

# **Robert Vincent**

## **2nd Chance Project- Episode 1**

### *Full Transcript of Interview*

*The following is a complete transcript from the interview Sarah O'Connor conducted in the Winter of 2017.*

**Interviewer, Sarah O'Connor= SO**

**Interviewee, Robert Vincent= RV**

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**RV:** I'm in a suburban area of San Diego and I work out of a two-car garage. I think this neighborhood was built sometime in the late 50s. Small neighborhood, but definitely still in the city of San Diego so the two-car garage is totally converted into a wood shop or workshop and right now I'm working on a concert guitar that is headed for a guitar dealer in North Carolina. I don't usually work with a lot of musicians or make many sales on my own. I let dealers to that for lack of time. It's difficult to have musicians trying guitars and answering phones and responding to people and then building at the same time, so I just let the dealers handle all the sales and I concentrate on just practicing my art.

**SO: I see. What kind of wood is it that you're using for making this one?**

**RV:** So this one is east Indian rosewood on back and sides and spruce top. Very traditional materials. So it's very dark wood on backs and side and light blonde colored wood on top, which is the face of the instrument. And all the supporting internal construction and the neck is typically mahogany or a similar wood.

**SO: So you learned your guitar making in a program in prison in California through the arts in corrections program in CA, so maybe you could tell the story of how you ended up there, what happened to bring you there.**

**RV:** It was a bunch of young men probably with too much alcohol and other substances and a lot of bravado and machismo and got in an altercation and a young man in my group shot a young man in the other group and circumstances what they were cost me a second-degree murder conviction right along with him.

**SO: So you were really just in the wrong place at the wrong time.**

**RV:** Yes, but I hate to minimalize it like that. I'm sure over the years I've contemplated if I just took a right instead of a left that day anything could have happened and it could have been a different story, but after a lot of self-evaluation and taking a hard look at what got me there, it was purely just life choices as a young man and hanging out with a rough crowd.

**SO: How old were you?**

**RV:** I was 20. I just turned 20 that year.

**SO: Would you have ever expected to end up in prison?**

**RV:** No, of course not. As a young man, I had all the typical young person thoughts that there's this invincibility. I was in a professional career. I painted cars for a living, but I also hung around with kids in my neighborhood that were a little rougher than others.

**SO: Was that in San Diego?**

**RV:** No that was in northern California, a Sacramento suburb.

**SO: So were you shocked when this happened?**

**RV:** Absolutely, absolutely devastated. I had two young sons at home, a young wife. I had just turned journeyman painter, automotive painter, and that's something I pursued at an early age in high school. I think I started painting bicycles. It was something I wanted to do from an early age and succeeded, largely in the custom automotive scene, painting hotrods and low rider cars and you name it. I had a goal at an early age and reached that goal, but I still had a habit of hanging around with people who really weren't in line with any career choices.

**SO: So what was your sentence?**

**RV:** Fifteen, actually 16 years to life, second degree murder.

**SO: What does that mean, to life?**

**RV:** That means there's no definite parole date. Depending on my behavior and attitude inside, my achievements inside prison, determine whether the board of prison terms has to grant me a parole date. After 12 years I started to go to the board of prison terms, and that was two board of prison term members and then the district attorney from my county, which was Sacramento, me and my attorney, so I went to four different parole hearings until I was finally granted a parole date.

**SO: Was your sentence a pretty typical sentence for that kind of crime?**

**RV:** I don't think so. There was a very similar case a year after mine where the person in my position received a manslaughter. I think the victim in my case was a Marine on leave. It was highly politicized in the county. Of course we had the Dept of Defense investigating and Sacramento sheriffs investigating, so it was a high-profile case where the other case very similar to mine, the guy in my position actually did more. He wasn't a Marine on leave, just another guy in the neighborhood, and he received manslaughter, and I've seen other cases where the person in my position received manslaughter, but it is California law that puts me in the same position as the shooter.

**SO: What was the shooter's sentence?**

**RV:** The same.

**SO: So what was it like being a 20-year-old and suddenly being in prison, and you were in a maximum-security prison, weren't you?**

**RV:** Yes, I was in...Pelican Bay Maximum Security Prison had just opened the year that I went into prison. Of course, the trial was a year-long trial, and then after trial there is processing and you go to a facility that places you in an institution. So it was a couple of years before I actually ended up in prison, and Pelican Bay had just opened up that year, so they needed people up there and that's where I went, immediately, to the highest-level security prison in California and it was a tough place to be, especially for a young man that had no prior experience, had never been incarcerated, had never been in any kind of juvenile facility, never been arrested.

**SO: Right. It must have been very frightening.**

**RV:** It was very frightening and it was culture shock and I had to learn quick how to survive. Fortunately, I did. It was a very tough time.

**SO: Did you have friends in prison?**

**RV:** I did. In the later years I had a small circle of friends that I did a lot of time with. I mean these guys I spent a decade plus with. It is a very odd circumstance. I mean you'll acquire a friend or acquaintance and then they'll move on to another prison and you'll never see them again. And then there's the trust issue. It's very hard to trust anyone or let anyone get close to you, especially in the higher-level institutions. And this has caused problems getting out too. It's a very standoffish attitude that you get and never let anyone get close to you or really have to not care so much. It's just a very odd situation. So it's difficult to really say I have friends because it's difficult to be close to anyone inside.

**SO: How long was it before you were moved to the medium security prison?**

**RV:** So it was almost four years in Pelican Bay, I think three and a half, almost four years in Pelican Bay before my security level was decreased enough to go to a medium security prison, which was Dueyville Casemont in Tracy, California.

**SO: Was that very different?**

**RV:** Very different. Yeah, really, really different. It was a lot more relaxed. The level of violence was a lot lower and there were a lot of programs. It was designed, originally for rehabilitating inmates, so there were a lot of programs available from vocational programs, the art program was there, educational programs, college programs, you name it, there were a lot of things available at that time that no longer exist there.

**SO: So this is where you first began to learn guitar making?**

**RV:** Yes, so the Arts in Corrections program is a program in all the institutions in CA and that program was available in Pelican Bay, too, but it was limited to painting and drawing, and they would have teachers come in and teach art classes, where the Tracy program was very diverse and well rounded. They had ceramics, two-dimensional painting and drawing, music classes, guitar lessons, woodworking. The artist facilitator who ran the program there, his background

was woodworking and he was a graduate of, I'm sorry I forget where he graduated, but his thing was fine art and woodworking, so the whole program was set up with woodworking and ceramics.

**SO: So would you say the emphasis was more on self-expression in the majority of the programs or training that was more vocational programming?**

**RV:** No, it was absolutely, the art program was more self-expression really. They had art history classes and really a fine art program versus a vocational.

**SO: What's your opinion about that, the difference between the two and which one or if both are important.**

**RV:** I think they're both important. A lot of the participants in the art program also participated in some kind of vocational program during the day, so their job assignments or their assignments during the day were vocational classes, anything from auto body to auto mechanics to cabinetry. So they also participated in the art program, and most of them did a similar interest. For instance, the cabinet shop guys would come in and want to learn the fine art end of woodworking. So there was a strong draw from the vocational and industry. They had an industry there where they made office furniture for all the state offices in California were made there. So there was a lot of talent to draw from and a lot of experience. Some of the guys were welders and electricians that worked in plant operations during the day and would come in the art program and participate also.

**SO: Are these programs still available in most prisons?**

**RV:** Not to that extent. No. The program was canceled I think in 2006. I was paroled in 2005 and I believe it was a year later that it was totally canceled. Just recently it started up again but unfortunately everything from the old programs were thrown away or removed, so it's really starting completely over now.

**SO: Well tell me about the guitar program and what drew you to it in the first place.**

**RV:** So when I got to Tracy, I was considered a higher-level security so I could not participate in the drawing classes there.

**SO: Why is that?**

**RV:** Well I came from a higher-level institution and when you go from a higher-level institution to a lower level institution, they want to see how you interact. I came from a very violent, violent, brutal place, so they limit your movement and basically see if you're going to make it there without offending or getting into any altercations or trouble, so I was limited on any programming for the first year, so I took to drawing mostly automotive illustrations in my cell, so my connection to the art program was that after I completed a drawing I was allowed to go to the art program and spray a fixative on them to seal them up and I could send these pieces of art home. So it was very limited what I could do there. I couldn't really attend any classes, but during the day I could go in there and order supplies and spray my drawings. I did that for a number of years until they removed me from my closed custody and then I was allowed to

participate in the art classes. Steve Emerick who allowed me to do that knew my background in automotive paint and knew my illustrations and was very supportive of that. They were doing the guitar classes for about two years, the guitar making classes, before I started participating, and a lot of the inmate students were completing guitars but they were having trouble spraying the finish on the guitars, the lacquer. That's where I was introduced. When I was finally able to participate, Steve Emerick asked if I could come in and spray the guitars, just that. That was my start. I figured it was very similar materials as automotive, the equipment is very similar, so I figured how different can it be? I jumped right in there and soon realized it's completely different. But I was able to accomplish it and started to develop an interest in it. I didn't know anything about the difference between a classical guitar and a folk instrument, say like a Fender or a Martin I just figured a guitar is a guitar. I really didn't know the difference. As soon as I heard a classical guitar played in front of me, it really got me interested in the building aspect of it. So I struggled through that with some other inmates who had completed one. In any art program, other inmates will help other inmates who have more knowledge. It's really helpful when there isn't a professor or an instructor to instruct, so I completed a guitar before I met Kenny Hill.

### **SO: Who is Kenny Hill?**

**RV:** Kenny Hill is a luthier here in California who, through the California Arts Council, took up first guitar playing classes, then moved into teaching inmates how to build guitars. Prior to my participation in the program. (he was what is called a visiting artist) he was pretty active prior to my involvement. Some of the inmates had a head start and completed one guitar over the course of year. For some reason it kind of stopped. For whatever reason, Kenny Hill didn't come in for my first year there. So I completed a guitar, then he visited a year later and saw that guitar. He saw I was really serious about it and encouraged me, gave me a couple of books and played one of his guitars in front of me, and I tell you it was life changing when I heard that music in front of me.

### **SO: What did that make you feel like?**

**RV:** It was incredible, the sound of this wooden box with strings on it. Prior to that, our ear develops this. Were used to listening to this, a speaker column, or headphones. Although there are very good speakers, it's not the same. Hearing the sound from just wood. There's no amplification, no electronics, nothing, just wood and strings. It's just this incredible sound this thing is making. So it was really the music that really got me, and it's romantic period Spanish guitar and Spanish music that really caught my interest. Then Kenny Hill gave me a book and it was a book of the life and times of Antonio Torres, who settled the design elements of the guitar that we're still building today 150 years ago, much like Stradivarius 400 years ago settled the design elements of the violin. Stradivarius, the violins were all different shapes and sizes and there was little commonality between them. Stradivarius came along and built a violin that everybody still to this day copies that design. It's much different of course today but he pretty much settled the design elements as did Antonio Torres 150 years ago. Kenny Hill gave me a book about Antonio Torres and that was it. I read that book cover to cover I don't know how many times. There was something about the relationship between the master builders and musicians, like Andres Segovia and Jose Ramirez, who was a builder. These two lives and their life's work would be combined to play I think the final art piece, the music. It transcended what I was doing, which was two-dimensional. That's great. I made a painting and I can hang it up and the viewer can interpret it any way they want, but that was pretty much it. Where the guitar,

it is the life's work of not only the musician but the builder and the composer. The performance on stage is the accumulation of all these other artists that's really the final piece of art. I was so intrigued by that for some reason. It was bigger than me. I dove in and studied every book and everything I could get my hands on to study what the masters did a hundred years ago and never looked back.

**SO: Do you consider yourself a builder? I guess what I'm getting at is, how important is sound in what you're doing?**

**RV:** It's the main importance. The sound is first. Sound and playability of the instrument is first. Making them look pretty is really the last thing on the list. That happens with good craftsmanship. It's really about the sound that makes it or breaks it.

**SO: How do you develop an ear for that or the ability to build for that?**

**RV:** Listening to master makers' instruments and getting really good feedback from musicians who play classical guitar and studying what the masters did technically and how they thickened their tops. The thickening of the wood is crucial. Interesting story is Antonio Torres on his deathbed, and this is just the story that is in some of the books I read, on his deathbed the pastor begged him not to take his secrets to the grave. His response was there are no secrets. It is all in the feel between my fingers, in other words the thickening of the plates of the wood. I've always had an intuitive feel for that and that confirmed my early feelings about building. There's a basic pattern and basic measurements you follow and everything after that is purely intuitive and that makes it or breaks it. It's like a fine chef and then the chef has all these wonderful materials but it's when you add the spice and how much spice. That basic recipe everybody could cook but the real good chefs just know when to turn off the heat and add the spice and that's very similar to guitar making.

**SO: It seems like there was something about it that made it worthy of a life's work, that it could be more than a job that it could be almost like a calling.**

**RV:** I believe it was a calling. My interest as a young man was craft oriented – cars and painting – but this felt right. It felt like this was what I was intended to do. There was something about it. Maybe the history, this real traditional history of it I connected to, the music. I don't know why, but it just felt like this was what I was intended to do.

**SO: Tell me about building a guitar, from first beginning it. How does it work?**

**RV:** The beginning of it is wood choice. I'm limited by tradition and by the market I guess to certain woods. I've experimented with some nontraditional woods that are a little less marketable. It is really just choice of materials, choice of wood. I'll go into a lumber yard and dig through a pile of boards and tap each one and look at the grain orientation and listen to what that board is saying. I'll literally hold the board up to my ear and tap it and if it has the sound qualities I'm looking for, I'll choose that board. Initially it's raw lumber. From there it's taking that raw lumber to proportionate sizes to use for necks and backs and sides and tops. From there it's constructing a box and thickening the wood. Every piece of wood I consider and look at, flex and smell. Every piece of wood I put in my guitars is considered. That's the difference between a handmade instrument by a luthier versus a factory-made guitar where

everyone has a specific job. They don't have time to consider each piece of wood. They get a piece of wood, they do their task then it goes on to the next guy. Hand builders like me, every piece of wood, whether it's a wood that's just going to be for aesthetics or going to contribute to the sound or playability of the wood is thought about before it is glued in.

**SO: What kinds of woods are traditionally used?**

**RV:** Typically, a rosewood for the back and sides, and mahoganies, spruce and cedars. Some are getting harder and harder to get. Some of them are considered an endangered species and are very limited. Unfortunately, in South America, a lot of the rain forest was slashed and burned for cattle and really went to no good use for making anything. That endangered a lot of the really good woods in South America. Unless that country manages its forest, those woods become extinct, or now what they're doing, when they get close to that, they're protected. They're literally protected, considered an endangered species and can no longer be cut or harvested for the industry.

**SO: How long does it take to make a guitar?**

**RV:** Typically...typically a couple of months. That's kind of a hard one because I never work on just one, but I can't say that. I work on just one, but for instance, when I'm making necks, I make a series of them. So there's always something in progress until the final stages, when I just concentrate on one guitar. At that stage, it's usually about a month and a half when I don't work on anything else but that one guitar. It's very limited. I'm making about 6-8 guitars a year on a good year, which prior years, the last five years, it's been very difficult reaching that number so it's very limited.

**SO: Do you have one guitar you've made that you consider the greatest?**

**RV:** I try to make everyone the greatest. I don't. I think I'm my own worst critic. I try to make every one better than the last one. Although I'm getting to the point now that I've pretty much settled all the design elements. I don't work from a plan anymore and originally, I did. My guitar is totally my design. The design elements are influenced by the masters but are totally my design. Twenty years into this, I'm just getting to the point that the design elements of my guitar I'm really really happy with. So now it's just repeating those design elements and carefully writing down careful notes and careful measurements and just repeating those now. I don't have one guitar that totally stands out. I think my best guitar at the moment is one I just sent to a dealer in New York. I use a nontraditional wood. I never used that wood before.

**SO: What kind of wood is it?**

**RV:** It's Asian striped ebony so it comes from Malaysia, not traditionally used for guitar building although a lot of builders are starting to use it. I found this wood in a lumber yard here in Carlsbad, California, which is close to San Diego. One of the guys in the lumber yard pointed it out to me and I picked up a board and tapped it. I was like, wow, this is really incredible. So I got some, brought it home, and took a chance and cut it up and made an instrument. It really turned out great. I've seen a lot of other builders are starting to use that same wood. It's really beautiful, striking, with the color variation in that wood is really incredible, it goes from dark to

light. It's not ebony like the African ebony that's totally black. This ebony, although same tree, different part of the world where it grows, is really a striking color.

**SO: It sounds beautiful and I've seen some pictures of other guitars you've made and they're really gorgeous.**

**RV:** Thank you.

**SO: Was it difficult adjusting when you came out and were getting started in your own business?**

**RV:** Yes, it was. Fortunately, I had a lot of family support throughout my incarceration and when I came home. I had a job at a family business. I started to buy equipment and materials and set up shop. The first year I was home I was working my full-time job at the family business and still trying to establish my own guitar business. I went to a national event that's held at Anaheim, California, called the NAMM. It's musical instrument makers, so it's everything from drums to pianos to you name it. I was very excited about my story and eager to share it. I talked to a lot of dealers and people in the industry and people I had read about. I met a lot of people. Some people were eager to hear the story and some not so much. It was a little difficult. There was a dealer I met who got ahold of one of the guitars I made inside. This is a nationally known dealer, very fine instruments they have in their store. The instrument they got ahold of, they had their in-house musician play it and write an article about it. His quote was it was the best nylon stringed instrument he'd ever played at that store. It was a really good write-up. I got in touch with them again. They were anxious to get a new guitar and I was well on my way to having my first dealer represent me. After a long conversation on the phone about my building style and techniques and what influenced me, he finally asked me where I learned all this. Me being excited about the story, I had no trouble telling him about it. And that was pretty much the end of the conversation. When I told him I learned inside prison, there was this odd, awkward silence. I thought I lost contact with him or something. I never heard from him again.

**SO: Why do you think that is?**

**RV:** I don't know. I assume he didn't like the prison story, didn't want to take a chance of working with an ex-felon for whatever reason. I really don't know. I took that personally and never told the story again for ten years. I figured I served my time the best I could, I tried to redeem myself and learn from my mistakes and come out and be a better man for that. So I didn't want to be judged again. I was judged by a jury of my peers and sentenced and I did my time. I wanted to be judged on the merits of my work and not my prison background. So I quit telling the story. Some dealers nationally knew of my story. If they asked I would tell them, but I left the prison part out of my story. I never mentioned it again for years.

**SO: And then a year ago you did decide to tell your story again.**

**RV:** A year ago, I was contacted by... Mind you, I talked a lot about the story publicly but not in the industry of guitar making. I was asked by the Department of Corrections to speak at a national conference of Art in Prison in Philadelphia. They flew me to Philadelphia and I sat on a couple of panels talked about my experience. There were people from Florida and all over the

country who were starting similar programs of art inside prisons. I spoke at a state Senate hearing. They were trying to reenact the program in the state of California. And community colleges. I did a lot of talking about it but not in the industry. In those circumstances, I asked whoever I was in front of not to have it on the internet. It was under agreement that I spoke, but that was it.

**SO: You said there were certain expectations people have of classical guitar makers.**

**RV:** The marketing of instruments, it's very common for dealers to talk about your background and how you learned and who you were trained by. So that's a commonly asked question. So if you look at one of my instruments and you look at the dealer representation, you could see another builder with this long history of people he learned from and is associated with. Because I never really talked about mine, it is very limited and you'll see one paragraph. There is an expectation about where you learned and how you learned from and the master passing it on to students, so there is an expectation about your background.

**SO: So as successful as you've been, you have to think about that when you tell your story.**

**RV:** I do. Last year I was contacted by a radio station in San Francisco who were doing a story on art and incarceration in California, and they wanted to interview me. Initially I agreed but I wanted to be anonymous. I didn't want them to use my name. I could just be the guitar builder that went through a program in the yard and now worked outside with my skills, but they wanted the whole story. After talking with them four or five times, I finally said it's probably time. I'm pretty well established. I figured somebody else would eventually tell my story. There are a lot of other people involved in my story. I figured it was time for me to tell my story before somebody else does. And I did. I was interviewed by one of the journalists from KQED. They aired the story and it was kind of a huge relief to finally tell it. Initially when I heard the story on their station it was like a huge weight off my shoulders. Then I saw it online. Before that, if you googled my name and guitar, two pages would pop up. Some musicians wrote stuff about me, but it was all about my guitar building and I'm a guitar maker. Now suddenly, I'm an inmate guitar maker. That was tough. I swear, it felt like I had been sentenced to life again. I can't just be a classical guitar maker. I have to be an inmate builder. That was tough. It still is. I got some positive feedback from that. Honestly, I think it may have hurt me. I just don't know, but the story's out and at this point there's no reason to keep it under wraps anymore.

**SO: I know you have a desire to help other inmates who are or have been in prison. What would you like for people to take away from hearing your story?**

**RV:** I think the main message I'd like people to know is that people go to prison and most people get out of prison. It's easy to send someone away for their crimes. There are some pretty horrendous crimes people committed and went to prison for, but it's really about when people get out. If there are no programs for people like me. I use this all the time. I can't imagine at 20 years old going to a prison system with a life sentence and not having any programs to work through trying to improve yourself if you want to. Some guys don't want to. It was my choice to participate in these programs, to better myself, and to really take a hard look at what got me there. If I didn't have any of those programs or ways to help myself, I hate to think of the person I would be after 16 years and coming home with that experience. I think those programs

are important for young people who want to better themselves and come out of prison a better person.

**SO: Do we have enough of those?**

**RV:** I think not. I think the programming is a lot less than when I went in, a lot less available. A lot of those programs, a lot of the attitude when I was incarcerated by for instance the guard union and a lot of the staff was, we are coddling these inmates. They made a crime. They should be eating bread and butter. This is punishment, and it is punishment. I agree with part of that. There should be some consequences, but that person needs to learn something from their mistakes, and if there's no way to learn these lessons, then the end result if you're going to kick someone else who is only worse and they'll be right back. There have been a lot of studies that show that arts in incarceration, no matter what state, reduce recidivism by quite a bit. A lot of programs prove that. I went about doing all I could on the outside to reenact that program in California that was closed down after I left.

**SO: You've tried to go back and teach the guitar making class and haven't been able to.**

**RV:** No, that could be available; I seriously doubt that at that level it will ever be happen again in California because of this extreme custody. When I was incarcerated, a lot of inmates or convicts kind of ran, I hate to say ran, but they were very involved in day-to-day aspects inside. That has been lessened over the years. The institutions don't want to give that kind of power I guess to the inmate population, so it's very limited. The programs I hear about now are basically the kind of program I started with in in Pelican Bay, a very high security program where they count every pencil, every paintbrush. At Tracy we were using sharp chisels and saws and hand tools that could be very dangerous in an institutional setting, and they allowed us to manage that. Part of my responsibility was tool control, so every night I had to count every tool and secure it. If one tool was missing, everybody in that program could go to lockdown until that tool was found. It was a huge responsibility that we were given, and that is totally eliminated now. They don't allow inmates to have that kind of responsibility anymore, which is unfortunate.

**SO: Right, especially if they are preparing people to reenter normal life.**

**RV:** Exactly, and there was another part of it where people from the streets -- professors and artists and teachers would come in. I see a lot of guys that get out after a number of years, and their speech pattern is what you would hear in the prison yard. They can't adjust from that. They can't seem to speak on a normal level other than this prison yard slang language that develops when that's all you're talking to is prison guards and other prisoners. Having the ability to talk to people from the outside -- professionals and artists and teachers -- really helped a lot of the inmates with that, just communicating with people from the outside. It really helped me a lot. There are so many things that helped people and that helped me.

**SO: Robert, would you be able to play a few chords?**

**RV:** I don't have one strung right now, and they usually don't hang around very long when they're done. The one I'm working on right now is probably 70 % complete, but it's probably three weeks from being complete.

**SO: Do you have any photos you might be able to send?**

**RV:** Yes, I have photos but I'm still trying to learn my way. When I got home I'd never even seen a cell phone. It's really culture shock, this little phone. And computers. A lot happened in that 15 years. I'm still dumbing my way through responding with emails and sending pictures to dealers, so it's kind of difficult for me. There's a dealer in New York called Savage Guitars. He does wonderful recordings of the guitars he has for sale and the striped ebony guitar I spoke of earlier he recorded and it's available. In his write-up on that guitar, he recommends you listen with headphones. It's an outstanding recording of this instrument.

**SO: I don't have anything more to ask, but is there anything we didn't talk about you'd like to mention?**

**RV:** It's a difficult thing, but the victim is always forgotten about in these conversations and that's important to me. The young man in my crime didn't deserve to get shot, not that anybody does, but he certainly didn't. It was just a bunch of young kids who had too much alcohol and the shooting of him is something I live with to this day. I come from a Portuguese background. We celebrate probably more of a pagan celebration than Catholic, but it's a Catholic celebration that we celebrate a patron saint and every year I would ask that my grandmother light a candle for the victim in my case. That's an important part of it. Someone lost their life in this, and I'm trying to do the best in my life to make amends for that.