



November 13: Attack on Paris (9/24/18)

- 00:00:28 Noah Rauch: Good evening. Welcome to our first onsite program for the fall 2018 season. My name is Noah Rauch. I'm the Senior Vice President for Education and Public Programs here at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum. As always, I'd like to extend a special welcome to our museum members and those tuning in to our live broadcast at 911memorial.org/live.
- 00:00:50 We have quite a first program. Jules and G d on Naudet have a 9/11 story unlike any other. On September 11, the brothers were working on a documentary featuring New York City firefighters when they heard a jet engine roaring over Manhattan. Lifting their cameras as they followed that sound, they captured the impact of hijacked Flight 11 into the north face of the North Tower, and kept their cameras rolling as those same firefighters they had been filming responded down to the site.
- 00:01:18 Their award winning documentary "9/11" was born from the near continuous footage shot that day, and presents an intimate, terrifying, and profoundly unique picture of what happened here. The film has been a tremendous resource for the museum, and through the brothers' very generous gift, we are fortunate to have one of the cameras used that day, as well as footage used from the film, on display in our historical exhibition downstairs.
- 00:01:43 This work was only the beginning of the brothers' career. The Naudets would go on to produce and direct for CBS' "In God's Name," as well as produce and direct "The Presidents' Gatekeepers" for the Discovery Channel, an account of five decades of presidential history seen through the eyes of all 20 living White House chiefs of staff. They've also

produced and directed "Spymasters: CIA in the Crosshairs," a documentary film airing on Showtime and CBS featuring all 12 living CIA directors.

00:02:11 It is their latest project, however, that brings us here tonight-- a three-part documentary examining the terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on November 13, 2015, attacks which killed 130 people. This project is available exclusive through Netflix, and was produced by the Naudets in association with Propagate and No School Productions.

And so with that, please join me in welcoming Jules and Gédéon Naudet in conversation with Executive Vice President and Deputy Director of Museum Programs, Clifford Chanin.

(applause)

00:02:48 Clifford Chanin: Thank you, Noah. And welcome back, everybody. I see a lot of familiar faces and some new faces, and I know we have some visitors from some of our earlier programs today. We're happy to have you all here. And we're off again for another program series for the fall. And as Noah was saying, it's hard to imagine a better way to start our season on a more powerful note than this film.

00:03:15 And we'll talk a lot about what it was to do this. But I did want to ask you each, as Noah indicated, the 9/11 film, which I'm sure many of you have seen it, which basically happens to you by chance, because you just happened to be downtown working on a documentary on a probie firefighter. This was not anything to do with what wound up happening.

00:03:41 But from there, you've done other films on important subjects, but not subjects that returned both as a subject matter and both in terms of a personal experience, return to this confrontation with the terrorism factor, the death and the suffering that it brings. So let me ask to start if, in anticipating the work as you were thinking about making this film,

were you hesitant to go back into this subject matter? Was it something that you had to overcome some doubts to do, or was this something you felt that you really needed to do?

00:04:20 Jules Naudet: I think we we kind of had prepared ourselves for this since it happened, because every five years, we try to revisit the firefighters and what happened to them, the one we followed 17 years ago. And so we would still kind of always... you know, that trauma is here for us for the rest of our lives. We're some of the lucky ones. We survived. Each other, still have.... we have each other. We're healthy.

00:04:55 But in some of the moments we revisited the firehouse, it was either... especially on the five year and ten year anniversary, some of the firefighters at the firehouse died of cancer, unfortunately, something you probably are aware of the.... 9/11 still, unfortunately, takes some of our loved ones away. And so that was kind of our preparation.

But to go back into, really, this one which was something we had not lived with, even though we were born in Paris, it is our city, our parents lived there, they were in the neighborhood of the attacks that night, and were, fortunately, safe, it was... at least on my part, it was a complicated way to go back.

00:05:36 It was... on one way, I knew it was going to be a kind of therapy, a year and a half, almost two years of therapy, which I felt I needed to... just as the way that I can only talk mostly about this experience with firefighters at the firehouse, I also needed to talk about my trauma with people who have lived it and to talk about it with these amazing survivors, whether they were first responders or civilians, that lived through the horrific attacks of November 13.

00:06:07 It was... at least for me, it was a kind of therapy. So I anticipated it. I was not reluctant, but I didn't exactly know how it would turn out on a personal level emotionally. And I'm glad I did.

Gédéon Naudet: Well, it was Jules' idea to do this documentary on November 13, as it was Jules' idea to do the documentary on September 11. And both times I said... actually, for the September 11, I was so happy to be able to jump into a firetruck, like most people.

00:06:42 The second one, no way, no way were we going to spend one year in Paris. It was going to be too tough, traumatizing. We finally were getting some sense of what happened 17 years ago. Why would we want to replunge ourselves into that? But then... and again, it's just my own experience.

00:07:10 After 9/11, I think my way of dealing with-with life and the insanity of it is really to transform into some type of vampire of good emotion. I don't really know how to describe it better than that. I need now positivity. I need to meet people who, whether they're weak or strong, whether they're beautiful or not, whether they... whoever they are, they have this willingness to fight, to survive, to... and I can't live without that anymore.

00:07:56 So to be able to meet people who have gone through absolute hell... and we'll describe later on who we met. But we were very privileged and lucky to meet those people, and they personally fed me life. And I need my dose every day. And to be able to meet people like that was... was that why...

00:08:31 Clifford Chanin: Yeah, it's... it's remarkable. And I will say, it's available on Netflix, so you can find it. My sense of it was many people could have made a film about the Paris attacks, of course. But I think the brilliance of this film... and it is harrowing at times. So it's not something you can sit down and watch in one go, I don't think. I couldn't, anyway.

00:08:57 But the brilliance of the film is that, I think because of your experience, you knew how to talk to people who had been survivors of a very similar event, certainly in terms of the impact it had on them. And the observations and the points that you were able to bring out, I think, could only come from someone who had been inside a story like this.

00:09:24 And so that it felt very familiar to me in terms of the 9/11 story as I know it, and as I've encountered it through people who had the direct experience of that, that there is a tone there of recognition between the filmmaker and the people you're interviewing that's a commonality of experience that's not the usual divide between one side of the camera and the other.

And I wonder if you could talk about how much you were aware of that as part of the process, and how that-that aspect of your earlier experience figured into the way you developed the concept and the relationships with the people you interviewed.

00:10:09 Jules Naudet: (clears throat) Excuse me. What we went through on September 11 is the link to why we did it. We knew that... you know, we're part of a strange fraternity of survivors of... victims of terrorism. But the trauma-- trauma is trauma everywhere, whether it is a terrorist attack, September 11, or November 13. But it could be a car accident. It could be a natural catastrophe. The elements of trauma are all there, and don't really change too much.

00:10:47 The events might change, but what it does on human beings, which is what fascinates us from the very beginning, and I think through our own trauma and what it does to us and our perception of life and our perception of death, I think we are united in a moment where you are confronted by your own mortality, it changes you. Whether it is a terrorist attack or something else.

00:11:10 And in meeting these people, which was... the longest time was actually getting to know these people, getting to meet everyone. We took eight months to sit down with hundreds of people to be able to talk to them, listen to their stories, and being able to select the ones we wanted in the documentary. But I think we were united by the same language, which is the language of trauma.

00:11:35 We knew... when we talked to them, I would put myself back to how I felt in the days, in the weeks, in the months, in the years after September 11. And their way of thinking, what they were going through, was almost identical. And it was a huge link, a huge strength, that we were giving each other. As much as I was... they were curious to know our trauma, and especially because we started about a year, a year and a half after the the events.

00:12:07 And so they had questions. They had questions such as, "Will I get better any time soon? Is that normal that when there is loud sounds, I completely freak out? Is there..." You know, these kinds of things. And I think they were... as much as they took solace from knowing what they were going through, through me telling them among others, but I think for them it resonated because of what we had been through, is that it was normal—that trauma has a process, and as slow and as fast as it is, it is there.

00:12:36 And for me, in particular, it was the possibility to not only help them, but also they helped us. I think it was a bond placed on our own issues, which always resurface, especially around these moments.

Gédéon Naudet: (muffled speech)

00:12:52 Clifford Chanin: I wonder, though-- there is such... Let's show a clip first. Because I want to give people a sense of it. Now, the first clip we're going to show you... and the event starts with the suicide bombings at the French national football stadium. There's a match underway, as you'll hear, between France and Germany. And the attacks of that evening were a series of events. And so in this first clip, you're going to get the sense of how people began to put the pieces together of what was going on.

00:13:27 Jules Naudet: May I, before we start, just for the people who don't know the event...

Clifford Chanin: Yeah, yeah.

Jules Naudet: To give you an idea, so it happened on November 13, 2015, which was a Friday night in the fall. It was unseasonably warm. And so most people were at terrace of cafes; it was kind of the last days where it's going to be nice. And us French people, and Parisians in particular, love to be at the cafe and smoke cigarettes and drink and have a good time, especially on a Friday night.

00:13:53 The attacks started at the stadiums, where three suicide bombers detonated themselves outside of the stadium where 70,000 people are in the stands, including the French president, the German president. There is a friendly match between Germany and France. Then three assailants in a car would stop at six different cafes and machine gun... with machine guns, shot at the terraces.

00:14:20 And then another team of three ended up going to a music theater where an American rock 'n' roll group was playing. The music hall held about 1,800 people, and they shot in the crowd, and then took 11 hostages, and barricaded themselves in a very tiny hallway until the SWAT team came.

Clifford Chanin: Good. So let's... first clip.

00:14:52 (clip begins)

Stanislas (In French): The game starts, it's 9:00 p.m. We watch the game. It's better than being on your sofa at home.

(crowd cheering)

President François Hollande (in French): I am in the Presidential stand. The French team is playing well. It is a good game.

Bilal (in French): My son says, "I want to go to the restroom." And I see the guy go past me again. I see him going to the café. I am waiting in line for my sandwich. I look at him, and all of a sudden... (imitates explosion sound)

00:15:27 (explosion)

President François Hollande (in French): There is a detonation. It seems to come from outside of the stadium. Nothing happens inside the stadium.

Stanislas (in French): We look at all the surveillance cameras. I realize the stadium is not being hit. The explosion doesn't come from inside, but is just outside the gates, by the bars I've seen a few hours earlier.

00:15:57 Général Boutinaud (in French): I haven't realized it was a bomb. I remember saying to the person on my right, "These are tests. They're showing us they can bring in a firecracker. One day it'll be a bomb."

Bilal (in French): The first thought you have is for your kid, in the restroom. I go to the café's restroom... and I can't see my kid. And I shout, "God! No! Not my kid!"

00:16:28 I come back to where the suicide bomber blew himself up to check if there is debris or some clothing or fabric which can... give me faith that my son is still alive.

(phones ringing)

Person 1 on phone (in French): Fire department. I'm listening.

Person 2 on phone (in French): There is a gas explosion at the stadium in Saint-Denis.

Person 3 on phone (in French): Fire department

Person 4 on phone (in French): Hello, I'm with a lady here.

Person 3 on phone (in French): What did she say?

Person 4 on phone (in French): There was an explosion by a restaurant.

00:17:03

Jérôme (in French): At first the information is confusing. People were pretty far from the scene. They were scared. They just mentioned noises. We didn't have any concrete intel. No one was near the incident.

Bilal (in French): At that moment, I am looking for my son. I can't just sit there and do nothing. And I see him with a bunch of people who were confined. And I see a young 13 year old boy... traumatized. I opened my arms wide, scared stiff. I lower my arms, and he takes me in his tiny arms. He says, "Dad..." and stops crying. I feel like I cried for both of us. I think, "I couldn't even protect my son."

00:17:51

(clip ends)

Clifford Chanin: So this is where the attacks begin. And, fortunately, the level of casualties is lower than, certainly, the terrorists had planned, because they never get into the stadium. Then, as you say, they are in a car moving through, and I'd like you to describe the neighborhoods that they're going to, because this is not tourist Paris. This is... as the French national soccer stadium would be, as the Bataclan theater would be.

This is striking at the heart of Paris as Parisians live it. This is not the Champs-Élysées. This is not the museums. This is people who know very well what life in France is like. And that's exactly what they're aiming at.

00:18:35 Jules Naudet: It's the 11th arrondissement. It is almost like a small village inside of Paris. It's kind of a chic... not chic, but it's where all the young French people go and... go after work. It's up and coming. It's not very touristy, but it's really the heart of Paris and the young community in Paris. And these attacks take place at a moment when everyone is partying. Everyone is either watching the game on the inside or outside, having a fun time.

00:19:09 And what we wanted to do, just like you see it here, and it's a little bit like what we did on September 11, we wanted the perspective of the people that were there. That's why we interviewed about 40 people, all who have a part to play in it, whether as civilians or first responders. But the way the film is structured is as people... as the events unfold and as people are discovering, just like on 9/11, we had no idea what was happening.

00:19:31 You live at the moment where you were part of an attack or an event like this, you see probably within five feet around you, but that's all. You create kind of a bubble. And the rest of the world can be 5,000 miles away, the next street, if you can think about it. And here we wanted to show how... all of these little bubbles of horrors, but also all of these bubbles of humanity that comes out.

00:19:55 And that was the most important point of what we wanted to show, and we'll talk about it later-- I'm diverting a little bit—but was to go back to how human beings, at the moment when you don't expect it, life can change. And yet, at the moment where we see the worst of humanity, we always see the best. And we'll talk about that a little bit later on.

00:20:18 But these... to go back to your question, these neighborhoods were really the heart of Paris and the youth of Paris. And, you know, all of the people were... most of them are between 17, 19, and very, very early 30s, if even.

Gédéon Naudet: Like the mayor of Paris would say in interviews, they were really trying to attack the heart of Paris, whether it was sports, soccer games, families going out to see a soccer game, whether it was friends going out to the cafes, or just listening to rock 'n' roll, really.

00:21:00 Clifford Chanin: And this is really sort of the nightmare security scenario, because it's a series of attacks. It's not... Mumbai, which had happened previously, was another example of a commando, essentially, of terrorists, coming to a city, having separate missions, and these simultaneous attacks that, you know, security services, I think, are always most concerned about, because you're diverted in one direction, and then something happens in a place where you're not looking.

00:21:27 Talk a little bit about... and the film does reflect this, but we won't go into the clips of that. But talk a little bit about the first responders and their reaction to this chain of events as it's happening. Because the incidents occur within a window not that large-- a half an hour or something like that.

33 minutes from the first suicide bomber to the last. Okay. And then there's the event of the hostage taking within the concert hall. But, basically, the stadium bombs go off. A series of sequential attacks on people sitting on these terraces, and then the concert hall.

00:22:06 Jules Naudet: It was... as you said, it was the nightmare scenario for any first responders—not only first responders, but also planning for such a thing. Fortunately, I think a lot of Paris, like New York and like most cities, had an inkling of these kind of things can happen. And the crazy part is that on the morning of November 13, they had done a drill of all the fire departments and hospitals on multiple attacks in multiple places in Paris.

- 00:22:36 At the point where when the attacks come in and the first report comes out, some of the people, at the... I think in the hospital of Paris said, "We had the drill this morning. It's already... you know, the drill is over." And "No, no, no, it's not a drill." But some of the challenges I think that were quite significant is the level of uncertainty.
- 00:22:56 Because first you have three suicide bombers at the stadium. Then you have one cafe, a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, over a certain... an entire arrondissement-- two, because it started in the tenth and 11th. And then more attack at the music theater. And it starts... which was their point, to overwhelm. At least that's what they wanted to do is overwhelm all first responders, that everyone will come back directly to an area, and then, unfortunately, there might be another attack somewhere else.
- 00:23:29 Fortunately, the fire department and the police had kind of planned for that, and had leaders who are very versatile, into studying attacks throughout the world and what happened, and had kept half of their forces in reserve to make sure they could go on for another entire day of attacks, if need be. It would have been horrible but, fortunately, there was some preparedness, some that has actually happened through... with the people who were there on September 11.
- 00:23:57 I'm talking about Chief Pfeifer, the chief who saved my life that morning, the battalion chief of the first battalion, who I followed on September 11, who had been doing a lot of work with the French firefighters and French police to prepare them and get ideas if these kind of attacks happened and all that. So they were, of course, overwhelmed, but what struck me, and I think struck us, was the same level of professionalism that you would see in the first responders.
- 00:24:27 And I think we show the firefighters, and you will see in the documentary, if you see it, the first responders firefighters coming to one of the cafes. And they had, you know, a strange twist of events, a cameraman following them, also, that night, and so arrives at the cafe with them. And

what you see in their eyes, exactly what we saw in the towers, the North Tower that morning-- a feeling of dread, of horror, of sadness, but also that dedication that you see in the eyes of first responders. When everything goes wrong, they know that they're the ones who are supposed to make it okay.

00:25:08 And so they can't afford to look weak, or their emotions to overwhelm them. And that level of dedication has always been... you know, for us in particular we saw it with our friends on 9/11, but we see it throughout the world whether it's fire departments or police departments. You can go to any country anywhere, you'll see the same kind of dedication to saving others. And that was very... that was a great source of inspiration for us that we wanted to show.

00:25:35 Clifford Chanin: I wanted, Gédéon, to ask about that further, because, as the events unfold, they have no idea what's coming next, of course. And yet they are dispatching... and sometimes the firefighters arrive before the police. So the firefighters are arriving on a scene where they don't know whether or not an active shooter is still present. And yet forward they go.

00:25:57 Gédéon Naudet: Absolutely. And it's always... it's always important, and as Jules said, this is really what we wanted to do, is to put the audience in the shoes of not only the victim but also the first responder. When we see them wearing their incredible suits, whether it's the firefighters or the ambulance worker or policemen, it's one thing to just see the costume.

00:26:31 But once once you realize that it's a person like you who has to face... and whatever experience they've had with that, have to face this absolute horror of seeing those bodies, and having to react so quickly and save lives because it's just a matter of seconds. And as you said, in Paris, it was extraordinary to see that the first responders did not run away. Not only not run away, but they performed extraordinarily well.

- 00:27:11 And there are some cases where... of great heroism. For example, the well-known story of those two policemen who arrive at the Bataclan just literally minutes after the carnage started. And even though they hear machine guns inside, they just have little pistols, and the two of them go in.
- 00:27:41 And there's a shootout between one of the three terrorists who is actually on stage, the two policemen are in the entrance door hiding, and later on will try to get in and hide behind the bar. That's the lobby scene.
- 00:28:02 The two other terrorists on the second floor, they kind of look at their colleague shooting, spraying bullets toward the exit, and one of the policemen is a good shooter or lucky or both, managed to kill the third terrorist, who blows himself-- purposely or not, we we'll never know-- on stage. And the two policemen survive, they get out, they realize they're completely outmatched when the two others start to shoot at them.
- 00:28:44 But just this action of where... you know, if you imagine yourself, you're a policeman, you have just two little guns. You know that inside are guys with machine guns or maybe explosives, and yet, you go in. And we later discovered that... I mean the police would later discover that this action really completely destabilized the plan that the terrorists had, which led the two surviving terrorists to really retreat into the corridor that Jules was talking about at the beginning, take the hostages, and basically stop literally killing the people who were pretending to be dead, who were wounded.
- 00:29:36 Because really when those two... and, again, please forgive me to extend this particular act, but I think it describes very well those little islands of heroism that happened on that evening. Right before the two policemen got in the Bataclan, the terrorists were literally shooting at people.
- 00:30:04 Whenever a phone would ring, they would point their gun at the direction of the sound and shoot. Whenever they would see someone trying to escape, they would shoot. So those two policemen stopped their plan, and then everything led out to the hostage situation.

00:30:26 Jules Naudet: When you talk about... sorry, for a second, you talk about the heroism of the first responders. You even have one moment where you have an ambulance, fire department ambulance, who's parked next to a café before the shooting happens. And they go to... because someone took a fall in the supermarket and has a sprained ankle. And they're next to the café when the terrorists arrive, and shoot not only at the café but shoot at the ambulance.

00:30:53 And they're the ones who give the first call to call for the police as the shooting is happening. Then these people, the terrorists, get back in their car and leave. And the three fire department ambulance personnel come in and administer the first aid, even though they're completely overwhelmed. There's about 40, 50 wounded with, you know, military weapons and all that. And they're the first ones to hold on and hold them until their fellow firefighters come in.

00:31:23 You also have.... and that was the most... for me, one of the most impressive moments is we talked to... we interviewed a doctor from the fire department. The fire department in Paris, they're all military, and so most of the doctors have done Afghanistan, have gone to... so they're war doctors, and they're used to doing triage and seeing horrible things.

And here to see, in the eyes of that doctor, who has to do military triage, except that it's a cafe where he normally brings his kids and his wife to have dinner, you could see in his eyes the... what it meant, especially because triage, by definition, is deciding who is going to... who you can save and who you cannot.

00:32:05 And to see the guilt and the sorrow that he carries with him by saying, "I cannot save your sister, but I need to save... these five people can survive." And having to say that to that husband or to that brother or to that... he carries with him, and yet, he's responsible for saving countless lives that night.

- 00:32:26 Gédéon Naudet: And even if some... if the fire department, as Jules said, are army, other, like, police officers or some doctors or just regular civilians who try to help, no one really expects to see wounds from AK47 in a city. Imagine that in New York or here in Paris, you're on the terrace, and a wound from an AK47 is very different from a regular pistol, handgun. The damage is absolutely horrible, because those... the bullets are created that when it goes in, it literally explodes, or creates gigantic holes. What do you do when it's so bad, to stop?
- 00:33:30 Clifford Chanin: And this, I assume, is one of the reasons... I mean, the film moves at a particular pace. And it's about three hours long. And it's very clear from watching it that you wanted each stage of this incident to have its moment. But you didn't want to skip over anything. And you move... as they move through the six cafes, you move through the six cafes. And there's a timeline here that the film presents.
- 00:33:57 But here's an example of where I... it struck me that your own experience was so well mirrored in the experience of these folks, and also what the film produces. Because... and I was in Paris speaking to some of these people. So I know that within the group of the families of those killed on the terraces of the cafes, I saw expressed a number of times the sense that somehow their loved ones were not getting quite as much attention as the people in the theater, because the theater is the most dramatic event of the attack.
- 00:34:30 And somehow-- and no one did this deliberately, of course-- but somehow there's this sense that the casualties, and there were many of them, collectively in the cafes, but those were somehow... "incidental" is too strong a word, but it's not the main focus of this. And you did not fall into that trap, because I think you each had your own minute by minute experiences here, and know that each minute is absolutely essential, and has the same integrity as any other minute in a story like this.
- 00:34:57 But to me, that was an example of how you understood the story very differently. There was no effort to shorten it for the sake of the drama or the narrative. Each one was going to get its own moment. And, of course, the horror of the event, and what the what the viewer can get from the

film, is this building sense of just how bad it is from place to place. And that it spreads through these neighborhoods in a way that sends literal terror through the city, but also leaves the people who are dealing with this, from the president on down, in a state of deep confusion.

00:35:34 Jules Naudet: No, that was a very important point that we wanted. After the attacks, the press had an expression-- they were calling it "Generation Bataclan." And it's... because that's where 90 people died. And the others, as you say, the cafes felt... and the stadium, in particular, felt that people were kind of forgetting what had happened there.

00:35:59 And it was very important for us to tell each of the stories, because we couldn't forget that at the stadium, something horrible had happened, which was... people didn't... after a while, if you asked them, they didn't really remember. At the cafes, each cafe, something horrible had happened. And all of them needed to be told if we wanted to tell the story of that night, and especially the story of... the the documentary, strangely enough, is not about the terrorists.

00:36:23 We don't talk about who they are, where they came from, their revindications, it was never about that. The program is really an exploration of human beings at the worst moments, but also at the moment where we can live through anything and still rebuild ourselves. It's complicated. The trauma is there. But it's really an ode to humanity, as strange as it might seem, doing a documentary about terrorism, and being about the human spirit.

00:36:55 But it is what we wanted to do and I think what we achieved. That's why, just like on 9/11, we never mention Al Qaeda or any of that. It's not about them. It was about the courage of civilians, the courage of first responders, of political figures like the mayor of Paris or the interior minister or the president. What we always have been fascinated by doing in our work is what... it's human beings. It's what's behind the uniform. There is... there is a mother. There is a husband, a wife, a daughter, a son.

00:37:28 And that's where it unites all of us. We might not relate to President Hollande, since he is president of France. But we can relate to the father, and to the husband who... his two sons were... one son was at the stadium with him, another was in the cafes not too far. So that's what we wanted to show in particular, and give everyone an understanding that there is no... ..way of grading the trauma, grading the terror, you know? It comes naturally, but we didn't want that. Everyone has lived something profound, and that they will carry for the rest of their lives.

00:38:06 Clifford Chanin: Now, you pull out from the story, and then as the story moves from the cafes to the Bataclan theater, there is this mass shootout, and then the hostage taking. And you go through the details with both the hostages and the members of the SWAT team. But on a number of occasions-- and this is the other side of the coin, and it's part of the 9/11 story as well, the two sides of that coin—the most horrible thing that could happen, and then these extraordinary responses by people to try to make something better, that you try to do something good that matched the level of just how horrible the experience was.

00:38:42 So I wonder if you could pick out for us, each of you... and they're called bubbles of humanity in the film, one of your interview subjects coins that phrase. Another talks about discreet heroism, where in the middle of these terrible circumstances, people do things that reflect the best of who they can be in these circumstances.

00:39:08 Jules Naudet: I'll go on one, and you can... but the one that strikes me the most, when the terrorist arrives at the music hall, there are about 1,800 people, 1,500 downstairs, 300 in the balcony. And most of... a lot of people manage to exit through the... actually the security guard who runs to open the emergency exits, then comes back in when he sees there's not enough people leaving, gets fired on, and still goes and runs through the entire downstairs, to the other exit, and managed to let hundreds of other people escape.

00:39:47 But the rest, the scene kind of freezes. People are on the ground, whether they're dead or they're pretending to be dead or they're wounded. And you have an eerie silence that has been described by

these people. So imagine about 1,000 people on the ground pretending to be dead. So it's a very chaotic scene. I think someone described it as Dante's Inferno.

00:40:08 And a couple was there that we interviewed, a young couple. It's their first night out after having their baby boy. And they start... at first they're happy. They're here, it's fantastic. It's finally life as a couple after... and then this happens. And they're on the ground. They do not see each other. All they have is they hold each other by the pinky. And they describe this half an inch square as their entire life. They don't see around them, they don't see.

00:40:42 But just that small touch, that small feeling of heat that they can feel from each other becomes their entire world. And they will start to, just through that, concentrate on staying relaxed, and staying calm, not moving. And this will also happen where they will say to their neighbor, "We're going to be okay. Stay calm. Don't make a noise."

00:41:07 And it's these little bubbles of heroism which... it's insignificant and significant in itself, because that's what will happen all around, not only at the cafes, but at the Bataclan, where little moments, small humanity that will help the two or three people around you survive and try to make it through that. And it's only through the face of horror that this comes out.

(muffled audio)

00:41:42 Gédéon Naudet: Again, we feel so privileged to have met all those extraordinary people. There is this couple from Normandy, and you can tell right away that they don't really look at Paris as the most exciting place in the world. They prefer to stay in the countryside at their house, and they like the village style, lifestyle. But there was this concert, and the husband is really into this kind of band, and the wife wanted to please the husband.

- 00:42:17 And so they drive to Paris, and they take a little picture of the Eiffel Tower as they drive by. But they leave to their own parents their two kids. And the oldest is, like, three or four, and the youngest one is, like, one. And they arrive at the concert, and they go to the... to the balcony, like the 300 people kind of did. And the shootout starts. And they manage to crawl to one of the end of the balcony where it's kind of a loge.
- 00:43:06 And in the back is a kind of restroom. And they close the door behind them. They realize there are about 30, 40 of them in this tiny little room. And they can hear the gunshots outside. And they know, those 30, 40 people, this couple from Normandy, that very soon, at any moment, one of the terrorists will come in and spray and kill all of them. And the husband, at one point, realized that someone made a hole in the little back toilet room.
- Jules Naudet: On the ceiling.
- 00:43:49 Gédéon Naudet: On the ceiling, sorry. And that some people are starting to get up. And what happened then is people just form a line. And what you see in movies where usually you see... I remember "Towering Inferno," a classic, there's always those assholes, usually men, who push the women and children, you know, and try to jump first and save themselves first.
- 00:44:24 And this doesn't happen. And so there is this line, there's still shootout outside. And one by one, they get up, and it's first the women and the children, and it comes to the moment for the wife to to go up. But she's a little bit heavy. And she cannot help herself. She cannot push herself through the hole. And so when she helps herself with her foot on to the sink, she literally breaks the sink.
- 00:45:08 But even then, you know, the line behind is not shouting at her, is not doing what, again, you expect in movies-- screaming, pushing her on the side. No, no, no. They're all encouraging her. The husband literally has her feet on the face, and finally managed to push her through the hole.

00:45:33 And everybody in this room escapes through the hole, and will live through the rest of the events from literally being underneath between the roof and the stage of the Bataclan. So they will hear everything that's happening. But it's... it's another of those moments where...

00:45:55 Jules Naudet: Little moments of humanity. The last one, which I think is quite touching, in these 11 people who are in that very tiny hallway against the windows, there is a moment where the youngest one, he's about 24, 23 at the time, and next to him is the window, because they've put them there to make sure the snipers don't shoot at the terrorists through that.

00:46:21 And next to him is an older man who is 55 years old. And the man says, "Suddenly, I feel that young man, who holds my hand, grabs it," and without turning, because he's afraid of the terrorists, he says, "We're going to be okay. We're going to be okay." And this man says, "It's crazy. He's the age of my kids, and he's the one reassuring me."

So these little moments of humanity, that you feel like it's almost like a... feels like a bad movie cliché, but that's what happens in real life. That's what happens when the world crumbles around you, if we were all cynical we could say, you know, human beings are horrible.

00:47:03 But, no, it's in these moments that we see the strength and the beauty that we have in us, and at least on a personal level it's kind of a giant (speaking French), as we say, to terrorism.

(laughter)

Jules Naudet: It's this humanity. The fact of it goes against everything, you know, they try to destroy. It's the beauty of who we are down deep.

Clifford Chanin: You tell one of the last moment of one of the victims in the music hall.

Jules Naudet: Yes.

Clifford Chanin: It is a moment of defiance, in fact.

Jules Naudet: Yeah.

00:47:34

Clifford Chanin: And I wonder if you'd tell a little bit about that.

Gédéon Naudet: Before that. As Jules said, there are so many ways to respond to terrorism. And you can bomb back, shoot back, do all those things. But a way to deal with it is really to show the humanity. There is nothing you can do to this message. Anyway, it was just...

00:48:07

Jules Naudet: But you were talking about the... when at the... at the music hall on the ground floor where all the people are pretending to be dead, either because they are or they just... you know, any movement... and as they said, any movement that they will have, they will be shot at, as the two terrorists are on the balcony and shooting everyone that is moving around.

00:48:27

That's before the two cops arrive and engage the third one. And you have some people who... some will stay and not say anything. And some, as a last, I don't know, last piece of themselves, stand up and insult the terrorists and tell them, "You are..." you know, I won't repeat. You'll have to excuse my French.

(laughter)

Clifford Chanin: Literally excuse his French.

Jules Naudet: Literally, yes. Maybe I can curse in French-- no.

Clifford Chanin: You could probably do that.

00:49:00 Jules Naudet: But I think it's... you know, it's... so it is that humanity, it's that courage. It is, in a way, something I admire, that at the last moment, where you think, you know, you have nothing else to go on, but you won't give them the satisfaction. And some of them do that, and it's very... it's very moving. But that's humanity. Yeah. And they... unfortunately, these people will be shot when they do that. But it is the reality of these moments. And again...

00:49:29 Clifford Chanin: We have another clip from the film, which sort of is the moment of summary, both in terms of the consequences of this chain of attacks, and then as things begin to sink in on the first responders and then on the survivors of this attack, what it has done to them. And we'll go to that.

00:49:55 (clip begins)

Voice 1 (in French): Final assessment for all medical posts. Four deceased. Seven critically wounded. Fifty-two lightly wounded.

Voice 2 (in French): Final assessment: Thirteen deceased. Ten critically wounded. Twelve lightly wounded.

Voice 3 (in French): Final assessment: Five deceased. Eight critically wounded. Eight lightly wounded.

- 00:50:28 Voice 4 (in French): Final assessment: Nineteen deceased. Twelve critically wounded. Five lightly wounded.
- Voice 5 (in French): Final assessment: One deceased. Three critically wounded. Thirteen lightly wounded.
- Voice 6 (in French): Provisional assessment: Eighty-two dead. Fifty-six critically wounded. Fifty-eight lightly wounded. All civilians evacuated. End of operation.
- (siren sounding)
- (beeping)
- 00:51:09 Jimmy (in French): So, we were heading back to the fire station, in the van... There was just silence. Total silence. Nobody said a word.
- Man (in French): Don't be afraid to talk about it. There's no shame in crying if you feel moved by this situation because it's really upsetting stuff. You've got to stay alert, both during the operation and in your private lives with your loved ones. It's going to be tough. Okay?
- 00:51:41 Christophe (in French): I arrive at the fire house and it's not over, because... because they created a medical outpost there for the people from the Bataclan. I needed to be alone. So, I go into the office with my victims' forms. And I go to the break room.
- 00:52:02 There, I just fall apart. I'm overwhelmed by what I saw. I had held everything back during the entire evening. So that was a bit much.

Général Boutinaud (in French): Some of the men and women involved were amazing. Some of them risked their lives without giving a second thought. That's what surprised me the most. That's what I found most admirable. Everybody did what they had to do and they stayed humble about it.

00:52:30 When I tell them what they did is amazing. They say, "I just did my job." That's it. The best reward is a smile. It's nice when you pat someone's shoulder to say, "Good job!" and they give you a smile, it's great. That guy will always have your back, wherever you go.

Anne Hidalgo (in French): It's a terrorist attack... that targets young people, people who love the entire world, who come from the entire world.

00:53:03 In fact... In fact, it hits... the thing that makes Paris so great. I'm talking about this sense of freedom, appreciating others... Our taste for life took a hit.

President François Hollande (in French): What I vividly remember was these men and women who were hugging, and who didn't know where to go.

00:53:35 Where does one go after going through that kind of horror? Home? Do you go to the hospital when you're not physically wounded? Do you go back to your family? Where do you go? Whose shoulder do you lean on?

00:53:51 (clip ends)

Clifford Chanin: How do those questions get answered by some of the folks that you featured among the survivors of the attacks? What did they do, and who did they turn to?

Jules Naudet: I think you have... they turn to each other. Some, for example, have created a kind of new family, the ones at the cafes who were together. The ones at the Bataclan who were in the same place. The hostages themselves are a very distinct group. They spent about two hours together in that hallway thinking that every second they were going to die.

00:54:27

And they still see each other. About eight of them have dinner together about every two, three months. They live in Paris. And whenever there is one who is not feeling okay, they all are on the same Snapchat account, and they all just send a little text and they will be there. For the most part... and it's exactly like 9/11.

We all form our own kind of cocoon of mental health in a way, whether it is the firefighters who go back to their firehouse, and one look will will... all that will be needed to know that you're not doing okay, and you need to go to the third floor and be left alone. Here it's the same thing. They see each other often.

00:55:08

You have victims associations who are very important, just like they were here, survivors networks and things. They have very French things called apéro thérapie, which is basically going, have a drink, and talk about your problems. It's a French twist on it, you know?

(laughter)

00:55:27

Jules Naudet: But I think, you know, it's like everything. We need the... we need to talk to people who were there, and because we... the worst is that, at least personally, is that feeling that you cannot connect to others who have not felt it. As much as you want to, as much as your loved ones want to, I think it's easier to be with each other, to finish each other's sentence, or to know exactly what will be the onset of problems or anxieties.

00:55:55 Gédéon Naudet: For the people who lived it, it's, unfortunately, the realization that even their close ones will...

Jules Naudet: Sorry.

Gédéon Naudet: ...will not understand. And in fact, it's very common for a husband, a brother, a sister, a teacher, a best friend to say, "Come on. It's been a year. It's been two years. You know, move on."

00:56:26 You know, again, there's a trauma that Jules was talking about. But, also, on the psychological level, we've learned so much since 9/11. And cities and countries have talked to each other through places like that. That's so important.

00:56:54 There is now so much communication that first responders know how to react right away. That's why, for example, in all the... all the cities, all of Paris, you had psychological... psychologists and therapists that were there in just an hour or two to help the people and welcome. As the owner of La Belle Equipe, which was one of the six cafes that was hit, the owner was himself there with his wife. His wife didn't make it.

00:57:36 And when he returned home, he pushed the door of his... their daughter's... six-year-old daughter's bedroom, and she was sleeping, and not knowing that her mother was dead. And so he... his friends and family came over. But he went to the mayor, to the... of his neighborhood, and there was a line. And he waited on line and talked to a psychologist.

00:58:17 And when it was his turn, he said, "All right, my daughter is going to wake up in two hours. What do I tell her? How do I tell her that her mother is dead?" But Paris was ready for that, and cities around the world are ready, because they communicate. So there is this other aspect.

Jules Naudet: I'm so sorry. Thank you.

00:58:46 Clifford Chanin: I think of... you mentioned the security guard at the music hall who, you know, he survives this terrible ordeal, and everything that he's seen, and in terms of heroism, he got people out, because he opened the door, and then he tells the story of going home that night and his wife tells him that she's pregnant.

00:59:04 Jules Naudet: Yeah. And as he says, "I've just survived. I've just seen death, and now life is the reward I have." So it's very... you know, it's all of these moments. Reality is much stranger than fiction, and these moments, the beauty of it, the terrible price of it, but the beauty of it is always there, so it's a litany of incredible heroes, and much more exists than we were able to talk to.

00:59:37 But, you know, everyone has a story. Everyone has been... has been quite... In particular. I'm reminded of the captain of the SWAT team. (coughs) Very... a guy who with a typical French police face, doesn't smile and all that. And, you know, this guy is responsible for ordering the assault, you know? They have 11 people in that hallway. They've negotiated. They know it's not going to go anywhere. Yeah, be careful.

(laughter)

01:00:09 Jules Naudet: And they know that... yes.

(laughter)

Jules Naudet: And they know that they have to breach, and he goes to the head of... to the police commissioner, tell them, you know, "Commissioner, we have to go through." And, you know, and the commissioner said, "Okay, going to go." And the head of the SWAT team said, "No, 11 people. The hallway is about this wide. It's about 11 yards

long. They have machine guns, and they have... and they have... they're suicide bombers. So we know we're going to lose at least half of the hostages and we're going to lose at least half of our team of SWAT team members. But it is the best of the worst solution."

01:00:50

The breach happens. By an incredible miracle, whatever you want to call it, all the hostages survive. It was incredibly close call. All the SWAT team members survive. And he is proud. He's not happy, because death is all around, but he's proud of his men. He's proud of what they have done. And he receives a call from his wife.

And she said, "I'm sorry to call you. I wanted to make sure you were okay." And he says, "Yes, it's incredible. We saved them all." And she says, "I'm sorry to tell you, but your best friend is missing, and we believe he was at the Bataclan." And that's his best friend since they were eight years old. They were his witness at the... his best man at his wedding and all that.

01:01:36

And he will, after this moment of elation, where everything went great, he will go and look at the bodies one by one, and unfortunately, will find his best friend dead in the hall. And so this moment where he himself was a first responder and then becomes a victim. And, you know, these are... these... for some of them the price has been very high. But it's that courage that we see again, as we saw in the eyes of the firefighters or police officers, is amazing.

01:02:02

Clifford Chanin: Let's see if we have a question or two. I'll ask you to wait for the microphone to get to you. In the back, please. Just... we'll pass the mic to you.

Audience Memb: Hi.

Jules Naudet: Hello.

Audience Member: I'm just wondering if in your journey or if in the journey of the people that you spoke to, if you found a thread of spirituality, and how that relationship might have changed due to the trauma that you experienced or they experienced.

01:02:34 Jules Naudet: I think it's... there is not one thread. I think it depends. And certainly, we've seen it in 9/11, which is, again, to go back to every time you're confronted by your own mortality, does something. I think people who were... it varies. People who were spiritual, some still are, and use it as a strength to survive.

01:02:57 Others, it's been complicated, if I'm... you know, if you believe and then this happens to you, for some you take it personally. For others, again, this is France, so there are lots of atheists and agnostics, so it hasn't changed them on a spiritual level. More on their human connection level, I would think.

Clifford Chanin: I will say, in the film, and this would distinguish it in my mind from the American experience, a number of people, three or four of them, after this experience, they say they're not believers, and they're still not believers. And I think, you know, it does reflect just a different approach to these things, or where the state of religion is in France.

01:03:35 Jules Naudet: Yeah, it's more cultural, I think. But as an aside to this, I remember one conversation with a friend, a firefighter, on 9/11, and the complexity of that question is for one who believed in God, he was Christian. And a certain trauma came from the belief in itself that he believed he was saved by God on that day. But then the responsibility of what it meant. "I've been saved, but to do what? And will I be able to fulfill that purpose?"

01:04:10 It became almost a trauma in itself, and to "Am I man enough? Am I, you know, good enough to deserve that second life?" So it can become... that's the many aspects of trauma. It's complicated.

- 01:04:29 Gédéon Naudet: Again, on a very, very personal level, what I was trying to say at the beginning, when something happened, and as Jules said, it can be any type of accident, crisis, a car accident, death, in all its form, there is this moment where you take the path being of trying to become a cynic, thinking about only bad thing about life, and why it's not really that worth living or it's just all bad.
- 01:05:05 And then there is this other side where, really, you see those bubbles of humanity that give you hope and not having to go and talk about spiritualism or religion, it's just believing in humankind, and seeing it firsthand, no matter who you are, where you're coming from.
- 01:05:29 You will react in ways that you save your neighbor. You will do things that make us all look wonderful from the eyes of a little green man somewhere.
- Clifford Chanin: One more. Who else would like... the gentleman there. Have you got a mic? On this side, I think. Yeah.
- 01:05:55 Audience Member: Hello. I'd like to know whether... because what hasn't been mentioned so far is the concepts of patriotism or of revenge, or whatever. Did you interview any people who said, "Now I hate Muslims" or "I am a Muslim, and I object to this," or "I don't understand this," or "As a Jew, we've been telling you this all this time," or "Now we need to have France militarized and prevent this militarily"? Did anything like that happen with patriotism or with revenge as issues?
- 01:06:38 Jules Naudet: What we've... we didn't explore that part in the in the film. We've asked, and we talked to people. What was striking is that, at least from all the people we've interviewed, and all the people we've talked to, which is hundreds, there is not one single message of hate or revenge.
- 01:06:56 There were mostly messages of love and life. Not as in, "I forgive you," and that. But concentrating on life, whether then, you know, all the

people, and I think that's mostly common in survivors, we normally... it's more on the outside, family members or friends.

But I think there is a certain kind of peace that comes over you, for the most part. Not for everyone. But at least here we saw the same thing. They wanted to concentrate on life and on love. And for them that was important. Some of them are... it is literally their message, is love is stronger than anything.

01:07:38 So on a personal level, it was interesting to see... you know, in France we have a complicated history with our flag, and what it means to be a patriot, and in... just just like in 9/11, where we saw the day after, all these flags coming all over, we saw the same thing in Paris, and we still see some of it, which is... I was very proud.

01:07:58 People were proud of France. They were proud of the city, and were all there together, as normally happens. You know, in New York, like in Paris, we're not always charming to each other in the streets.

(laughter)

Jules Naudet: And try to get someone's cab from one another-- you'll see what happens. But it's when... just like after 9/11, there is that kind of, "We're all in this together." And it's quite amazing to see that. So...

01:08:21 Clifford Chanin: Yeah, the film doesn't really spend a lot of time on it, but there are a number of scenes of either memorials, these spontaneous memorials that were set up, or people going... the owner of the Le Belle Equipe Café going to a demonstration. And the overwhelming sense of that is the solidarity and the commonality of the human experience. And so, I mean, I'm sure there were a variety of sentiments.

Jules Naudet: Of course.

Clifford Chanin: But certainly in terms of what you show, it is this sense of unity. It's a remarkable film. I would urge you to take the time, if you can, to see it. And maybe in gradual doses.

01:08:59 Jules Naudet: Which is why when we were talking before, I think, we're very grateful to do it with Netflix. One, because it was a great partnership. But also, we knew very early on that this was kind of a complicated program. We didn't want the program to be on a network or something like that, because it's... you know, it's not something you want to watch for, necessarily, for two hours or three hours as a program in one go.

01:09:24 And so it was a good way for people to watch it in little bits. Whether they wanted to watch everything, or watch a piece, and then, you know, take a break for a day, for a week. And so that was... that was very important. The format was, from the very beginning, important to keep. And that's why we're lucky to have been able to do it with Netflix.

01:09:47 Which, also, I think the point is this program is not just for French people or Parisians or the ones who lived that. Just like our 9/11 documentary is not. I think it's directed to everyone in the world who has lived through these things, whether in Barcelona, in Boston, in New York, in London. Unfortunately, terrorism is with us, and it's kind of the new normal.

01:10:09 But I think people will find in these bubbles of humanity the same message that anyone around the world who has lived through something like that, has seen around them. So that was that was one of the important...

Clifford Chanin: And I think as difficult as some of the material is, the through line of the film is this message of this humanity. It is something that is always present, even if it's not the most immediate focus of the particular scene. But, please... we've run out of time. Please join me in thanking Jules and Gédéon Naudet.

Jules Naudet: Thank you.

(applause)