

Episode 161-- Teamwork Matters in Grief and In Protecting Ki...

Fri, 12/3 9:27AM 36:52

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

ethan, people, guns, mike, child, kids, life, brady, parents, happened, person, family, son, sacrifice, lost, braces, kelly, sitting, feel, kristin

SPEAKERS

Mike Song, Kristin Song, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson



JJ Janflone 00:08

This is the legal disclaimer where I tell you that the views, thoughts, and opinions shared in this podcast belong solely to our guests and hosts, and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's okay, we find it disturbing too. Hey everybody, this is JJ.



Kelly Sampson 00:39

And this is Kelly.



JJ Janflone 00:40

And together, we are the hosts of Red, Blue, and Brady, the podcast that you're listening to right now.




Kelly Sampson 00:46

Yeah. And as the year winds down, and we're in the middle of the holiday season, one thing that I know I'm grateful for, and JJ is too, is the opportunity to speak with wonderful guests like the ones we'll hear from today.



JJ Janflone 00:57

Exactly, Kelly. I am so glad that Mike and Kristin Song were able to take the time to talk to us today about their son Ethan, who was killed due to an improperly stored firearm, about their advocacy and about what life after such an unfathomable loss is like.

 Kelly Sampson 01:15

Yeah, and I think it's particularly poignant that we're recording this in the same week as the shooting at Oxford High School in Michigan, which also, as far as we know, the facts are still developing, that it also seems to deal with an improperly stored firearm. So it's very poignant.



JJ Janflone 01:31

Yes. If you have any thoughts or concerns about safe storage, about firearm safety, or about grief, I think this is definitely an episode to hold close to your heart.



Kristin Song 01:45

So my name is Kristin Song. I became active in the pursuit to keep kids safe after my 15 year old son walked to his best friend's house and was killed with an unsecured firearm.



Mike Song 01:57

And I'm Mike Song. I'm Ethan's dad, and I have had a life changing experience of losing a child and, and I have been reeling from that ever since it happened. But I've been trying to get my bearings and keep my family together and keep moving forward. And so it's been about three, about coming up on our, well, it happened in 2018, January 31. So we just basically count the days from before that versus after that.



Kelly Sampson 02:29

One thing. I mean, this is the part of the podcast we wish, I know JJ says all the time and I believe it too, we wish we could just meet wonderful people like you in different circumstances, but we can't. And so I'm wondering if you wouldn't mind telling us a little bit about your son, Ethan, just as a person, you know, what was he like? And do you have a favorite memory with him or something you wish people knew about him?



Kristin Song 02:50

I have lots of favorite memories. Mike, do you want to? Do you want to share one?



Mike Song 02:54

Yes, sure. Ethan and I were like friends and buddies and, and also, you know, he was my son. And we decided to have a series of adventures to live the life to its fullest. So one of the things he loved was, he loved to, he loved food. He loved to eat anything. And all my other two kids

are wonderful, but they won't touch like something like sushi and Ethan was just like chomping down. So we were secret food buddies, we were foodies. We would go out. We were trying to find the best lobster roll in New England. We were trying to find the best sushi restaurant in Connecticut, the best French restaurant. I mean, it's so, some of my favorite memories are for him, sitting down in front of some really exotic meal and thinking, this kid's never going to eat this. He's 13 years old. And he would just evaluate the meal, like he was a New York Times restaurant reviewer or something. And he was as far, as I could tell, pretty accurately on. And he was my only real food buddy, I would say, you know, like I don't, I don't really have that adventure with anybody else. And so we would sneak out and go out and do stuff that was crazy. And our trip, our idea was we were going to go to Japan and go to the best sushi restaurant in the world someday, you know, and, and we had this whole crazy plan worked out, but we never got to live that out. So those are some of my favorite moments where I'm sitting across the table from him, and he has this reaction, and we have this kind of crazy bond around this weird thing. And, you know, that empty chair, like whenever I'm sitting somewhere eating, and there's a chair that's empty across the way from me, I always, I just say that empty chair is always there. And he's supposed to be in that chair and we're supposed to be doing this crazy fun thing. And yet, you know, we're not, you know, and I'm sitting alone in a restaurant somewhere on the road and I just always picture him right there. You know, my buddy, and I, he's not there anymore. So if I could get you know, five, if I could get like 30 seconds back with him, we'd be sitting there and I, you know, asked him what he thought of something, and he would kind of expound on it. And that was so fun for me to see him do that.

K

Kristin Song 05:08

Yeah, and I think for me, Ethan was, Ethan was one of those people that fought for the marginalized and vulnerable. After he died, I had a ton of moms come up to me and tell me how, you know, Ethan protected them from the, the, the lacrosse bully. Or, you know, one mom's son was intellectually challenged, and Ethan made sure that he, he was invited to sit with him every day at lunch. So that's the kind of kid Ethan was.

K

Kelly Sampson 05:35

He sounds like a really wonderful, wonderful boy.

K

Kristin Song 05:39

He was.

M

Mike Song 05:40

Yeah.

K

Kelly Sampson 05:41

So, in as much as you're comfortable with sharing, could you tell us about what happened to Ethan?

K

Kristin Song 05:47

Sure I can, I can. I spent the morning with him and the early afternoon with him. Ethan was getting his braces off that morning. And so we headed out to the orthodontist around 8:30. And at around 10:30, we were sitting in the car, and I took a picture of him with his beautiful smile and sent it over to Mike and said, you know, look, no braces. And he had school that day, but he had asked if we could go to breakfast to celebrate, you know, he was the kind of kid that had every contraption in his mouth. So getting his braces off was a long, you know, a long commitment. And he was just very happy. So we headed off to breakfast. And it was just really an amazing morning, you know, he was just so talkative. And he was just telling me all about his hopes and his dreams. He wanted to go to Rice University. He wanted to join the army as an officer. He wanted to get married and he wanted to have seven children. And I remember just thinking at that breakfast, how, how excited I was for him, because he really, he really had the most exciting and, and just he was so jazzed for life. And, you know, I remember saying to him, you know, you're gonna make such a difference in this world, because your heart is so big, and you're so determined to protect those who can't protect themselves. And then we came home, and I work for Mike's company, and I was chatting with the accountant. And he came in and asked if he could walk to his best friend's house who lives down the street from us. And normally, I don't let Ethan, I usually have my kids at my house. But he had had surgery in June. And the surgeon had, we had just saw the surgeon and he asked, he said that Ethan needed to walk more, exercise more, start moving, into like running. So I thought him walking to his friend's house and coming back would be good exercise. I was downstairs, making dinner. We were going to celebrate with the family. And two police officers walked across my front lawn. And I had no idea why they were there. And they just said to me, you need to get in touch with your husband and you need to get to Yale New Haven Hospital immediately. And so I texted Mike '911' and he called me back. He was in a business meeting. And I picked him up. And on our way down to Yale, we promised each other that we were going to be able to get through anything, that we were, we didn't care if he was blind. We didn't care if he lost the limb. We didn't care if we had to feed him for the rest of his life. We were going to come together as Team Song. And we were going to, we were going to overcome this. Never in my wildest imagination did I think my son was dead. So we arrived at the ER, and Mike, if you want to pick it up from here.

M

Mike Song 08:46

Yeah. So we got in. And there's several horrifying things that happen to you as you go through this nightmare. And one is that, like, everything gets flipped upside down. So, if you go into a hospital, you always are intercepted by people who want you to fill out paperwork or identification. And there was a row of five or six police officers, and they were like, we walked in, and they were like, you could tell that they were there to, to greet us or to kind of get us into this other room and there was like no sense of who, who are you. They knew exactly who we were. It was, and that was a horrifying moment because I was like, that's not supposed to happen. And I could just look into the eyes of the first officer and I was like, this is, we're about to go, we're about to go into the, like a hellish experience. You could just feel it. So they take you into a little room and then you kind of sit there for a little while and they're kind of, you know, you're just bracing for something horrific. And the doctor came in and said, you know, you, we couldn't save your son. He died of a gunshot wound. And, and we fell to the floor and

then you know, you just literally fall off your seat. You really really feel like crump- just your heart is just ripped out of you, and you crumple forward, and you hit the ground pretty hard, like on the, literally on the ground. And then it occurs to you that, you know, at some point, you want to see this, your child, you know, one last time or whatever. And they were like, the doctor said, I don't think we can let you do that because it's too grotesque. And, you know, and he himself had slid down the side of the wall. So you, we're all on the floor. It's just hysterical mayhem, really, like your head is spinning. You're like, it's a dream, it's a dream. You're pinching yourself. You're trying to slap yourself. And then it occurred to me, like when I was on the floor, that this was going to hit my other two kids. Like, they're going to hear about this somewhere, like, and I said, I have to try to call them because I would, don't want them to hear this from anybody else but me, like, or Kristin. And so I, through my tears, you know, my eyes are dripping, I called my daughter on FaceTime. And she's at the University of Connecticut. She's in her, I catch her in her dorm room, and I begin to explain this to her and like the phone drops out of her hand, and I just hear a person screaming and running around the room, you know, and, and the phone's, like pointing at the ceiling, you know. And, and, and then I won't even go into just how hard that was, as a parent knowing that her life was, you know, changed forever. She would probably never get a FaceTime from me, again, without having a PTSD moment about it, you know. We're just never going to be the same. And then, then I went through a series of like, seven or eight relatives, my, my, son. You know, of course, I called him next and my sisters, and, you know, Kristin's sister who's very close to Ethan, and same thing. I mean, it was like, just the worst, you know, thing I ever had to do, you know, to try to tell people. To be the person bearing this news that was already crushing my soul. And so you feel like you're plunging, you know, and it, it just gets like, every single thing gets worse and worse. And like every reflection, you realize, never a birthday is going to be celebrated the same way. Never will, a Christmas, or Hanukkah, or a New Years, or. You just will never, that empty chair is there. It's like a fixture in your life. And you will never not look at a chair and go that, you know, that's where he would have been sitting right there. So, so that was the the deepest thing I've ever been through, it just was the deepest, darkest nightmare. And, and when you balance that against how hard it would have been for this guy just to secure his weapons. I mean, there's just no comparison. I don't care what anybody says about freedom, or the Second Amendment, or whatever their philosophy is in life is. You're putting people through this with your negligence of just leaving your weapons lying around. And so that whole irony of that whole situation that millions of people could care less about this is, you know, just the one more insult in a, you know, in a marathon of insults and injuries to your heart, your soul, your your humanity. And so from there, you know, we have to develop a plan to survive, basically, you're just at that point in survival mode.



JJ Janflone 13:07


Is it hard to deal with as well, you know, how people respond to you, after a loss?



Kristin Song 13:13

You know, we just had Thanksgiving, and his name was not mentioned once. And it's incredibly painful to a mother. I can only speak for myself, I don't know how Mike feels about this. But for me, I talk about Ethan all the time. So it's really odd to go to a Thanksgiving where you always gotten together with these, you know, with my sister's family, and, and no one mentioned his

name. So, you know, I encourage people, it's, we may cry when you start talking about our son, but we would love for you to share a memory. We'd love for you to share a funny story. You know, remember when.

 Kelly Sampson 13:50


I know you've actually talked about that. How one of the harder things after losing Ethan was that people would sometimes avoid talking about him. And can you talk a little bit about what that's like, and why for people who may be seeing loved ones go through an experience that you're going through, why sometimes avoiding talking about the person is actually more hurtful than they may understand or intend?

 Mike Song 14:15

It is something that I recognized was the counterintuitive thing. But that, to bring, to bring Ethan's story to other people is a way of keeping him right right here in our hearts. So it's, it's oddly, for me, I feel it's the right thing for us to do if we can help other survivors feel like, you know, we've plunged into that pit of despair with them. That is probably good for them. And it's probably good for us in a perverse kind of way, really to put yourself through this. But I do think it might be a counterintuitive thing that people might shy away from so I'm encouraging other survivors just to consider it might help to talk about your loved one because sometimes we try to bury those things and that's not, not good either.

 JJ Janflone 15:02

Is it ever awkward for you, you know, if people who you're talking with, you know, they get emotional about what happened to Ethan or if they kind of put their foot in their mouth, if it's, if it's a strange interaction?

 Kristin Song 15:13

No I get, I totally. Listen, we've, I can't tell you how many parents we've met since Ethan has died because Mike and I are so involved in passing Ethan's Law. And so we have become kind of the poster parents for safe storage. And so I, both Mike and I, get calls, messages from parents who have lost a child with an unsecured gun. So you know, for, even for me, having lost a child, I still am nervous about saying the wrong thing. So I totally get it. And we know, we know when people are coming and speaking with us with a kind heart. So we never are offended by anyone because it is awkward. It's the worst thing that can happen to a person.

 Mike Song 16:01

I think that people really appreciate is: tell me about Ethan, tell me about Akilah, tell me about Jamie, tell me about Joaquin. You know, I just think that is a, you know, what was, what made you laugh? You know, is a great, what were some of the adventures you had together? This is, like for a parent whose child is gone, you know, it brings them right back to life.

K

Kelly Sampson 16:24

So one thing I'm wondering, as you've been talking about your family life, is what is it been like being a parent to your other children, Emily, and Evan, after Ethan was taken?

M

Mike Song 16:34

Well, I think, I think, it's, I think, it's, I would say it's a mixed bag. I, you know, I if I was to be really honest with you, I would say it's hard for them to talk about this. I think they see it. I think they're, for them, had to be super hard to lose their, their, their brother, like amazingly difficult. And then to see your parents. One of the hardest parts of this whole thing is to see the pain reflected in the eyes of the other family members. That is just really, you're hurting. And then you look at, you know, the other family member. You realize they're really hurt or you realize they're just trying to gut it out for you. Because they know, you know, they, they, they've seen you kind of break down. So I think it's, I would say if I were to be honest, I think that sometimes we're not fully working through our feelings together. I did a lot of work on my own and did a lot of therapy and did a lot of internal dialogue to get back up on my feet. And I think they did as well. But I would say one of the things that is hard, like, is to sit there at Thanksgiving and say, 'Hey, let's talk about some adventures we had with Ethan'. I think it's a little hard for them. But I don't know, Kris, would you agree that it's not?

K

Kristin Song 17:38

I think, yeah, I mean, when we buried Ethan, the day we buried Ethan, the four of us, we asked, I asked if everyone could leave and it could just be the four of us. And, you know, one of the things that we did was we made a commitment to each other that we were not going to let Ethan's death destroy us. We were not going to self medicate, we were not going to become drug addicts, we were not gonna drop out of school, you know, we were going to honor Ethan. And we were going to move forward. You know, obviously, there was lots of stumbles and falls. But you know, my Emily and Evan have gone off and have done really well, academically, job wise. I think for them, the trouble is going to come with relationships, and I just was having that conversation with my son the other day that you can either deal with this now, or you can deal with it later. But you will have to deal with it. And it's better to deal with it before you've entered into a marriage or before you have your own children. And so, you know, we're just, I'm just starting to feel more comfortable talking to my kids about, you know, how are you feeling, buddy, then, for a long time, nobody said anything, because we were all falling apart. And we all wanted to be strong for each other. And so you know, now I think they see that I'm up on my feet again. That I am, you know, it's a very, very dark time after Ethan died. And my children were very, very worried about me and just even if I was going to survive, so.

K

Kelly Sampson 19:13

Thank you for sharing that, first of all, because we've been doing a series on grief. And I think that that's something that through the conversations we've had with others around like, what the process looks like and how it can be different for, for everyone from person to person. But

we haven't talked as much about what it would be like in a family unit.



JJ Janflone 19:33

Well, and speaking of that relationship, how has that changed even your relationships with with one another? Or, or even with you know, how you view yourself?



Mike Song 19:43

Well, I think there's a few things that, that we quickly decided and figured out and one was that everyone is going to grieve differently. So in this sense, you've got to really respect the track that person's on and they may take a different approach, completely different approach. I, you know, I wasn't as interested in the facts of this case, like exactly what happened because there was no reversibility for me. But Kris really was interested in it. And so, you know, I said, look, you know, this is great, you, this is something that you want to pursue. Go for it. And I'm glad she did. And I think so we grieve differently. I think that's first the most important thing. You'll never quite understand everything about the other person's grief pattern. So I know that that was what our starting point was like. It's going to be like, we're just going to go do the best we can. I do think, though, that sometimes people feel that the loss of a child is something that just, like, tears families apart. And I think some of the statistics on that are wrong. I think there's actually been some research that shows, actually, a lot of families use it as a reason to pull together. So I would just say to anybody who's listening or saying 'what's going to happen to me?', I mean, that's a really interesting question that comes into your head a lot like: what, what's to become of this person that was Mike Song, who did all these other things? And now, now I'm just this other completely different person. I would just remind people that you may become a person who's not as happy as you were, but you may be leading a more meaningful life and you may have more meaningful relationships within your family, because you have been like soldiers going through war together. You've been watching horrible things, you know, something horrible unfold. Well, sometimes people come back from that, and they say, hey, those people that I was in that war with, they're my brothers for life, or, you know, my sisters for life. So I do think there's a flipping of that script that's possible when you start to think about what's to become of me.



Kristin Song 21:41

Yeah, very, I mean, I think our I think our marriage has, I mean, we were blessed, because we had a very strong marriage going into this. We were a very, very strong family unit, which was good and bad, because it was bad, because it became so obvious all that we lost. We were a very, very happy family unit. But I think, you know, I think our marriage is very different. I think I'm a completely different person than I used to be. Some days, I don't even recognize myself. But, you know, but I think we've, we've been very gentle and very accepting of each other. After it first happened, I would seek Mike out and just be sobbing. And he would be the strength for that day. And the next day, Mike would seek me out and just be a mess. And I would be the strength, you know, the rock for him that day. And so we just, you know, we just hung on to each other for dear life. And we're now standing and we're now fighting for other children.



K

Kelly Sampson 22:40

And one of the things that you both have done with your grief and with honoring Ethan, is you've gotten into activism, which you've talked about before. And so I was wondering if you could tell listeners a little bit about Ethan's law?

M

Mike Song 22:53

Well, I think if you were to sum it up, it's basically saying kids around, lock guns down. I mean, the kids are walking by a gun, you know, and you could have a gun with bullets next to it. I feel that's just as dangerous because kids can load a gun pretty easily right now. And many guns that people think are not loaded, are loaded or have a bullet left in the chamber. It's pretty common to hear about people dying that way, which may have been part of the way that Ethan died, because it's very questionable. You know, how, what, what exactly happened. We just knew there were kids, easy access to guns. There was, you know. The idea that they didn't know where these guns were, or, you know, is just ridiculous in my mind. So they were playing with these guns for months and months. So from my perspective, I just immediately felt like this was insane, you know, that we don't have a stricter laws around just, there's a kid in the house. A two year old, a crazy 15 year old is really rambunctious, it doesn't matter. They, the danger that that presents with a one and done situation, like what happened with Ethan. It's not like you can go hey, you know, you really shouldn't do. It's over, you know, and it's, it's your will to leave your guns lying around. I just don't, I think that's where your gun rights completely end and your rights to protect people in your home begin, you know. It's like having a, you know, any kind of dangerous situation in your home continuously 24/7. And I think that is, you know, for me and then the second that I figured out that you could open a new gun safe with your fingerprint, and you know, or a PIN code like you open your phone. This crazy protest of like 'I gotta get to my guns so I can barrel roll across the floor and shoot nine people' like in the movies is just, you know, it's just not real. It's so unrealistic. And you can practically do that with the new gun safes. So from there, I just had it in my head, that this is just, it's just their technology has changed. It's a win-win, the win for the gun owner, and it's a win for kids in your house. And it's, it's a win for reason and compromise. And my favorite word, you know, in life is sacrifice. You know, life is about sacrifice. I don't care. You can pretend that you have all these rights and all this freedoms. If you, if you say: I don't make any sacrifices for the people around me, for the world I live in. I don't sacrifice anything, because I'm supposed to be free all the time. To me, that's spoiled brat nonsense. It's nonsense. You have to make some sacrifices and some compromises in life to live with other folks and to keep people safe. So for me, I was ready to really fight hard for something. But I would say, Kristin was even more passionate. And I think her, you know, she immediately began to, you know, gather momentum for this movement, which I think is going to continue across the country.

K

Kristin Song 25:39

I think for, for me, the moment was when Mike and I went down to the police station, and the prosecutor had said she had finished her investigation. And we sat across from her. And she told us that she would not be charging the gun owner with anything, not a fine, nothing. And instead, she was going to charge Ethan's best friend who was 14 at the time, with manslaughter. And I just thought that was insanity, that someone who could be so reckless and negligent with their deadly weapons, was going to get, you know, a pat on the back and a pass. And so I told her, this law is going to change in Connecticut, and we are going to put the

accountability, the responsibility, the burden on the gun owner, on the person who brings that deadly weapon into their home, holding, you know, teenagers who don't even have the executive function yet developed, or holding a five year old who gets hold of a weapon. I mean, it's just absolute insanity. And so, really, from that point on, Mike and I were just completely focused on getting Ethan's Law passed. And we were as equally committed to making it a bipartisan bill, which, which we did.



JJ Janflone 26:54

That's, as someone who grew up in a household with guns, that's always the thing that surprises me, when folks say, you know, that the kids, they've hidden them, or because they've, their, their kids have grown up in a gun culture, and they respect guns, they know what guns are, that somehow that is, that is going to keep a kid from being a kid.



Kristin Song 27:09

Exactly. I've talked to so many of those parents, and that's exactly how they start off the conversation. My child grew up with a gun. I brought them to the range. They understood the safety. They understood the power of the gun. And you know, it's their gun, where the child takes it, and it's usually a suicide, and they just cannot believe it. And you know, what they miss is that when a child is in crisis, none of those things even enter their, their mind or their, their judgment or their thinking. And it, just like Mike said, you know, guns are extremely successful. And when you try to commit suicide with a gun, it's usually pretty successful. And so I talk to these parents all the time, you know, they think because they taught their kids about gun safety, that that would prevent them from using their gun to commit suicide. And it's just not the case.



Mike Song 28:03

And we've appreciated some of the things that Brady has done here with family fire and your educational push for this is really great. And I think we're all pushing together just to, to wake people up to it. I thought your pieces were very persuasive to gun owners. And I think that's something that I think you guys get, it's that, hey, these are the folks that that may. We have, they have to kind of illustrate through an emotional, for the pain of going through it. And the scariness of it, you know, and I just always say, hey, there's three words that ought to strike fear in the heart of anybody who thinks they can just hide their gun somewhere. And that's a kid's game called Hide and Seek, you know. I mean, the whole idea of Hide and Seek was you hide somewhere where you don't normally go and you, you'd find yourself in your parents closet trying to, you know, hide so that no one could find you. It leads you right to know everything about what's in your house. And apparently these kids really do know where these guns are, and they can get to them.



JJ Janflone 28:59

On that sort of emotional appeal and to sort of let people know that this is the reality, right, that these laws and whatnot come from loss. I wonder if we can talk really briefly about your, about the short film that you all put out that will I mean we'll link in the description of this

about the short film that you all put out, that win, I mean, we think in the description of this episode, but it's absolutely heartbreaking.

K

Kristin Song 29:18

Yeah, Jill Nesi, I was actually in a parking lot and my phone rang and generally I don't answer my phone if I don't know who it is, but I happened to take her phone call. And, you know, she said, you know, listen, I am all about keeping kids safe. I've done a film on bullying, and we wanted to do a film on, a short film on Ethan's tragedy. And, you know, I think both Mike and I wanted it to be realistic. And so some of those scenes in the movie are from actual videos that the boys were taking of each other the day that Ethan died. Not that, I did not see them myself, but was told by an attorney I had actually hired to review all the evidence. And so, you know, our goal always is to keep kids safe. So if we can just make an impact on one child, you know, Mike, and I always say that's a W, you know, that's a win. And we also wanted to make sure that it was real, realistic enough that the parents understood that this is, you know, this may be happening in your house, if you are not vigilant.

M

Mike Song 30:26

I think sometimes we lose the messaging war by explaining, you know, the facts. And sometimes the facts are a little generic for people and, and what I love about what Jill and Nick Rapuano, who's the director, and Jill produced it with 'Stand UP & Speak OUT' was that it, there's a moment in there where you just feel so much weight and heaviness in the air, but the kids are oblivious to it. They just think it's just like this fun day in their lives. And they get that feeling of you cannot dive in front of that bullet. You can't be with your kid every second of every day. Your kids are going to be in rooms that you think you know, but you don't. And as a parent, you just see like, I don't know where my kids are every second of every day.

K

Kristin Song 31:07

Well, and I did, you know, that's the thing, I was the 'all-in mom'. I was very vigilant about where my children were, what they were doing. This was a child that we knew for 10 years. We have known Ethan's best friend since he was four years old. So this was not a family that I didn't know or a child I didn't know. And so, you know, that's one of the things we, we, you know. You may think you have it all going on, but you just don't know. And so why not take that danger out of the equation.

M

Mike Song 31:37

It's not tyranny, it's teamwork. And every person at some time has been taught that teamwork is the only, really, way to make a lot of progress in the world. You, you just don't have a football team with one player on it, you know, and Americans have got to get back to teamwork. Teamwork is not tyranny. When your coach says hey, you do this, you do that. You can't all be the quarterback, you can't all, you know. You work together and you sacrifice. Those are the most beautiful people that I know. And my friend, Steve, card carrying member of the NRA, like I hate his views, like I honestly cry when I hear some of the stuff that he says. But in this one regard, he was willing to say I've made this sacrifice for the health and well being of my family,

which is what a man or a woman that I would respect in this world would be willing to lay it down for their family. I think it's just tragic to hear people talk about teamwork like it's tyranny. You know, I can't put a two ounce mask on my face to save my, to save my parents. I can't, I can't lock up my guns to save my kids. Because I'm some kind of, I don't know what, I don't know, primadonna, that's what I would call them. If they were on my side, I'm an All American athlete. That's what I call if you're on my team, and you said I can't make a sacrifice for the team. So that's one of the things that shocks me that you, the umbrage that, you know, you just sit there and you go, can you just make any kind of sacrifice?



JJ Janflone 33:02

Well, and that's on love, right? If you love someone, you're willing to sacrifice for them to keep them safe, at a minimum. And so Kristin, Mike, Kelly and I want to thank you both so much for coming on, and for continuing to do all the work that you do and for sharing Ethan, with us today. So ways for people to find you and all the work that you're doing will be the description of this episode. But again, just all the love in the world. So the songs are amazing, obviously.



Kelly Sampson 33:32

Yeah.



JJ Janflone 33:33

But I don't, I'm having a really hard time focusing on on anything, Kelly, other than the fact that he just gotten his braces off.



Kelly Sampson 33:41

Yeah, I think, and the fact that, you know, Kristin shared about them going to celebrate that and Ethan talking about all of his dreams and aspirations for the future. And I think that that just drives home. This is not, we're not just talking about statistics here, we're talking about a real precious human being taken away for a entirely preventable reason.



JJ Janflone 34:06

Children, right. And it like, it breaks my heart for them. It breaks my heart for the kids in Michigan. It breaks my heart for kids every single day in the US. And, as I think Mike and Kristin really articulated, there are easy and sensible solutions to this. So that's, that's going to be my big call to action this week, to honor Ethan's memory. One, I'm going to share the documentary, I'm going to share the short film that they did with at least five folks. I'm putting that on a personal list. And then I mean, I've definitely talked to pretty much every single person I know at this point about Brady's End Family Fire initiative, particularly about how asking about guns and safe storage can save kids' lives. But I'm going to make a, make a dedicated impact. I'm going to find five new friends who maybe aren't aware and going into the holiday season when folks might be seeing one another. I'm going to spread that news.

K

Kelly Sampson 34:59

Yeah, I definitely think that that's also my call to action. I mean, I know, obviously we're in the middle-end, third season, I don't even know where we are in the pandemic right now. But I know that a lot of children are still going to school or going to play dates and things like that. And so, I'm going to think through people I know with kids and people I know who have homes and just bring some of these resources to them.



JJ Janflone 35:22

Well, then I'll shameless plug. Kelly, so everyone should go to [Songstrong.org](https://www.songstrong.org) That's where they can find the film and all the other work that the Songs are doing. But for EFF, folks can find everything that Brady is doing by going to endfamilyfire.org, or by even checking out the hashtag [#endfamilyfire](https://twitter.com/endfamilyfire) on Twitter because I think there's phenomenal resources there. Hey! Want to share the podcast? Listeners can now get in touch with us here at Red, Blue, and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call or text us at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever! Kelly and I are standing by.

K

Kelly Sampson 36:01

Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts, and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast. Get in touch with us at [Bradyunited.org](https://bradyunited.org) or on social [@bradybuzz](https://twitter.com/bradybuzz). Be brave. And remember, take action, not sides.