't have the emotional toll, the energy to do that after working so many hours.

One of the things that I reported that I think was really powerful was what it was like for something walking into that theater. I talked to people that walked into this fifth ring of hell. They walk in and the emotional impacts on these officers, as you walk in, there are streams of blood coming out. You see a weapon, the AR-15 laying outside. On top of the car you have the 40 caliber pistol, the 9mm handgun (had an M-16 rifle, a 12-gauge shotgun). You walk in and you see people who are dead and dying. You see a child who is in a pool of blood, who's been shot in the abdomen who is dead, you see people who have been ripped apart. There is smoke, the alarms are going off, the lights are flashing and batman's playing. That's something nobody knew until we reported it. You're sitting there going oh my God, this is a real life horror show.

What I bring to this, I'm from small-town Missouri. I grew up and there was a shotgun and a rifle behind my dad's bedroom door. When did we use them? To bird hunt. I don't shoot deer, I don't shoot large animals, but I don't have a problem with people

doing that. But for me, my father was the person who said we don't shoot silhouettes of people. We shoot for points. We would shoot frogs, and eat frog legs. My grandma would make them. In Paris, you know, it's \$200 to get them. We had them from the river. Guns were like the lawnmower for me. Kids wouldn't be like, hey do you want to see my lawnmower? There was no fascination with guns when I grew up.

I was a CBS correspondent for ten years. I was in Beirut. When you can see what a 7.65 round would do to a human body, you see what it does. It rips people apart. That's my backdrop of knowing what an AR-15 does to a human body, when officers are describing that to me, there's horror in there. These guys deal with this stuff all the time. You don't walk in and see a young woman with her intestines all over the movie seats, or a dead six-year-old. One guy was hit with nine rounds. These are bullets that go through both sides of a car. There are rounds that are going through people and hitting others and killing them, or going through two seats and killing someone, or rounds going through walls into the other theater. This guy has these huge magazines and he's just clicking them off. He has this 100-round magazine drum. If that drum hadn't jammed, we would've had 25, 30 people dead. He was taking out targets, going up the aisle. If he had another 36, 40 rounds, my God.

What you're talking about, having been in a war, a war in Beirut, in the middle east, your institutional knowledge is far greater than others who walk into this same situation. Not only because of Columbine but because I worked with CBS News for ten years and I understand a great deal more than most people understand. That's not saying I'm better prepared, worse prepared, it's just knowledge I have. When I think about the six-year-old, I have a whole different image. In Beirut, I saw what this does to a child, to a woman, to a man. Literally, it would take your arm off. What you're seeing is a whole different image, understanding of what you're walking in to. I think that's why law enforcement officers will talk to me. They know that I understand what they've seen. I have a working knowledge about what's going on.

The trust level that I have with some in law enforcement is because they understand that I have some sense of that because of my experience and that my goal is never to put them in a bad position. I respect what law enforcement people do. I will put things in the right context.

I don't have a hardened view. I believe in redemption. I don't believe in the death penalty except when it's absolutely necessary. I believe society has an obligation and a right to protect itself. I think most people can be isolated. You don't kill people because it's a bad perception for society. But there are people who are dangerous to others in

prison. A threat to society. They literally would kill someone who came in contact with them. In those cases, there is a reason for the death penalty. But I think they're rare. I've seen murderers, I've talked to victims. I'm not jaded, there's an overall principal and I think we have to abide by that. I think one of the most things that I've seen, which is really disturbing sometimes, is that you find people who become so bitter about what they've seen is that they turn and become what they hate. That's the thing in life you have to understand to put it into perspective. You can't become what you hate. And it's easy to do that.

If it was my first day on the job, I wouldn't have known anything. I would have been out in the field reporting here they are, there they go, this many are dead. I wouldn't had the knowledge to know where to look, who to talk to, etcetera. My first day on the job, I worked at WTVT in Tampa. I'm shooting, editing, doing all of this stuff on film. My goal there was to learn as much as I could. That's what I would be doing here on my first day. The difference is that having that institutional memory to connect with, to help your viewers. You're giving your viewers a new perspective. You have law enforcement, you have viewers, you have your own colleagues, and they're hearing what you're saying. You're bringing a perspective to that story that nobody else can give the story. That's what you strive to do, in any story. You're striving to give the people knowledge and a new perspective.

Any issue is a mosaic. I can do a two-hour documentary on the shooting. It's only one piece of the mosaic. I'm only one piece. My colleagues here, nationally and internationally, newspapers, magazines, are bringing in a bigger picture. In my mosaic, I have to be one thread in the cloth. I have to make sure that I'm giving viewers the best and most honest perspective that I can and letting them know, in some cases, mentioning Columbine. Full disclosure about what you've been through to share the information you have in a meaningful way.

Just like when I covered the pope. I am catholic, covering the pope. I told viewers, "I want to let you know I'm catholic." Give people a sense of this is who I am and to be honest. I think you have to be honest with viewers. Use Columbine as a background to compare. This is why they confronted James Holmes immediately, at Columbine that wouldn't have happened. The tactics were different. Your knowledge gives viewers about why things happened the way they did. You remember those memories. You remember why things occurred. I'm giving a perspective.

In this case, what Aurora did was unbelievable. It so happened that there were overlapping shifts. There were people coming in and people going out. They were there

in two minutes. It was unbelievable. I don't think you'll ever hear criticism of the Aurora Police Department. The ambulance issue was a whole other issue but the police men were taking people in cars, they were doing heroic work. They saved a ton of lives. You need to remind viewers of that too.

We're watchdogs. We're not lap dogs, we're not attack dogs. People will know when you're one side or the other side.

We had access to psychologists. In all of these crisis situations, KMGH's HR says here's a number, here's who you call, etcetera. I never went to a psychologist here, with Columbine and Aurora. But I have discussed these issues in the past with a professional. I started seeing, especially after Columbine, but PTSD, but something like it. I couldn't get it off my mind. I couldn't stop. You have to be able to come down. At one point, well after the fact, I had to figure out, is this normal? Okay, yeah, you're fine. Even today when I talk about Rachel Scott, it's very difficult. The thing that gets you about these things is that people weren't involved in any reckless behavior. They went to school. These people went to a movie. I feel like you can always justify it with, well, these guys were in this area and all the sudden there's a shooting and there are people dead. It shouldn't happen but these people had some culpability. They put themselves in this situation. They didn't have guns, there's no justification for killing people but gosh, they made choices to put yourself in this situation. These people were doing nothing but going to school, going to a theater. That's what makes this so difficult. They were totally innocent. There was no culpability, they were doing nothing that anyone wouldn't do on a Saturday night, or going to school.

I covered another shooting at Platte Canyon High School. I was actually at the scene. I was talking with people in the field who knew exactly what was happening inside. I made a documentary about Room 206. One woman lost her life there. Heroic. This woman got all of her classmates out. No SWAT team has ever talked about a school shooting. Because of my relationship with the SWAT team at Columbine, it's the story about evolution and how everything at Columbine, all the changes made, came together. This man killed this little girl, who wasn't little, she was a high school junior. Everybody got out. 20 something kids got out of there. It was because of her and how she handled it. It was a hostage situation. In the end, he killed her when the SWAT came in. That story, about Emily Keyes, had a tremendous impact on me because I had an intimate knowledge of that situation. I never met her, I have a picture of her in our office that's on the wall. What she went through and her own self-sacrifice, and the emotional impact that it had on the SWAT team, on everybody involved, is incredible. No one has ever talked, but we

had full access after 11 months, no one has ever talked about it. We took them back in there. We saw the SWAT team going in, they just kind of looked and I told the photographer to stop the camera. They needed a few minutes. We cleared out. They were just going to pieces. We couldn't do that to them. They realized they couldn't do it. They hadn't been back in there. A lot of people would say, that's emotion. You screwed up. I'm not going to exploit that. I can tell people they came in and I can describe it. I don't need to see them break down. The emotion they spoke about what emotion enough. Platte Canyon was another whole thing, back in the tunnel.

When you start out, you don't have a life perspective. All that builds up and you use it to understand. You use it to take the information and say, here's what this is about. This is why. Describing what happened in that theater. Once you do that, whether people like you in law enforcement, they see that you're honest about it. That's what your job is. It's gaining credibility through action. It's being a watchdog, not an attack dog. You're not going to burn a source for something incidental. I'm not going to put sources at risk for my own ego.

It's using your talents for the good of the community. Whether your doctors, lawyers, journalists, firefighters, police officers, whatever. In terms of public policy, you're using your talents to approach people and say, here's what you want to think about to make a decision about this. Consider this as well.

Anastasiya Bolton, KUSA Crime and Justice Reporter

I was one of many reporters covering the Aurora shooting. I was not the first one on scene. Brandon Rittiman was on call that day, but I'm the Crime and Justice reporter and they didn't call me. They apparently were saving me, allegedly, according to my management. Because when I called in once I figured out what was going on, which was really difficult to believe because it's right next to my house, the theater used to be my theater. I will never go there again.

But, I called in, I think I was in shock because I actually had to ask them if I should come in, which was in hindsight ridiculous, I should have just gotten dressed and come in. It was a Friday, a Friday morning, which was my day off.

Actually, my husband wanted to go to that movie opening that night, and I told him no because I had a bunch of things going on right at the beginning of Friday morning. I could've been in theater nine or ten. Yes, I could have. I was the lame wife and I said, no, we're not going to go, and that may have saved our lives.

But yes, I'm the crime and justice reporter and they didn't call me, which I gave them an earful for, like why the hell would you not call me in in the middle of the night. But they needed other people to come in and carry the torch the rest of the day so I worked from I think 9 a.m. until 11 p.m. that day and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

I woke up at 7 with my phone going off because people across the country, and actually from across the world, even in Russia where I have family, were texting me, making sure I'm okay. I wasn't sure what the heck they wanted from me, why are you disturbing me, and then I turned on the TV and there's Brandon, and there's my theater, and there was a shooting, and I'm like, "no, no, this is not happening!" And it was. So I think by 9, I was in the office, I just got dressed and went in and then I was on the site of the Aurora theater shooting.

At this point, I've been doing this for 14 years and I think I expected what I saw. What I saw was a bunch of trucks and all of us staged in one area in front of the theater and there's a crime scene, 12 people were dead, and so many were wounded. What I didn't expect, and what hasn't happened really before, and since then, because there hasn't been anything like that since, is the people, the witnesses milling around and coming up and talking to us and describing what they saw. All of these people went to see this movie and a lot of them, most of them, thankfully, survived it without being shot,

and so all of them were there. On scene, talking to us. There was a row of cameras and a row of people talking about what they had seen.

The long hours didn't take a toll on me for a while. Because when you're in it, you're not thinking. You're just thinking what's your next step, who do you need to call, how can you move the story forward, right? So my job, I was stationed at the movie theater and then eventually I was moved to the police department where I think they had a press conference the following day, Saturday. I can't remember if they had anything Sunday.

You don't think of the hours, you just, I knew I was going to stay. I knew I was going to stay and do everything, the entire time. This is my beat, my people, and my community. That thought never entered my mind. Through the ten o'clock, I don't even know how many live shots I did that day. I went to work Saturday to try to organize our coverage and what we were going to do. I literally walked into the newsroom and we had one of those paper boards sitting outside of the assignment desk and names, names of the victims, started coming out from different media sources. I said, okay, I just started writing down lists. What do we have, who are their names, how do we know, who reported it, do we have contact information, how can we look them up, who else is missing? There are 12 dead so we had maybe from 8 to 11 names. We were missing some people so I wrote a list of who we had. We had people fly in from different Gannett stations so I just started assigning family members to make sure we continue the story. So I knew we needed to do that. The other piece of paper was, what are the stories we are doing today? So, we have a press conference. But before that, what do we do? Oh, Friday somebody contacted me and said a daughter of a friend of mine was badly, badly wounded. She was in the ICU. Maybe they'll talk to you. Call them. So I call them. And they're ready, not ready, so at 2 p.m., before the press conference, I remember driving to University Hospital, parking somewhere far away. I didn't want to get official permission to be there, I didn't want to wait for a press conference when these people are force to talk to everybody. I met them and they talked to me. That was my big story that day. I shot that and went to the press conference.

You're kind of going through this, it didn't matter to me when the next break was, you don't think about food, you don't think about any of the normal things you do on an average work day, like what's for lunch. You just kind of go from, I knew I had to be on TV at 2. I knew I had a 5 and a 6 and a 9 and a 10. So what am I going to do for each of those so it means something to people.

The realization of what happened came after. Like on, maybe, Monday night. When I did a 7a.m. to 6 p.m. shift, not a double. I went to court for Holmes. After that, you get home and you're like, wow, that happened. And then, on Tuesday, is really when I allowed myself to feel something. I went and I interviewed a friend of mine, a man who turned out to be my friend after all these years. He lost a daughter in a shooting in Platte Canyon in 2006. Emily Keyes. John Michael Keyes and his wife turned that tragedy into something positive for the community. They did public education in schools about school safety. She negotiated with the shooter and he picked her somehow. He shot her as the SWAT team came swarming. I called him up and said, "listen, would you talk to me? Because I think you have something to offer people. Obviously, the people in the hospital aren't watching but maybe their loved ones, their friends are watching. Somehow, your message of how you get through something like that. I don't think they know how. How do you live with losing a loved one in a situation like this?" He said, I told everybody no, but I'll tell you yes. So I went up to Bailey [Colorado] to interview him and after I interviewed him, I lost it.

My husband gets the brunt of the crap. A shrink helps you deal with that. That's who you go to. But you, you sort of have to come to a realization that that's who you have to go see. So after I lost it with John Michael, he told on me to a mutual friend of ours. Another friend of ours, and John is calling me saying, "are you okay? I know you're not okay. You need to go see someone. I'm going to call him for you." I'm like, "don't, don't do that yet. I'm not ready. I'm not ready to go see someone. I'm not there." So Wednesday comes about, and I think on Wednesday I take a personal day. My boss offered me that opportunity since I worked so many hours and it was so hard. So I took that day and John still pushed it and I said no. So I called this psychologist. He's famous, he works with cops, with firemen, and NASA and people who deal with stress like this and I set up an interview with him. I'm like, "hey, would you come talk to us about how people need to deal with this, what precautions they need to take, what they should look out for." I'm like, "I'll be honest with you, somebody told me I should make an appointment with you and I'm not there yet." He says we should talk after the interview. He comes to do the interview on Sunday and after I talked to him that day, he sat down with me off the grid, he said, "come see me." I'm like, "I don't know, can I afford you, you probably cost too much." He told me to talk to human resources and they'll take care of it. And I did. I went to see him a couple of times and that helped because I really, I could start crying at the drop of a hat. It was really, really hard. You take on other's people grief. I don't know how other reporters deal with situations like this, but I say to

people, you can't report on people's tragedy and not feel it. When you write it, it doesn't come across right. It comes across as dry. That's now what their personal stories are about. You have to allow yourself to feel in order to tell their story to a viewer in a way that comes across emotional, and comes across right.

There's nothing like Aurora. Nothing like it. I'm forever changed. You ask people who have dealt with Columbine, there's nothing that could prepare you for that. I think. You could learn how to do interviews with cops, you can learn how to cover press conferences efficiently, you can learn how to ask questions, you can have a helpful background when you're asking the main FBI guy when they're speaking. He is giving you the official blah blah blah and the question I asked Jim Yacone on Saturday afternoon was, your experience. You've dealt with terrorists. You've lived overseas. How does this, what you saw in his apartment, how does that compare? That's what you want, you want to know people, you want to know their background. You don't ask them what happened so they give you this robotic official response. You want to dig deeper. You want to make the chief of police cry. That's the only preparation. Emotionally, there's nothing, I don't think anybody could do; do deal with so much grief.

I think covering [the] Aurora [movie theater shooting] changed my reporting techniques 100%. The reporting on the shooting didn't really change anything. I kind of looked at that and said, oh, okay, knowing the director of the FBI's history helped, that's why I went to the FBI citizen's academy. Fine. Great. Knowing your community, knowing the name of your police chief, okay, that's fantastic. But that didn't do anything. What changed me as a reporter and as a journalist was reporting on the incredible amount of pain of the victims. And dealing with victims. That started as a grassroots effort with John Michael Keyes and me. John Michael Keyes talked to me and asked about, remember what you're putting out there, the footprint you leave as a reporter, the names, the focus you bring to say the perpetrator. He's talked to me about this and his position was, why do we have to say the name of the perpetrator because then people end up remembering his name, versus the victims' names. It's true with Columbine, people cannot name you all of the victims, I can't. But I wasn't there for that. Maybe people like Kim Christiansen and Patti Dennis know them. But I can name you the two shooters. So John Michael Keyes had spoken with me about the bigger concept of, what do we put in the news. When you Google it, what comes up? That happened years ago. When I first did my first story with Emily Keyes, which was probably 2007, 2008. But it really truly came, I practiced it. I kept talking to these people who had somebody shot, or somebody taken from them and they're like, we don't want to hear about him. We don't want to

hear his name. It offends us. And I get it. And so, I started advocating in the newsroom. I knew we had to report on him, but we need to discuss how we do that and when we do it and why we do it. When he's in court, obviously. But when we do a victim piece, don't mention his name. Focus the victims' stories on them. Just about them. Not about him, at all. And I somewhat won that fight. We've had many institutional conversations with people. We've had victims over for dinner who have mentioned it. I kept saying, we don't have to mention him in the month of July at all. He's not important. There is no reason for us to say his name. None whatsoever. We can call him the shooter. We can call him the suspect. We do not have to say his name unless the victims say it. That's how it changed. Journalistically, I will say the name James Holmes next time he's in court. But I will really think about if he needs to be mentioned next time we talk about what happened in that theater.

If you're with officials, you have to be with a reporter. That does not mean you're mean or disrespectful. You're professional. When you're with victims, it kind of depends on the victim. 50-50, 60-40. I think I was very aggressive in getting people to talk to me. But I also told them they didn't have to. I had to respect them and when they wanted to do it. I pushed but I also called to make sure they were okay. I would try to give them information if they missed a hearing and I tried to be more of a person, I think that helps you in the long run when you're reporting. Because you're human. But maybe I let that get to me a little too much because I'm too emotional about it.

You have to separate yourself from who you're covering. Compartmentalize. It also depends. I have a hard time separating myself from the Aurora people because I've spent the last year covering them. I have different feelings about, I've covered lots of homicides and it doesn't bother me. Especially now, after Jessica Ridgeway, when people come to my desk and say well, such and such happened, you know, it's not a joke, but I ask if they were a victim of mass murder. No. Were they dismembered? No. Then I'm not interested. It doesn't do anything for me. So unfortunately, the bar has been raised really high.

First, do I relate to the victims? I don't look at Sam Soudani and think, I understand what you're going through, or I can imagine what you're going through because your daughter was shot to shreds and she survived and you're so lucky. I don't relate to him that way. I relate to him on a basic human way. I relate to people based on who they are. So Sam, he's very similar to me. He's very forward and he's very jokey. He deals with grief in a different way, by joking. So he was very sarcastic and very jokey as his daughter was in the ICU. He had to share that with people. He also had to share her

with people. He dragged me into her ICU room and I still have that image in my head. She survived and she's beautiful and she's doing well. I honestly, when I told him when I did a follow up story, is that I had to see her. All I have her in my mind is what you showed me on the 21st of July. No I don't relate to people if they have kids or no kids, because I don't have children. I relate to people, I try to find common ground. Common ground is important to find, not for Anastasiya the individual but for Anastasiya the reporter has to relate to the people she's covering or they won't talk to me. That's the oldest journalistic trick in the book. You try to relate to people, on whatever level you have a common ground. That's how I do my job.

Journalist Anastasiya at her first on-air job in Amarillo, Texas. I was really trying. I did not know what I was doing. I was always curious, so that worked in my favor. I could not write. I certainly not ask the right questions. I could not do a live shot to save my life. I always had an innate understanding that I had to meet with people in person, I had to talk to them off the grid, I gotta understand who they are so they can help me in my job. I always knew that. But the level of that has changed. But more importantly, my overall understanding, my storytelling and looking at the big picture, I think that has changed the most for me. I'm like a different person. In what way? I'm a better writer. I'm a better story teller. I understand how to tell a story better. Not only in a pretty, frilly way, but in a way to know what needs to happen in a story structure to get people to understand and connect before you get to the, what you want them to really pay attention to. I've always, my belief as to why we do this job has not changed since college. I got into it to change things and sometimes we get that opportunity and we have to grab onto that opportunity and carry that torch for as long as you can, for as long as your manager will allow you to do so, if not, what's the point? I guess some people do it for fame and being on TV. You know, that sort of, it's humbling to be recognized and it does make me smile, I'm not going to lie, but that's not why I do it. Integrity and being true to your word, that hasn't changed. I just have a bigger platform. The responsibility of keeping your word if you gave somebody your word and the responsibility of being honest and giving the full story with all of its sides. That's more sort of in my face. It's like this bright light shining in my face. It's always a reminder of how I need to do my job because the implications of ruining someone's life, or changing it for the better, comes with a huge responsibility.

Absolutely (I have hardened my perspective on life). I am much more callous. After Jessica Ridgeway, your average, ordinary murder, it sounds terrible. Not interesting. I know it's someone's wife, husband, kid, I know it is sad. But after someone

kidnaps a ten-year-old and dismembers her, and does other things, you just kind of like, well, that's the epitome of evil.

My role in society, me as Anastasiya Bolton, journalist, is to try to make positive change or to bring light to a subject that may or may not need change. It depends on who's looking at it. But to start a discourse, a conversation that may or may not go anywhere but I want people to be aware of what is going on in the world and going on in the community.

Mitch Jelniker, KMGH Morning Anchor

The first I knew of the Aurora shooting is on my smart phone when I saw some tweets about it from producers here at the station. The producers get here over night, like 9 or 10 o'clock and work all night long. It's not a great shift. I saw their tweets and one of them said, "hundreds," don't quote me on this, but something like, "hundreds of police are being called to the Aurora theater near the Aurora mall." And I thought, hundreds? That doesn't seem right. Maybe that's a typo. Was it a shooting, a stabbing, an accident, what was it? And then I saw a second tweet and thought, something's not right here. It's not like it was deleted or corrected. What would hundreds of people be showing up for? Normally in the morning I would read wire copy, see what CNN has, what ABC has. I go to bed at 7:30 for the morning show so I may have missed the 10p.m. broadcasts, or 2020, or 60 minutes. I don't catch those things, I'm sleeping. I get up every morning and do nothing but see what the Washington Post is doing, the New York Times, ABC stations, stuff like that. Instead of doing that, I thought I better get to the station. So I dove in the shower, raced to work, I could continue to see the tweets, also from Aurora PD. I could the producers were so smart, they didn't even call me. A lot of times if there is something breaking, they'll call and say we need everybody now, there's a huge flood in Big Thompson canyon, or a bridge collapse, or whatever it may be. Call the station or come in as soon as you can. I knew it had to be big because none of them, the three or four producers, it looked like, had time to even call me. I blew through the door about 45 minutes before I usually would and they said, "we are so glad you're here." I said, "what in the world is going on?" They said somebody walked into the theater. I asked what movie was even playing, I wasn't keeping up with what premieres were going on. They said it was a Batman movie. I said, oh, that's right. I was driving in and in Littleton [Colorado] and Highlands Ranch [Colorado], you could see all of these cars coming out of the theater so I knew there was some kind of premiere. The producers said a guy was in there and opened fire on people and we still don't have a handle on what's going on, we've got crews out there, so get on the air.

I jumped on the news set. We didn't have any scripts, certainly. We were adlibbing from shots of the helicopter, which was pretty safe. It was pretty dark, but we were at a safe distance. We wouldn't see something we wouldn't want to put on the air. That's something we experienced during Columbine. The chopper was trying to zoom in to see what was going on – was it really a gunman? Was it just fire crackers? At first you're trying to figure it all out but then you zoom in and see kids on the lawn, then it's

like oh, wow wow wow. There's a delay before you put it on air. You use a delay and it was dark. We just adlibbed about what we knew was going on. That early on, it wasn't a lot.

I didn't go to the scene that day, but in the days following. The decision was, I like going to the scene, because there's nothing like being there and getting a sense of what exactly is going on. I was on the scene at Columbine. When that happened, I was down the road, I had just given a speech to some college kids in fact, when the news director called and said get in here immediately. I said, "I should go to the scene." She said, "get in here immediately." And I said, "no, I should go to the scene." And she goes, "you know what, you're right." You feel more of what's going on and how it's happening. In that case, I was already here. You don't want to take your anchors off the air for 30 minutes while they make their way through the traffic to get there. To get the live shot established, to get the live truck set up, get the microphones plugged in. I just stayed here and just kept going. I was already on the air, so we didn't want to disrupt things. We needed to get the people information as fast as we could. It was a logistics decision.

I went to the scene for the first time Saturday. Of course, they had us all roped off and pretty far back. It wasn't like the building had an telltale marks of anything going on. Probably the most eerie thing was all of the cars in the parking lot. They had sealed it off and made it a crime scene. People who either passed away, or were injured, or who had escaped uninjured – all of their cars were still there. Columbine was the same way. Outwardly, nothing appeared to be out of the ordinary. It was just a school. There was nothing scary about the movie theater itself. It's just knowing what happened that's unnerving.

Long ago, I covered the Edmond, Oklahoma post office massacre. Which now, probably doesn't even register on the list of unfortunate, horrible news. It was where 13 postal workers were shot. That was long before 9/11 and things of that nature. I was there, one of the first ones on scene, and saw people come out of the back of the building, bloodstains on postal uniforms. I lived in Oklahoma City during the Oklahoma City bombing. I was on scene there. That explosion was so powerful, it shook the windows at my home some 20 miles away. My kids woke up thinking it was thunder. I thought it was a gas explosion somewhere. I also covered Hurricane Andrew. That was the one that hit Florida and spun around, wiped out Homestead Authority. Remember those images, I got there the next morning. They had pretty much sealed that off, the roadways there. But I

got on board the National Guard helicopter and went in and saw the devastation. That was wild. Then I came here, went through Columbine, Platte Canyon, now Aurora. The lessons I've learned, is to only, when you're standing there for hours on end you have to give the audience as much information as you possibly can. Often times, families of people who may be victims, they're not sure, show up at the scene. Parents of kids at Platte Canyon, parents of kids at Columbine, spouses of workers at the building in Oklahoma City. They're standing there, just off camera, within arm's reach of you, hanging on your every word. Even though I wish I could tell them more. Is there another bomb, is there another gunman? Is he shot and killed, did he kill himself? If I don't know, I don't want to go down the wrong road. The biggest challenge is not to report the hearsay and the rumors because there are a lot of them. It just happens. People in Oklahoma City said, "oh, we're looking for someone of middle eastern descent." Who? Who says that? There's another bomb in the building. Well there wasn't. People ran away, their nerves were frayed. They thought they saw a device that turned out to be somebody's alarm clock or something. At Columbine, there was somebody who was within the law enforcement community, they were obviously stressed and called to the scene. I could tell they were shaken and they said, "we heard there were like two more gunmen." Snippets of information they thought to be true. I decided to wait to get that confirmed before I said anything. And sure enough, it did not pan out. The hardest thing is, to say, I know I'm standing here repeating myself a bit, and I know all of these parents are hanging around me teary-eyed and they want more, but this is all I've got. It's better to do that than to say something wrong. There are far too many people saying, oh, this is coming in, there are military helicopters. Well wait, hold on, who says that?

People ask, "how do you do those things? That's awful. That's just chilling. How can you do that?" The way I look at it is, people who are relatives of victims, or potential victims, they need to know what in the world is going on. I can hopefully provide that for them. I see it as an important role. Trying to get information. What's going on? Why is it happening? How did it start? How did they get in there, etcetera. Not all of those things I can get answered in the first few hours. At least I can try to get some answers when they're just in shock. It's all sealed off. Law enforcement is too busy doing their job. The other thing I try to keep in mind is, some days it's really heartbreaking to do those things but any emotion I'm experiencing is like one-one millionth of what a victims family, or a victim themselves, may be suffering. Really, don't feel sorry for me. It's not that much. And I also, this may sound bizarre, but when you go to scene like that that are really, really heartbreaking, and tense, and dangerous, and violent, you also see the best of

humanity. Now, all the sudden, people who don't even know each other are helping one another. Yes, certainly more in the days following, with volunteering, or donating. But even the moment of, people grabbing people, trying to get them out if they're hurt. One of the people who died in the Oklahoma City bombing was a nurse on the way to work. As a nurse, she got out of the car, climbed up that rubble, and as she was going up, a chunk of concrete fell and hit her in the head and killed her. She wasn't even in the building. She didn't know anybody there that we know of. So there were all kinds of people helping and assisting each other. Where, 20 minutes earlier, they may have said, "God, there's traffic, I'm late to work and it's too crowded, I don't like this highway, the theater is too crowded, they don't even say hello to the people sitting next to them. And then, five minutes later, they're helping the lady next to them, who they don't even know, get out of there. Something changes in people. You see the best of people in the worst of times. People just do amazing things. You ask them why they did that and they're kind of like, I don't know, I just ran into the building. I heard stuff going on next door. That happened at the post office massacre. The back door was kicked open and people heard stuff and saw people coming out. They went in there. There could have been eight gunmen in there for all they knew. People were just trying to help each other, which is really remarkable.

Within KMGH, we've been provided with counseling if we wanted to. In Oklahoma City, at the time, it was so huge, before 9/11, so that was easily the biggest breaking news that we had seen in that area. It was just unfathomable that something would happen like that in little old Oklahoma City. The station there required everyone in the station to have a counseling session, to sit down and talk about it, which was helpful because a lot of people say, "I'm macho, I can get through this, I'm a reporter, I'm tough, I've been to murder scenes, I've seen dead bodies." No, you really need to sit down and talk about it. That's good. I think that it's good that they did that. That's probably the most important thing TV stations can do for their employees. The other steps that we did in Oklahoma City, and I mentioned it and we did it a little bit here, somewhere in the reporter, photographer, producer station, for day stories, you pick a couple of teams and you leave them out of the coverage. They basically say, Kerry, you've been to three funerals that last three days. Today, you're doing anything but Columbine, the Oklahoma City bombing, whatever tragedy it may be. You just need a break. That works well. You're like, I don't know how much more I can do of this. The next few days, you're not going to worry about it. You're going to do a Denver water story. You're going to a school board meeting. You're doing a new bridge going in at I-25. Anything, nothing

remotely close to that tragedy just to recharge your batteries. That's helpful that stations can do. They don't all do it, but they can do it. I've experienced it in Oklahoma City and here in Denver.

It does impact you. I had a hard time talking about Oklahoma City for a long time. I would get home and my wife would have a million questions and I would say, I can't talk about this right now. It's funny, my kids were really little. They were like in preschool, kindergarten during the Oklahoma City bombing and at one point, my daughter said this to me later, in middle school. She said, "I can tell when you've had to cover something that wasn't very pleasant because you hug us a lot." That's kind of cool. I think we relate in that way. Tragedy makes you stop and say, "wow, okay, I don't care that the garage door isn't working, or that my daughter got a C- on an algebra test. All of those things seem so insignificant. It really does remind you of what's important." I try not to bring it all home to them.

Sometimes my kids have questions. My kids had a ton of questions after 9/11. Like, who does this? Why? My kids even asked, well would they do something like that to us here in Denver? Which is not a silly question. I had to convince them that they're probably going for more symbols of capitalism. They're probably thinking Mount Rushmore, the Golden Gate Bridge, Vegas, the mint, we don't necessarily have those things here. We're probably not high on your list. I talk to my kids about it if they have questions but then I don't want to come home and emotionally barf on the family. My wife knows I just start hugging everybody a lot more because I feel appreciative of what I've got.

It helps when you're pulled out of the mix of doing those stories. Being a news person, you're constantly looking at your smartphone, your iPad, your laptop, your TV at CNN or something. When those big stories happen, I get to Saturday or Sunday and I don't even turn that stuff on. I'm sure, if it's big enough, I'm going to figure it out, or my phone's going off. I just need to take a mental break from it. I think everybody, even our viewers say, I can't do this anymore. We ran into that situation in Oklahoma City, where, at what point, when something that big happens in that small of a metro area, at what point doesn't it lead the newscast? At what point is it okay not to lead with it? It's a hard question. It's hard for us, because we're into the coverage and four days into it we think, man, we can't lead with this stuff, but you may still be grabbling for answers. We got to the point in Oklahoma City where some people were complaining they weren't getting enough information. They would call and ask, well who are the suspects? What are the leads? What else can you tell us? We're hearing this, we're hearing that, they call our

newsroom and drive us crazy. And then you have the people who are saying, “will you please not talk about this every day?” Well what do we do? What we decided, which was kind of neat in Oklahoma City, I suggested it here for Columbine but we didn’t do it for one reason or another. For Oklahoma City, we built a separate, small little news set. We took the same fabrics, textures and colors you see on our news set. We built a little podium with a screen behind it and we put it off to the side and said, okay folks, every day, at five minutes past the hour, we were going to have a bombing update. That way, if you want it, you know where it’s going to be. I promise we’ll have something new for you every day. Maybe it’s something so small as, “hey, the victim’s fund got another \$4,000 today.” If it’s day 172 after. If you don’t want to see it, you know you’ll see other news. Now we have the advantage of the Internet. We can now say, if you want to read more, go to our website. If you want to see this funeral in its entirety, go to our other channel. We’re going to move on and play the ABC movie of the week. But if you really need to know this, it’s playing, right now, in its entirety on another channel. That way, there’s a way to get it, but we don’t have to bombard everybody.

I guess the thought is, perhaps, you become really jaded about things. But unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, I’ve covered so many big stories, or big tragedies, it’s helped me keep things in perspective and staying to those rules of journalism. In my mind, it’s not important to be first, you just need to get it correct. Take something that’s rather confusing, or complicated and in a short amount of time, digest it and disseminate it in an easy to understand way. That’s kind of what you’re doing as journalists. Whether you’re trying to tell your viewers the new water rights bill, which is 89 pages wrong, or a shooting in a middle of an intersection. You’re taking something that you may be like. “what?!” and make it so you can say, “here’s what we know.” I guess that’s stayed the same. Now, I have better perspective and know to slow down, tell people what we know, and don’t tell people about the things we don’t know. Early on, you’re reporting, like, “I, I, need to know more.” A young reporter will often get on scene and get wrapped up in that emotion. You kind of need to take a deep breath, before talking really fast, you can get that way. But just make sure you’re just more of a calming presence. Here’s what we know, here’s what we don’t know, but we’re asking. Don’t get too whipped up and all of the emotion and the noise of the moments. All of the lights, and the noise, and the sirens and the screaming.

I don’t think that tragedy makes me think any less of society. I try to look at the positives of what our responses have been to them. I’m not more of a curmudgeon after

everything, I guess I'm more; I point to how well we rally together and overcome these things.

Something as simple as the Oklahoma City bombing memorial. If you think about it, that thing was erected and opened to the public before we even had a World War II memorial in this country. It took us 50, 60 years to finally agree with one another on what the World War II memorial was going to look like. Remarkably, the people from Oklahoma City, the city, the county, the state, even the federal government, they all got together. That's a lot of bureaucracy. They even had to close a road down. Once upon a time, the road was used by one of the main firehouses. They had to agree that they could now go around it. And do all of that and have it open, talk about people working together. The committee, the task force that put that together was mostly volunteers. Amongst all of our issues, all of our problems, or well, it's the Internet, well it's the media, it's the movies, it's guns, it's drugs, whatever people are trying to blame it on, amongst all that, people still rolled up their sleeves, didn't know each other and some how figured this out. I think my role is to get the information to the people. Information they need as quickly as we can, but not so quickly that we get it wrong. And then, to step back and say, how did that happen? How was that back door allowed to be open? Or was it really open? Should there have been an alarm on it? Was the police response okay? Did somebody get an inkling that there may have been a threat in Oklahoma City? Should there have been warnings earlier for Hurricane Andrew? Sometimes we rub people the wrong way. Like at Columbine, did the SWAT team go in quickly enough? Well it's fine for you to say buddy, I'm going to go in there and get shot at. I'm not asking that to be cruel or to speak ill of our law enforcement, but that's a question we have to ask. Just like a white house reporter is going to ask the president, should we really be going to war? As a journalist, you may believe one way or another. You're not asking because you're trying to sway something politically, but somebody has to ask those tough questions. It may irk people that you're asking it, and may irk the public, how dare you question our law enforcement? I'm just asking. Do we have the proper plan in place? Did enough ambulances respond to the scene? Did all of the radios communicate together like they should? Should they? Does that cost too much money? Did we make a mistake there? You have to ask those questions.

Unfortunately, I think there are going to be more crises, just the way the world is. If I never cover something this big again, I'd be just fine.

Some people say, stories like that really make your career. I don't know. I think you can sometimes see someone shine. It doesn't necessarily have to be a tragedy. It can

be an issue when something as mundane as school funding. You're going to stand out if you do a good job, if you do your homework. I don't like to look at crises that way. It's like all of us saying we hope there are no more wars either, in reality, we know they're going to happen.

I think it probably takes its toll on a lot of people. In Oklahoma City, we had a lot of reporters that said, you know what, I'm done now. They stopped being reporters or photographers. Not a bunch, but maybe two or three said, I did this bit in Tyler, Texas, then I worked four or five years in Oklahoma City and then the bombing happened. They went off and did other things. You can see how it can take its toll on somebody.

We did a story in Oklahoma City where a little boy was grabbed in a field when he was walking home from school by a sexual predator. The little boy was mutilated and he lived through it. It was so disturbing. That was another one where we had to take turns reporting. We couldn't even put on the air half the things this guy did to this little boy, this cute little boy. That thing haunted me more than some of those bigger stories because I talked to the mom, I talked to the dad, I was in their house. I was like oh, my gosh.

Sometimes stories the audience may not remember stick with me. I did a story once on a support group here in town for parents of children who have died accidentally. They drowned in a pool. They were killed in a car accident. They fell off an amusement park ride, whatever it was. They invited me to the group to share what they do and when I got there and started listening to these people's stories, it was unbelievable. There was a couple there who said, this takes a huge toll on your marriage. What are you dealing with right now, Jan and Bob, talk to us. They say, well when our daughter died at age 8, I wanted to keep her stuffed animal because it had her smells on it. And the mom said I want to take it and put it in the casket and bury it with her. I was like, oh my God. Can you imagine a family having to think about that? The rest of us wouldn't even imagine thinking about that. It was years ago and I can tell you exactly where I was sitting in the room when the families are going through that. It reminded me that I have no problems. I say to young reporters these days, you can't really pull yourself away. But, we get to see how well people function and come together. When I get home and the back door doesn't work the way it's supposed to, or the refrigerator broke, I think, who cares? I live in a palace compared to half the things I see every day. I go to the homeless shelter. I go to the burn center. When you're thinking you're having a bad day, go to the oncology ward at The Children's Hospital. I come home some days thinking, wow, I've got it pretty good. I'm grateful for what we have. When my kids complain about things, I say, guys, we don't have any problems. As journalists, we can give our kids perspectives on the

world. Sometimes when I'm out reporting, I really wish my family was with me. Just so they could see what life is really like. Being a journalist makes you happy for what you have.

I think a lot of reporters joke and are sarcastic during difficult situations. They aren't able to grasp what's actually happening around them so they make jokes about the dead body in the middle of the street. It's a defense mechanism. So many journalists laugh at things just so they don't lose it. Just so they can keep it together to do their job.

Kevin Torres. KUSA Multimedia Journalist

The night of the Aurora shooting was interesting because I was working that Thursday night for the 10 o'clock news. My best friends were getting into town from Syracuse that night, so basically my vacation had just started at ten. They ended up meeting me at the station and we went back to my house, I live a couple blocks from the station. One of them ended up passing out on the couch, the other one and I were just up hanging out, we were on Twitter. He works in news as well. All of the sudden a tweet comes across from Justin Joseph from Fox 31 saying, "potential mass shooting at Aurora theater, 20-30 possibly dead." I thought, that's not possible. It's gotta be some big mistake, someone screwed up or got something wrong. More tweets start coming along, so we downloaded the police scanner app and started listening to it. That's when things started to get real. We started going to YouTube searching Aurora theater to see if anyone had uploaded anything recently. We found this video of people being rushed out of the theater. That was probably around, I want to say, 12:45 or 1 o'clock in the morning. At that point, I threw on a pair of jeans and a 9NEWS polo shirt and ran out the door. When I got into work, that's when I realized how serious it was because most of the managers were in at that point, all in their pajamas. No one knew exactly what was going on, we had one reporter in the field, Brandon Rittiman. So, at that point, Tim Ryan (the Assistant News Director) deployed photographer Chris Hansen and I. He said, "why don't you guys get out there, see what's going on. Swing by Denver Health first because we're thinking maybe they'll start bringing patients there." We swung by Denver Health and didn't see anything at all. We were wondering why ambulances weren't coming there. Of course, there was University Hospital, but we'd thought there would have been activity there. We didn't realize at that point that there was a shortage of ambulances and response wasn't what it should've been at that point, that police were trying to get victims to hospitals as fast as they could in their cars. We called the newsroom and they told us to get over to the theater, so we did. We were there maybe an hour after Brandon was and we jumped in live. It was interesting because at that point, crews were just starting to show up, everything was taped off, and there were these crowds of people on the outside who we talked to. But, on the way over to the theater, we had heard on the scanner that there may be bombs in vehicles in the parking lot. So of course, being in the parking lot, you're wondering in the back of your mind, what exactly is going on. The thing is, when you're covering something like that, to that extent, it goes on the back burner in a sense.

Adrenaline just goes rushing through your body and all you're focused on is telling the story and trying to gather the facts as fast as possible.

The only other thing that I had experienced that was comparable to that, I've been out on murder scenes and shootings and everything else, I've been a reporter for almost nine years now. But the only thing that I can compare to that is in 2009 or 2010 was the Deer Creek Middle School shooting in Littleton [Colorado], which was just a few blocks up from Columbine High School, and that I think was within my first year at KUSA. Right when that happened, I was sent right over there and kids were running outside of the school with their hands on their heads and everything else. A man had gone inside the school with a shotgun and shot students. That was, I guess, my first adventure with covering a crisis. When you're out at the Aurora Theater shooting side, it's non stop. You really don't have any time to think. You just have to go, go, go and try to gather the facts as quickly as you can to get information on the air. In the back of my mind, I think to myself, if it was a still a very dangerous scene, people wouldn't have allowed us to go over there. I tell myself that, but police were occupied themselves and were having a difficult time dealing with everything else on their end. So, it's kind of a defense mechanism that you put up for yourself. You're not really thinking about yourself, your safety.

I stayed until 9 o'clock in the morning. I started working at 1 p.m. the day before. By that time, my mind was a little bit fried. I realized, well, I am supposed to be on vacation, my friends are waiting at my place. I went back to the newsroom, I got a ride back with Nicole Vap, the executive producer of 9 Wants to Know. I walked into the newsroom and looked around at everybody. It's as if nobody even realized that anybody was around because everybody was so busy, so focused. I've never seen the newsroom like that before. I went to my desk, grabbed my bag and walked out. When I walked out, that's when it hit me what had just happened. That's when I started to get emotional about the whole thing. Like, man, did that really just happen? I passed out for maybe four hours and woke up thinking the whole thing was a dream. And, of course, you turn on the TV and see there is live coverage on every channel. It's one of those things, I feel like, when you're in that position, it really doesn't hit you until you're done with work and you have a second to think about what just happened.

Nothing prepares you for this. Nothing. You can be on 100 different assignments and nothing can prepare you until you're there. I mean, who knows what's going to happen next, what the next big event is going to be. I can assure you, having covered Aurora, it's not like you can still prepare for the next big thing. There are many

assignments where I've seen dead bodies, dead children, all that stuff. Every single time, it hits you in a different way. I don't think there is a specific way for somebody to be trained and ready to deal with it. I think it just comes from experience, and, after a while, you just become numb to it.

Tragedy plays a role in how you grow as a journalist. I'd say, I think from the beginning I've always been pretty respectful toward families. I think covering tragedies like Aurora adds up a little bit more, makes you respect families grieving a little bit more. I know there are certain situations where, only a few weeks after, was Jessica Ridgeway. I know reporters from competing stations went right after her family and threw their microphones and cameras in front of her parents' faces. I wouldn't do that. After seeing what happened at Aurora, I don't think I ever would have done that to begin with, but seeing families grieving during a horrible time kind of reiterates the reason not to do something like that. I'm actually a person, not just a journalist.

I mean, my contract ended right after Aurora, around that time. I could've easily gone somewhere else with the amount of content I had produced from the shooting alone and I decided to stay. I don't think that my coverage makes me think about what awards I can win. I have friends who are reporters and would like to be on every big story possible, it gives them a face and allows them to be recognized. I feel like 9NEWS is a special place and our reporters understand that we're a community station and we're here to serve the community we live in.

I've been fortunate enough to not have to deal with a lot of tragedy in my personal life. I've often wondered, or I think to myself, I have to young nephews, and what if anything ever happened to them? How would I feel about that if something happened to them and some reporter tried to stick a mic in my family's faces. I think the one thing is, I always tell families this too, but I think it's best to have a family spokesperson because reporters are going to try as hard as they can to get information, to try to interview somebody. Whether it's a friend, or someone in the family willing to do it, I think every family needs a spokesperson.

The first day of my first job was October 28, 2004 and I was there not really knowing what I was doing. I knew this was what I wanted to do since I was a kid, but I think once you actually set foot into a newsroom you're like, "oh wow! This is really happening." I think, from there, it was a really great lesson, every day. From my first job, to my second job, to now, I think you learn every day. I think you learn not to put together TV news stories as TV news stories, you put them together as something that really actually tells a story instead of just news. I think people are able to relate more to

an actual story instead of, you know, here's x, y, z, show the emotion, show the process of what a family is dealing with. You really have to think like a human for a little while, not like a reporter. I think that's important.

I think I try to enjoy my life a lot more. I see so much tragedy that it's kind of, I would rather appreciate the stuff I've been given. I treat every day like it's a holiday. I think my first couple of years, I was like determined to get to my next market, reach my next goal. Now it's just like, man. I would rather just be having a great day at work and with my friends and everything. I want to truly enjoy my life.

My role as a journalist is to tell the community's story. To get out there and give a voice to someone who, otherwise, wouldn't have a voice. There are a lot of people out there who feel like they're not worthy of being a story, but everybody has a story and it's my job to tell it.

I started covering the Dylan Redwine story pretty much since day 1 and I became close with his family as I've been covering the story, his mother's side of the family. So, they invited me over to do a story with them on Christmas Eve and I went over there to do a story, you know, kind of, what is it like to not have your son with you, when he's still missing, on Christmas Eve. At the end of the interview, Dylan's mother Elaine gave me a "Hope for Dylan Redwine" bracelet. I've never taken it off since then. Up until recently, when he was found, his remains were found, that switched from "Hope for Dylan" to "Justice for Dylan." The only time I had it off was when I switched it from hope to justice. I'll continue to wear it up until there is an arrest made and somebody's found guilty of his death. The family put a lot of faith in me and trusted me a lot. They don't really talk to other reporters, the mother's side at least and I respect them. It's one of those things that means a great deal to me. I keep in contact with Elaine and Dylan's brother Corey and Mike, his stepfather, quite often. We're going to see where that story goes.

I think it affects me emotionally when I look down at the bracelet every day. There was another story, plenty of stories, actually, where I've had a personal connection to it. Delaney, who was a young girl up in Northern Colorado, was diagnosed with a rare brain tumor and, um, I met with her a few days before she died, with her family as they said goodbye to her, and then I was with her family the day she died and they had a candlelight vigil. Pretty much all of Northern Colorado came out for that. Then, I was with them the day they wanted to visit her gravesite on Christmas. Same thing up in Sterling with Cole Roads. The same day he died, the high school sports star, his family allowed me to interview the mother. To have them allow me to speak with her on the day

he died, that was something. They really appreciated the way the story came out. They invited me back to do a story when his team was playing for the state champs. They ended up winning. And, you know, we've won a few awards for that story and we've given the awards to that family every single time. It's one of those things where, if they trust you that much, you know you're doing your job right. You're making an impact.

Adele Arakawa, KUSA Anchor

I actually got a text message notification, which lives right by my bed, and I did, I woke up in the middle of the night and I checked it. I'm not positive, exactly what it said verbatim. But the jist of it was, "shooting in Aurora, multiple injuries." Something like that. I thought okay, and went back to sleep. From that, you can't glean a whole lot of information. As memory serves, I got up the next morning and realized what had happened. The expectation here is, you don't wait to get called in to ask if they need you, you just come in. Everyone's on call 24/7. I came in, I think I was at the scene and co-anchored from the parking lot, kind of across the way from the theater. My day didn't start until later. I knew, from watching our coverage early in the morning that people had come in over night, shortly after the shooting, and had been working all night long. My feeling was this. If they really had needed me, they would've called me in earlier. My shift was night side. I needed to relieve the people who had been there overnight. So logistically, that's kind of what had happened.

What went through my mind? A combination of things when I realized the scope and the severity of what had happened. It did bring to mind Columbine very distinctly. The same things go through your head, at least on a personal level, that it's senseless, it's tragic. Why is this happening again? On a professional level, how do we find out more about what did happen? It's going to take days and weeks to discern who the suspect is, what his motive was. The story was developing all day about his booby-trapped apartment. It was an on-going story. In the field, there were several survivors who were in theater nine, who were talking to us. It does become a media circus. You're in an area that had, by then, network reporters in the area. Brian Williams was there the next night. It becomes this jockeying to see who can get which interview with who. And that started kind of, by early afternoon.

It's a process. I mean, there are people there with food and water and things like that to support those working on that particular story. Everybody was out there. There were people, families of the victims. Families of the survivors, who had come, and what they come there for, this happens. They want information. They see you as an information conduit. They kind of hang around, listen to what you're saying on the air, they actually come up to you and ask if you've heard anything else, and what's the latest in the investigation. Then there's curiosity seekers who live in the area, or are driving by and see all of this going on, and just kind of come and watch. There's more of that curiosity factor too.

The time goes by. It really, there are logistics at play. When you're in a true field anchor situation, later, not in the early stages. You are still gathering information in the early stages. New details are coming forward on a fairly regular basis. If you're in a situation, as in a command post, you can glean quite a bit of information from authorities in charge of the scene and pass it on. When you start getting into the later hours, things start to dry up. They slow down. Then you become this gurgitator of facts over and over again. You start to look for fresh interviews, or a new survivor, or a fresh perspective on a story that is 12 or 24 hours old. It is developing, but it's moving forward too. You're trying to stay ahead of it. You're trying to do the viewer a service. They want to know just as much as anybody else what is going on.

Here's my personal rule. You never involve yourself personally. You cannot in a story. You can sympathize. In some cases, you can even empathize. You cannot, ever ever, become part of the story. It's hard sometimes not to let your emotions rule. They did at Columbine for some people who were in the field.

Here's my analogy. It is like; this is a very loose analogy because I would never compare myself to a medical professional type person. But, it's kind of like being a paramedic who works an ambulance shift. That paramedic comes on a horrible accident scene. That paramedic, does his or her job, to the best of their ability, the way they were trained to do it, and then if they have any personal issues, or problems or residuals after that they need to deal with it on a personal level. While they're doing their job, they have to do their job. My job is to convey the most recent information I can give, as accurately and as quickly as I can. Therefore, my job as a journalist is to disseminate information. That's my primary function. I don't need to editorialize. I don't need to draw conclusions. I am simply there to pass along information.

It is not hard to separate myself from the emotion when I'm on a level in the field. A lot of people are depending on you. It's not just your viewers. It is your camera crew; it's your engineer in the truck. It's your producer. A lot of people are depending on you to kind of be that corner stone. You set the tone and you kind of are driving, pretty much. If you cannot do your job, they can't do their jobs either. I don't lose sight of that.

Columbine was so impactful, that after it, they brought in counselors to the studios into the station to talk with people who work here who needed to unload. People who were impacted by that. I got calls from all over the country because my son was in high school. There were people who did not know where he was in high school and that impacts you. Columbine was a little different for me in that it hit home, more so. We're never desensitized; I hope we're not. Columbine was kind of the precedent setter, like, oh

my gosh, look at what happened. Look at what happened in your community. It was kind of a rude awakening.

You don't disconnect yourself. You try not to become emotionally impacted. You can become emotionally involved. There's a difference. You have to have that empathy, that understanding of this huge personal loss that many of these families went through. That's hard. If you've got to cry, you go home and cry. You don't cry when you're doing your job. You try not to. It's very emotional sometimes. It's easy to say it; it's harder to do it.

The experience, you don't ever want to become calloused or hardened on what we do. We do see, experience things that most people do not, and frankly should not have to. There are things that we don't put on air because we should not share those with our viewers. We're exposed to it and we see it and you can't think that doesn't impact you in some way. You do, you have to think first and foremost, I have a job to do.

The sheriff at the time at Columbine was Sheriff Stone. They were really, really good about giving periodic updates throughout the day. I was there by 1:30. The shooting happened at about 11:20ish. Before law enforcement could really get a grip on everything that was happening, before they had accurate numbers, they were actually giving out wrong numbers. Specifically, they were giving out the wrong number of casualties. We conveyed the information the sheriff gave us. He gave us those numbers himself. We had him on our air. We kept using those numbers because he was our source. He was a trusted source. It came out later, those numbers were wrong. So, as far as fact gathering, I think what I learned from Columbine was, you attribute. You say, according to this person, this is the number of fatalities we have. This is what they say. This is what the sheriff's department is saying. We did that at Columbine, but we did that, I took it for truth. I took it to be accurate and it was not. It taught me that, very early on, in a story of this magnitude and this scale, there are a lot of unknown. It was like the Boston Marathon bombings. There was so much information going out. You have to couch it by conveying to your viewer that it's early in the investigation, it's early in this story so therefore, take this with a grain of salt. But, according to so and so, our official source, this is what they're telling us.

You have to understand their investigate process too. Different sources. There was a SWAT team, there were different law enforcement jurisdictions and they didn't get their numbers together. There was one number here, one number there. Nobody figured out where these numbers were. It was before Twitter. It was long before twitter. We were, in real time, on TV, the primary source of information. It was different. It's

changed so much. There is so much misinformation, but there is also a lot of accurate information on Twitter.

The comparisons would be between, the Boston Marathon, and I get on twitter and go, oh my gosh, this is do different, than it was even in 1999 at Columbine. The way of communicating now has changed so dramatically. It's not community wide, it's not state wide, it's not nationwide, it's global.

It impacts you personally, sure. The night of Columbine, I didn't get home until 2 a.m. I was there from 1 in the afternoon until 1 that night. It snowed that night. It started snowing at about 11 or 12, I was freezing and standing out in the snow. We were still trying to get numbers nailed down. My son had school that day and he was asleep, obviously, but I went into his room, just like I did every night from birth on, I would go to his room and kiss him goodnight, even when he was asleep. It impacted me and I hugged him. He woke up and he said "mom, what's wrong?" I said, "nothing. I said, "I just wanted to hug you." That's how it impacted me. As a parent, it did affect me pretty deeply I guess because of that. When you send your kids to school, you don't think they're not going to come home. You don't think they're not going to come home because somebody shot them. I guess that's kind of the shock factor of it. It was such a shock to everybody. You think it's a safe place. It kind of shakes the foundation of your reality, your world. It makes you second-guess your whole perspective.

I've been in this business a long time. 40 years. There was never this epiphany of, look, I'm a journalist. I spent seven years in radio and in those seven years, a lot of it was in radio news. And then after being in radio news, I went back into the entertainment side of it. I was a disc jockey for a while and then I went into television and I did weather. I was a weather forecaster, not a meteorologist. I was a weather forecaster for six months. And then transitioned into the news role, as a reporter and a photographer, and then again into the anchor chair. It never was a, "oh look, I'm a journalist." It was more of an evolution. I was very young. There were no role models. I guess I could've taken a generic one, but I never did. There weren't a lot of women in the industry anyway. I never wanted to emulate anybody; I didn't want to be like anybody else. I wanted to be me. It was never about, if anything else, because it was so male dominated, you were just one of the guys. You paled around with them, you acted like them, there was never a gender gap, per say, because we all had the same responsibilities. We all pulled the same load. No one had preferential treatment. It was kind of neat that way. You were just one of the guys. I tried to be one of the guys too. I was married at the time, but there was

never a line drawn that said, you can't do this because you're a woman. Which was kind of good.

You grow, you learn. When I was young in the industry, everyone was young. There was no mentor. The people who were older in the business, there was so much of an age gap, it was crazy. At my second anchor job, the guy who shared the anchor desk with me was in his mid-fifties. I was 25. So, you're talking a father-daughter age difference. He honestly felt a little threatened by me. I don't know why. I was producing one show, so I pretty much controlled one of the shows.

It is an evolutionary process. You learn. If you stop learning in any job, especially this one, learning, challenging yourself, then it's time to get out. It becomes not a challenge anymore. You're a reader. You come in, you read what's up in front of your nose, you don't fact-check it, and you don't look for more information. You don't learn from it, you don't find it interesting. Therefore, you might as well give up. What's changed most about the industry is in the way we disseminate information, the platforms. It's changed dramatically, because, I mean, when I started, there were the three main networks –NBC, CBS, and ABC. You worked for an affiliate or an owned and operated. When I started it was AM radio. FM wasn't even around and now there's satellite radio. It keeps evolving. You have to evolve with it, to a degree. But I think the bastion still remains. We primarily are disseminators of information and it's our job to be fair, accurate and balanced when we do that. Now, some younger generations feel like it's their job to offer perspective. I'm old school. I do not. I think our job is to present information and people can draw their own conclusions and have their own perspectives. I strongly feel that way. And I know that there are those in this newsroom that don't feel that way, but I'm old school.

Here's one thing I will say, in addition to Columbine. In this industry, and you will find example after example in our own newsroom. You can't lose touch of the people about who you report. Whenever Columbine happened, one of the victims, his name was Kyle Velasquez. He was a special needs child. He was one of the ones shot in the yard before they got in the school. The station said, "do you feel comfortable approaching the parents of some of these children?" All of us were asked that. I said, "no, not really. I'm not the kind that goes knocking on doors to say, 'hey, how do you feel?' I know damn well how they feel." However, I did reach out in a very subtle way to the family of Kyle Velasquez. They graciously agreed to talk to us. We went to their home. Al and Phyllis, to this day, we stay in touch. They send me a birthday card. They never forget my birthday and it's been 14 years. We've established a life-long bond. I cared

deeply about how this impacted their lives. I have an interest in how they do and how they're dealing with life. We don't report on it. It's just a personal thing. Cheryl's done that a lot. Kim's done that a lot. You reach out to these people and you realize they're human. You realize that they need something to hang on to that gives them a feeling, of this is a tie to the person we lost, to some degree. A person that knows, kind of, what I went through and they empathize. That's kind of what you have to keep in mind.

You have to, like I said, never lose your humanity. Some of the things we report are just inhumane. And how you keep that in perspective is knowing that behind this heinous act, there are people who are true who still know what it is to be human. Who have a sense of community, a sense of family. That's truly a backbone of our community. If you can still keep in touch with that, you can easily deal with horrible things that happen. Things that are out of our control, that are nobody's fault. Things that just have to be reported on.

I get so much heat, not so much anymore, but people always say, "you guys just report on negative news." No we don't. Some days are bad, some days are bad. I agree with that. If you dissect every newscast that we do, I challenge you to find all of the negativity and stack it up. I feel like we make an effort to balance the newscast. I used to argue, "oh my gosh, why are we wasting 30 seconds on that piece of pabulum." Over the years, my position has kind of changed. You give them the meat, but you have to have something to balance it out. Otherwise, your diet becomes one thing, and it's not healthy for you. You have to have a good balance.

Kim Christiansen, KUSA Anchor and Reporter

I heard about it first thing in the morning. We had returned right from vacation I think. Early that morning, I was getting ready to go to work. To be honest, I thought it was just a shooting. A typical shooting. Even though that's bad, it might be two or three people. I could tell right away that it was bad. I got the call that was like, "get in, get in now." So, I got in and relieved Kyle Dyer, who had been on air since 2 a.m. and then just stayed on the set with Kyle Clark until midnight. I was on the set the whole time. I think initially, mentally, you don't want to go there. I don't think you want to realize it is that bad. The information started to come out. It came out quicker than Columbine, I might add, in part because police agencies are a little more trained on how to deal with situations like these, and because of social media and cell phones and the ability to connect with people. People were able to say who was missing and that information came out much quicker. By mid day, we had a much greater sense of how daunting this really was. I think my feelings were a lot like everybody else. A theater I a lot like a school. It's a place we go into, thinking it's completely safe and I kept thinking, right away, that it had to be young people. The majority of people my age that work a typical job are not going to a midnight showing of Batman. I was guessing these were all high school students in the summer time, or college students. These are young people and this was devastating. Just to think about how they were trapped, in a room, in darkness, and that really got me. The fact that it was pitch dark and the movie started. I 'm not sure I could discern what would be real and what wouldn't be when someone comes in like that. I mean, what in the world would you do? That's the feeling, that utter, complete despair, fear, terror. The worst fear you could ever imagine in the middle of the night. The movie is still going, all of those elements.

I can remember Columbine as clear as day too. Everybody remembers where they were. I was actually assigned to a reporter shift that day. I had an 11 o'clock speaking engagement. This tells you a lot about how the technology in the world has changed. I had my pager with me and I was about to start speaking and my pager went off. It said there had been a shooting at a school and I needed to come to work. I left the speaking engagement and came here. Ironically, I ended up on the set the first day there too, because Adele was sent out to the location. I was with Jim Benneman until, I think, 11 or 12 that night. The next day, I was sent to the church and then the following day to Clement Park. I was on the scene days after, again and again and again.

The thing that struck me about Columbine is, we didn't have a lot of information initially. We didn't know how bad it was. We knew it was serious. I was a student in Jefferson County Public Schools. I grew up in Jefferson County Public Schools. I went to Arvada West. We played Columbine High School. To me, it was like, this isn't happening. This doesn't happen in Jefferson County Public Schools.

It was really terrible when parents started showing up at the school and showing up at the elementary schools, trying to pick up their kids. They were screaming out names as they got off busses. There was a triage area set up. It was really difficult to watch that, the kids just coming, rushing out of there as they did. And then, when the sheriff's spokesperson came out with the numbers. It just, it was if I stopped breathing for a minute. No words could have come out of my mouth at that moment. I will never forget that moment.

I will always remember Patrick Ireland. We knew there was this boy in the window. And Dave Sanders. The calls started coming in. While the kids didn't have cell phones those days, they were able to get to a phone. They were saying he's dying, we need help, get in here, get in here and nobody was there. Nobody was able to get him. From that first day on, those were the most difficult moments. There were more after that, for different reasons.

I think Columbine altered all of my reporting techniques. I remember standing at the church the next day and at clement park. I was looking around and seeing, you know, Katie Couric. Katie came up and introduced herself to me. I remember saying, wow, that's Katie Couric. She was asking if she had any additional contact information we could share with them. That was a reality check. I had gone down to the Oklahoma City bombings but I had not realized, oh my gosh, that's right, every single network is in my town, my hometown covering this. It wasn't just NBC. It was so bizarre to see Entertainment Tonight there and Japanese television and the National Inquirer and all of these other people. It was not only surreal, it was really disturbing that they would be there. That they were covering this in the same way. Sadly, that is exactly what the two killers wanted. In that respect, they had achieved exactly what those killers achieved. When you have international news media, and not mainstream, traditional network news teams at the site. That changed a lot, that experience.

Clement Park was just overwhelming to see. It was pouring down rain at that point. Columbine happened on a brilliant, beautiful day. Right after, the rain came and then a spring storm. The flowers, all of the memorials, were covered in snow. They were frozen. Everything was covered in mud. It was just, it was how many were brought there.

Then the man brought the crosses. These were images you could not shake. We all worked 12, 13, 14 hour days and we couldn't sleep. I just kept thinking about them. I think we got to day 4 or 5, but Dave Sanders' wife called me. She asked to do an interview with me because her sister had breast cancer. She felt a connection with me. I work with survivors and I had breast cancer. So she came to me. I went to her house and never will forget that and my role as a reporter there. It was an excruciating story. She was there with her whole family. He was her world. He was absolutely her world. She told us right away how desperate she was for information and that she couldn't get any. We knew the story too. We knew people were calling from inside saying, help us, help us, he's dying. Get someone here. She was calling everybody. No one would let you into the school, or even the streets near the school, nothing. And a reporter from the Denver Post called her and told her he was dead. That's how she found out. She has never, ever, even spoken to anybody or even looked at a Denver Post again. What I took from that was, I never wanted to be that person. No matter how much information I have confirmed, I never want to be that person. That is something she will never, ever forget. That was unbelievably devastating.

The other family who requested to speak with me, who I did many follow-up stories about, who I still stay in touch with, is Anne Marie Hochhalter. What that particular story did, was many things. She's a brilliant girl. Straight A's, perfect student, and that was a serious, catastrophic injury for her. Life-altering. I met her family at Craig Hospital. I did a couple of stories there, with Sean Graves too. Sean and Anne Marie and Patrick Ireland were the three I got to know the best. In Anne Marie's case, it reminded me of what my mother would be like. Her mom was really fragile. Her mom was just trying to get her head around what was going on. That her daughter, this beautiful, smart girl, wasn't going to walk again. Her brother was trying to be the lighter note but they were just a serious family. They were academically oriented, I could tell. Her mom was quiet, but I kept thinking, wow, I could tell she's struggling. We followed her for a while and then it became time for Anne Marie to be released and that is when she really started struggling. What we found out later on, from her dad who explained the whole thing, she was on some antidepressants. She was hospitalized for a while. It takes a while for those antidepressants to build up in your body, the way he explained it. He did not feel she was ready to leave the hospital. She did not feel they were ready to have Anne Marie in the house. People redesigned the house so she could get around. She was just overwhelmed with all of the needs Anne Marie would have. So she walked into a gun shop, bought a gun, and shot herself. Right there, in the gun shop. That was in October. So from April

until October, this girl loses the ability to walk and then loses her mother. And just the other day, I saw on Facebook, she posted a picture of her with her mother when she was a little girl and she said, “this would have been my mother’s birthday.” I lost it. How does somebody go on? She has. Those were the stories that just kept going back. The lessons I learned, with all of those media, the mainstream media, they all left within a week. We still live here. Sean Graves, who I adore, who was probably the most capable in recovery even though he was so young, only 15, outstanding family. Sean did eventually walk again. He’s still walking.

There are all of these ripple effects that continue to haunt, and be a part of this community. I hope we honor that and remember that. Over the time, we had a lot of things that were released, like the tapes, the tapes of the killers in the basement. We had a lively debate about the value about releasing that on TV. We played about 10, 15 seconds of it. It wasn’t going to serve, it wasn’t going to advance the story. They had built bombs in their basements, they had gone to shooting ranges. They had planned this horrible things for months and months. They’re demons on tapes. What could that do to help anybody? That was a good debate. Just like when we decided not to use the aerials of the kids leaving the school with their hands up. That re-traumatized people to see it. Yet NBC decided to do it. Dateline decided to do it. People painted us with the same brush. It’s hard to explain to people that that’s not us. We didn’t do that.

I think our role is to listen and to document. To have a sense of the heart of what people are thinking and feeling in the community. I know when Patti did the meeting with the Aurora families here, that was really useful to me. We did the same after Columbine. I got so close to so many families. I think I knew, in Columbine, the sense of what the families wanted from the press. The Velasquez’s, the dearest people alive, they remember our children’s names. I can honestly say, if you ask me the killer’s names, I have to think. I can remember their first names, but I have to think a little about their last names. I have put them in the back of my mind and I think that’s what people expect of us. They expect us to back off when things are too close. Even the general viewers get weary of a story. If Columbine is just thrown out all of the time and only one negative connotation comes up, that’s our fault.

It’s also important that we ask the hard questions. A lot of things changed after Columbine. The way SWAT teams respond to critical incidents. School security, bullying incidents, the way people get lost in a big school, a lot of those hard questions were asked. Those are important to report on. We still have to do that.

I kept thinking, why can't I sleep, I've been working nonstop, especially after Columbine. For me, I think it was ten days after or eleven days later. I was going to an event in Boulder that I was emceeding. It was for a charity. I had no idea what it was, I had cried many, many times with these families and shared in special moments and struggle to sleep. I lost it on the way to Boulder. I mean, uncontrollable sobbing. I was like, I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know how I am going to even get there. I think it all just caught up with me. It was, I've never done that in my whole lifetime. Losing grandparents and those things, those are usually grief moments, but a man told me once when dealing with grief you suppress for a long time, you have to accept grief bursts. It comes in bursts. If you smell something that reminds you of someone, you just need to take it, at that moment. I realized now that I was probably suppressing that for a while. I just lost it at that moment and I can't say it got a lot easier, I but I did feel better. I had this incredible relief knowing that I had been apparently living with this. I slept a little bit better.

So with Aurora, I was like, gosh, here we go again. The biggest thing for me was that I had become a mom since Columbine. So that was a really hard day. My son's old enough to text me and say, did they get the guy for sure? Tough questions that a normal 11-year-old boy would ask. I kept thinking, what am I going to tell him? So the next day, again, I was like okay, I just need to allow myself some time. I was okay the next day. But Sunday, they had that service. Kyle and I just had to introduce the service. That was very cathartic for me. I have a strong faith. I can't forget a couple people's faces, watching them. Alex Sullivan, his family, and the girlfriend that was hanging on, their faces at the service. The little girl Veronica's face. It's constantly in my memory. After that, for a couple days, I really allowed myself to lose it for a little while, knowing that it would help in a lot of ways, like it did in Columbine.

I still haven't figured out what my feelings are, a couple of people brought this up. It's so different when the bad guys are dead. There are all of these questions that haunt me about Columbine, but the shooters are gone. In this case, there are still all of these questions, but he is still here. It's a very different dynamic about where you put your anger, where you look to with questions. As a journalist, we all ask questions. In Columbine's case, Dylan's mom (Dylan Klebold), who I've seen a few times since the shooting, she's never talked to the media, but she is actively involved in the CU depression center and some suicide prevention groups. As a parent, I think you also think about what is she left with for the rest of her life? She's choosing to be a part of

something she thinks is important. So that says something about what she thought about her son, being in the place she was. But that's something.

I do talk about it a little. When they offered up those counselors who came into the building, I met with them. I had some questions answered about how to answer Tanner's questions. He was going to continue to ask questions about Aurora. Plus, every time we go somewhere, other families, or sometimes strangers, say stuff to me and he's right there. He's got like four ears when something comes up that I don't want him to hear. I wanted to be able to answer questions the right way. I did talk about it with him a little bit. I tried to assure him that I can't say for sure something like this won't ever happen again, but something like this happens, procedures and things change. People become more alert. In the days after Columbine, there were a lot more resources at the school for those who were struggling. You have to explain that these people had problems and people are now more aware of mental health. But besides that, I don't talk about it that much.

My husband, he understands crisis management different than I do. He investigated plane crashes with the NTSB for 25 years. He understands the value of having someone there to deal with victims' families. Sometimes we talk about that. Victims' advocacy, and who's there for them, and what role should they play. That's involved a lot in tragedies. He did the TWA 500 crash. Not everybody on that plane, the victims' families, believe that crash was what it was.

I've done stories with families of plane crash victims. One family felt so much comfort because we had the recording of the cockpit before the plane crashed. The family loved that they could hear the father's voice. They said, it comforted us to know, that even though there was a fire, that he sounded calm. You learn so much from people that are left after tragedy. When they're stuck wondering what if, and how, things happened. When I started, I was a writer on the overnight shift for Jack Maher. I think, at that time, I was really concerned about being able to get the facts right. To answer the who, what, when, where, why and how. I now realize how naïve I was. But, I was curious. It taught me so much about the world. I tried to watch and read as much as I could. I felt this burden to learn as much as I can. I was assigned to all of the stories about the middle east, which shows how much our world hasn't changed in a way. But I remember thinking, okay, where is this country, what is this story, what is the background, things like that. When we report on casualties overseas, there was sort of a disembodiment of that. And now, in what I've done what I've done, reporting on the marines who have died, the homecomings of soldiers, I have a very different perspective. Like, wow, is there

anything in the world that could be more important to them. So, I have a much better appreciation of our job and the responsibility we bear. While it's difficult to report on a lot of the things we report on, we have to realize there's family behind that story. There's a mother, a spouse. We owe it to them to ask the hard questions, why this shouldn't have happened. That's our job now. It's not just stating the facts. It's about the people behind that story.

We had a lot of people who really struggled after Columbine High School. When Newtown happened, that was the other one. I did the 4 p.m. show that day. On Saturday, I couldn't stop watching TV. I was so messed up about it. I was thinking, what is wrong with me. I felt like I had to know everything. Then they started building the big security thing in front of Tanner's school. I walked him to the door every day. Deep down, it was my problem. He's in sixth grade. But I understand why people are concerned about kids in schools now.

