

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO FILE:

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

THERAPIST: How are you?

CLIENT: I'm okay, I think. I don't know. I'm kind of not sure. I feel okay today. I don't know. I think I'm definitely kind of mildly depressed or something. I feel tired. I was just a crazy . . . I was already feeling a little off before all of this shit happened so . . . [00:01:09]

THERAPIST: What was it like for you Friday?

CLIENT: It was crazy. It was definitely traumatizing, there's no question.

THERAPIST: Oh, my goodness. This was at night, you mean? [00:01:53]

CLIENT: This was Thursday after they killed that cop and got chased into Cheshire. I don't know. It's going to take some time. And then what was it 20 hours? I don't know. It's hard to put into words that kind of terror because at that point you're like, "Well, this guy has nothing. Obviously he knows it's over." They didn't care about dying or killing other people so it would make sense. If I was that person and that insane, then it would only make sense to just knock someone's door down, take a few more people out, and just blow yourself up. There are no words to explain, to feel like that could happen. I mean yeah, they were armed, but all that takes is a second. If he knows he's going to die anyway, just do it. It was a fucking . . . it was just . . . you know. I don't know. [00:03:22]

THERAPIST: From the starting point of hearing the noises and then seeing them, I would think that alone is . . .

CLIENT: Oh, yeah. Just like the sounds were so loud. It was clearly . . . there was no confusing . . . I mean it was surreal. It was surreal. Suddenly it sounded like there was a war going on. The horrifying part, the first thing I thought because it sounded like so much noise, it didn't sound like two or three people, I was horrified that they'd come to Cheshire and there was some kind of group, do you know what I mean? And that there were suddenly 30 insane people waiting fully armed for I don't know what. That was horrifying. Horrifying. [00:04:13]

THERAPIST: Because you don't know what's happening at that point at all.

CLIENT: No idea. No idea.

THERAPIST: How many there are. Had you been asleep?

CLIENT: No. I was wide awake. I had just walked down that way that night. It was a nice night. Since I already wasn't feeling that great that week I was like, "You know, I'm just going to take a walk." I walked right where it all went down like around 11:00. And then I got home and I was talking to my friend in Phoenix, so we were talking. I had the window kind of open and I saw all of these cops flying down the street and I thought, "That's weird." The cops were going really fast. I was like, "Yeah, this is not normal." [00:04:59] Then by the time I told Giorgio, I heard two loud noise and then I hung up.

THERAPIST: You went down to get your mom?

CLIENT: Yeah. I grabbed Cecelia; I grabbed my shoes. My mom was already awake. I was like, "We're going right now. We're getting in the car and we're going." But then, for whatever reason, I thought to call 911 and, when I told them my address and stuff, they were like, "Just

turn off all the lights and don't go near the windows. Definitely do not leave your house. Lock all the doors." It was crazy. On the other hand, once it was over I also felt a tremendous amount of I mean, I've never been prouder to be from Cheshire. Between the cooperation of citizens and law enforcement, that's fucking amazing. [00:06:06] We're going to get the 911 guys; just fucking hunted them down like dogs. It's kind of weird. I don't know, when I think it, it felt like a police state. It was a police state. That was kind of weird. I don't know how you get around that if this is the world we're going to live in. You're going to have to give up some civil liberties. So when it was all over it did feel good. I went out with people thanking cops and that felt pretty amazing. They were doing all these sweeps. They came to our house several times. [00:06:54] One of the times on Friday before they'd caught this guy, the police on the block knocked on the door and went down and it was actually very moving because when I opened the door, suddenly they became very human. They were like, "Hey, we're just doing a check door to door. We just want to see how everyone is doing. Are you guys doing okay?" That was very moving, actually. But then it's depressing because I know this is going to happen again. I'm surprised it doesn't happen more often. That's just very depressing. It's a big country and there are a lot of people, just random, just freaks. [00:07:56] Overall I guess I'm okay. I just feel tired. I definitely feel kind of depressed. I don't feel very motivated. I've been feeling a little bit sick to my stomach [] (TAPE RECORDER FAILS at 00:08:09 to 00:09:43)

I was telling my mom everything would be okay, but in my mind I was like, "Well, what are the chances of him coming to our house?"

THERAPIST: They could have.

CLIENT: Yeah, but then I was like, "What are the chances that any of this is happening? It is happening in my backyard in all of our backyards in that neighborhood so for any one of is it very well could." It's not like we don't know where they are at all, but then it's like what are the chances they're going to end up at my house? But when literally there's a major event, cluster fuck, clearly it could happen. It's here. [00:10:23]

THERAPIST: He's going to end up in someone's yard or house.

CLIENT: Exactly. Exactly.

THERAPIST: It's very, very scary. I thought of you even with the police knocking on people's doors. I mean I know they're there for good reason and they're there to help and protect, but just police alone have been a form of trauma.

CLIENT: Yeah. This time with that, I didn't feel that this time. I felt good that they were around but . . . I just can't put it into words. It was surreal. It was beyond . . . or suddenly there would be a commotion at one of the houses around us where they'd be surrounding the house yelling, telling people to come out bizarre. [00:11:22] I don't know why in those houses. Usually the people that would come out are some white, old ladies. That just drives home that he could be hiding anywhere here.

THERAPIST: Even that though. It's not just that he could come to your house, you're watching this happen. He could be right there.

CLIENT: Right. Right. And really where he ended up is . . .

THERAPIST: Not far, right?

CLIENT: Yeah. (pause) It's weird. It has only accentuated how I was already feeling, so now everything feels really weird and discombobulated. It's just strange going back to our routines. (pause) [00:13:00] I guess all in all I'm doing okay but . . . Yesterday I was like, "Wow, do I need to see Dr. Carlton again maybe? Do I have some kind of low-grade depression going on?" because even before all of this happened I wasn't feeling awful, but I just . . . I'm just so tired. (pause)

THERAPIST: Before all this happened you had been in a space for a week or week and a half where it was like coming down off of the flow of tremendous energy about the two sites connecting. You've been pushing and pushing and working and actually been productive and staying up late. You had your hand in so many things moving forward. How could you keep that pace up forever? Impossible. And you got sick a little bit; you got tired just letting your body decompress. And then as you're decompressing you're aware that there's just a lot of other stuff there feelings about relationships. We were talking about Kelly and Bethany. Going back and forth and just feeling really confused, I think, about what you feel and what happens the closer you get to somebody that makes you then sort of look elsewhere. You think a lot of confusion as new things were getting opened up for the first time and then this happens. [00:15:04] I could see in that state that this just added fuel to the fire, being totally turned upside down and inside out for a while. (long pause) [00:15:58]

CLIENT: Yeah, it's funny, because last night Kelly came over and we just hung out at home. It was really nice, but I don't know what it is, I just . . . (pause) It's like there's a part of me that just wants to retreat and just wants to be alone. I just don't know.

THERAPIST: Maybe your metaphor about being let out of prison and, again, the coincidence of this event happening right now as you're really getting into this process and, I think, more opening up about what happens when you're really known to another person, whether it's me, whether it's Kelly as the relationship grows deeper. [00:17:07] And you're actually being your whole self and not just editing and picking and choosing what to say and who to be. She's being her whole self, but this event, in a way, is filling you with a massive amount of terror. Again, that's something else in a way, but that's what's there lurking right now. "Is this going to be terrifying? Will I get hurt if I get close to her?" the way I think you have been in the past in your childhood.

CLIENT: Or will I hurt her.

THERAPIST: Will you hurt her. Right. Are you the terrorist? Are you going to get terrified?

CLIENT: Because right now there's something in me that feels a little bit reckless, like flirting with other girls. There's something in me that's whatever. [00:18:05] (pause)

THERAPIST: I think there's so much of your life because of your relationship with your mother that has given you those two options. Either you get hurt or you hurt someone else; and if that's the choice, hurting someone else is in some ways preferable to getting hurt. But it's like there's nothing else in the middle of those two. (pause) [00:19:20]

CLIENT: Yeah, I don't know. I just feel drained. My appetite is back, but I just feel off. (pause)

THERAPIST: I also get the feeling that there's a lot of feeling. You know you say sometimes you hit these moments where you're watching something and all this feeling comes out, like a release almost, and then you feel better. It has that feeling to me, like there's something dammed up inside.

CLIENT: Probably.

THERAPIST: Even just from what you went through Friday. [00:20:12]

CLIENT: Well I did have one of those moments Friday when they came and they said, "How are you doing?" When I locked the door, that was the one time I just completely broke down.

THERAPIST: Good.

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah. No, it was good. Or I think there was another time when I was petting Cecelia or something.

THERAPIST: Both times it's feeling a kind of being cared for.

CLIENT: Yeah. Throughout this whole thing I did have moments like that where I cried. There will always be more good people. I'm so proud to be from here. I don't know of any hate crimes so far or just, in general, people opening their homes or giving people rides or whatever it might be. [00:21:27] It's amazing. Even the law enforcement. As much as I don't like cops, in this case, God bless them. Unbelievable. (pause) I think the problem, though, is this just highlights and builds up the existential stuff that I feel. It's just all absurd and random. Things happen. It's overwhelming. [00:22:31] (pause)

THERAPIST: And yet, you also feel something when you think about the good outweighing the bad.

CLIENT: No, definitely.

THERAPIST: That has an ethic and a meaning to it beyond "life is meaningless and we could all die tomorrow."

CLIENT: No, no, no. It's not a "life is meaningless" thing. It's more, I think, just a melancholy-ness. That's exactly it, that it's not meaningless, but that unfair and absurd, senseless things happen and they hurt people and you never know when or where or who it's going to be. [00:23:22]

THERAPIST: Like your dad.

CLIENT: Um-hum. And then today is the commemoration of the Assyrian genocide. That's so funny. Normally, to me it's like my dad I just think about it anyway. You don't need one day to commemorate millions of people, but there is something ironic about it happening in Cheshire. It's weird. (pause)

THERAPIST: Friday could bring up your father. [00:24:13]

CLIENT: Oh, yeah. It brought up lots of things, you know? (pause) In a way it just shows that life is short. It's more like trying to beat the clock. This shit that I'm juggling and trying to get done, it's just . . .

THERAPIST: Work-wise it makes sense. In relationships, I think it feels more confusing what this kind of threat, loss, conflict . . . [00:25:11]

CLIENT: Yeah, in relationships, I don't know. In don't know what to make of it. Kelly and I hung out. Sunday we went to Mystic. When I'm with her it's great, but also I don't know what to make of some of my superficial feelings, like "I wish you were skinnier." She's very pretty, but I don't know. There's that. I'm a little confused. I'm just confused. (pause) [00:27:12] It definitely feels kind of roller-coaster-y now. Do you know what I mean? Like earlier today I was feeling good, and now I feel like shit.

THERAPIST: And then what happened?

CLIENT: Probably coming here, there's just so much.

THERAPIST: You felt good coming in, though?

CLIENT: Yeah. I was walking around. It was beautiful outside. I had a nice walk with Kelly to get coffee. Now I'm sitting here and I feel that tiredness and a little bit of sick in the pit of my stomach, a little headache-y.

THERAPIST: You feel so sad to me. [00:28:04]

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: It isn't even an appearance thing. It just feels like there's just the weight of the world on your shoulders right now with this whatever it is this is stirring about your father, like the whole family history of genocide and trauma and torture. There's a lot in this, Brian. It's hard enough just be trying to remember in here in this process and kind of at your own pace getting yourself through it, but a real thing actually just happened in real time that is like these other things. It not only reminds you and brings you back to the feelings of these other experiences, but is another one you are experiencing right now. Like all of the feelings after your father's death that led you to cut yourself off and kind of meander lost into the world out to Oregon, just aimless and disassociated. [00:29:15] I can imagine that, hopefully, on a smaller scale and, hopefully, caught that's kind of what we're here to do and help you with but I can imagine that being a piece of what's happening right now. You have enough work under your belt that there's this other life that you have going on that feels like it's yours and you're attending to it, but how could this not be triggering for you of some pretty dramatic feelings? Not to mention where you were before this happened in this process.

CLIENT: And the funny thing is that I knew that that was happening even before. Like when the bombings happened, I knew that something felt triggered. It's just like what the fuck? The only two things I keep telling myself is that one: it's not just me. It happened in a whole neighborhood and number two: people died and those families . . . people are maimed. And number two: at least I have this to come to. [00:30:32] Also this is an opportunity to, instead of becoming so disassociated, that's where work can ground you. I just have to find a way to regain some energy. Right now that's what it is. I just feel like I have no energy. I just feel kind of sick. (pause)

THERAPIST: I think when I say "of course" and "no wonder", it's in part just trying to say to the part of you that gets really anxious about where you are today that it would be weird if you weren't here today, given your history. [00:31:27]

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah.

THERAPIST: You can go back to Dr. Carlton, but I don't think this is something that we should medicate. This is what you would do if something like this happened. It was starting to happen after Monday and you will come out of this, probably actually sooner than you think.

CLIENT: Yeah, yeah. Right, right. I've been reminding myself of that, too. That's what I was saying, I'm actually handling it better than . . .

THERAPIST: Totally. I hear you. That's what you're saying, "These are the things I keep trying to tell myself." That's part of what you're doing.

CLIENT: Yeah, like you said, I'm just kind of waiting to feel those things instead of telling myself those things.

THERAPIST: Even being interested in what your experience is of this instead of judging it.

CLIENT: Right. I'm trying not to be so hard on myself.

THERAPIST: You were surrounded by judges as a kid. So many judgments from your mother and from your mother's whole side of the family. Things are either good/bad; good/bad; good/bad not just interest in your experience. (pause) [00:32:56] I think that's why so often you'll move to wanting to judge yourself like, "This is bad that this is happening to me." And then you say, "But the good thing is that I'm doing this." It's like things have to be judged as good or as bad; and there's something kind of comforting and familiar about knowing whether it gets to go in the good column or it gets to go in the bad column. I just think that's what your family did, but it's not about knowing who you are. It's not about knowing, it's about categorizing and black-and-white kind of thinking. (pause) [00:34:16]

THERAPIST: What are you thinking?

CLIENT: Nothing specific. I was all over the place.

THERAPIST: To where?

CLIENT: I don't know. I was thinking on the one hand, what sucks now is I'm full of anxiety, but what is the next thing that's going to happen? Like what's the next bad thing that's going to happen? (sighs) Today I was like, "I could try to write about this," but then, of course, I was thinking, "Yeah, well that's what I say about a lot of things and then I don't actually do anything." (pause) [00:35:10]

THERAPIST: You were trying to gather it into all of your trauma.

CLIENT: Ehh. I'm not doing it.

THERAPIST: Meaning writing? Or not getting people together?

CLIENT: Yeah. No, not really. (pause) [00:36:20] It's a curse to be so ambitious. It must be nice to just not be as much. I have all of these things on my plate. No one put them there. I'm putting them there, but I can't help it. (pause) [00:37:17]

THERAPIST: I think waiting for the next bad thing to happen is trauma. That is a symptom of being traumatized. That's what hyper-vigilance is. It takes many different forms. The expectation that something really bad is going to happen and just waiting for it. It's in some ways an adaptive way of being if you're used to really bad things that keep happening to you. If you're at least prepared for them, that's what it's meant for in a way. But, again, why would you not be waiting for that right now? And why also, for example, would it not freeze you up from leading a regular, humdrum life? That's what happened when you were 20. If horrible, horrible things happen, your whole system starts responding as though you're there for survival and waiting for the next blow. [00:38:22] It's not about, then, forward thinking and productivity and planning and being a pro-active person. Reactivity is what's important when you're in trauma for safety, so I could see also this feeling as you look down on yourself that you're not doing it. That's what happens when your brain is preoccupied with staying safe. (pause) And your brain became very preoccupied with staying safe as you became really psychosomatic after

your father's death. All the fears about "Now me, am I having a heart attack? Am I getting cancer?" That's a form of hyper-vigilant waiting for the thing that's going to go wrong in your own body. [00:39:25]

I think you have that relationally, too. In your relationship with your mother before your father's death. She looks at the picture and says, "Oh, she's beautiful." And then, "Oh, but she has a big mouth." It's like there it is. There's the bad thing coming in the relationship. There's the dagger that you could be waiting for with Kelly or else be waiting to dole out to Kelly because that feels better. And here am I going to hurt you? Are you going to hurt me? As you've gotten close to people you've gotten hurt one way or another in your early life. [00:40:23] (long pause)

CLIENT: You know that comedienne, Margaret Cho? Do you know what I'm talking about? She has a think on salon.com about children and why she's ambivalent and she's pretty sure she doesn't want them. There's one really good part towards the end where she's like, "In the end, I think what it is, is that I don't want to love anything that much," and that's something that I know is in me. I don't want to. I was like, "Wow, that's such a simple way to say it." [00:42:31] I know exactly what she's talking about. There is something perversely freeing in not going there completely. I think she even says something like, ". . . not loving something that much, even myself." I was like, "Yeah, that makes perfect sense. [00:43:22]

THERAPIST: It makes perfect sense if, when you loved that much, you got hurt.

CLIENT: Right. (pause)

THERAPIST: That's very, very sad. (pause) Tomorrow.

CLIENT: Okay. 12:50? All right. Thanks. See you.

END TRANSCRIPT