

Man Who Survived 9/11 and Las Vegas Massacre: 'God Has a Plan for Me'

When the bullets first rang out over Mandalay Bay, Mike Dempsey knew he had to take cover fast.

He was outside by the hotel pool when suddenly he was one of the thousands fleeing for their lives after Stephen Paddock opened fire on a crowd of concertgoers nearby.

"I was right under where he was firing so that was probably the scariest part," he told *The Raleigh News & Observer*. "Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined this incident could have happened. But unfortunately, it could happen anywhere, anytime."

This wasn't the first time Dempsey was running for his life in the middle of a national tragedy. Just 16 years earlier he was working inside of the World Trade Center Tower 2 when a plane struck the building.

The images of people running for their lives in Vegas was eerily similar to the ones he saw during the 9/11 attack.

"Those are images you can't ever get over," he said.

Miraculously, Dempsey survived both terror attacks, but the Las Vegas one brought back horrific memories.

"I was good for 48 hours and then I just tanked," Dempsey said. "You start reliving, just little triggers and it just doesn't go away. You start having anxiety attacks, sleepless nights."

"One thing you don't envision is scenarios like a plane hitting the World Trade Center. You don't envision a shooter

firing bullets onto a crowd,” he said.

Now, he says Las Vegas will never be the same for him.

“It’s my home away from home, and it feels violated,” Dempsey said. “It’s going to feel weird going back.”

It’s the same feeling he gets when he goes back to ground zero of 9/11.

“When I go back downtown now and see the Freedom Tower, it’s not the same World Trade Center that I worked in for all those years,” Dempsey said. “But there’s a new normal you have to find. And I’ve found the best way to conquer your fears is to face them.”

However, Dempsey believes God spared his life both times for a reason.

“Maybe God has a plan for me, and I can help,” he said. “Instead of being angry or upset, I’m going to try to find what the families and survivors are going to need.” {eoa}

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