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The Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF OCTOBER 03, 2017

LAS VEGAS — Jake Velzl and his wife were standing in the tightly packed crowd when the shooting started. As people ran screaming, they dove to the ground. Looking back, they saw someone get shot, standing right where they had been.

“When we left, the person that took our spot got hit,” Velzl recalled on Monday, the day after the massacre that left at least 59 people dead and more than 500 injured. “It sounded like at first fireworks, and once you realized it wasn’t that, we had to get everybody down. Then we got up and ran and hid if we could. And that’s what we did to get out of there.”

The couple came from Orange County, Calif., to see the outdoor music festival, which they had attended two years ago. As of mid-afternoon, they had not heard from a friend who went to the concert but was not standing near them when the gunman opened fire.

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“We don’t know if he got out or not,” he said.

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He stared into the distance as he spoke, struggling to describe his emotions.

“I don’t really feel,” he said, his voice trailing off. “It feels kind of numb. We’re just trying to figure out how to get through it, I guess.”

Up and down the Vegas strip, electronic billboards that normally advertise entertainment and nightlife offerings flashed requests for blood donations and a number to call for those looking for missing loved ones. Some included messages such as “Our prayers for the victims. Our gratitude for the brave first responders.”

They included Toni Mullan, a clinical supervisor in trauma resuscitation at University Medical Center of Southern Nevada, the state’s only Level 1 trauma center. Mullan said she got a call from a nurse she works with around 10 Sunday night.

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“Mass casualty,” the nurse said. “I need you.”

Mullan hung up and jumped in her car. She raced to the hospital, running through red lights at high speed while calling other nurses to see if they could come in to help.

When she pulled into the hospital parking lot, her car was overheated. Inside, it was chaos.

“Beds were full and people were still coming in,” she said. But the staff was prepared and able to handle the rush of people needing treatment, she and other hospital officials said.

“This was the proudest moment I’ve had to be a nurse,” said Mullan, who has lived in the Las Vegas area for 10 years and is originally from Detroit.

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Las Vegas concertgoers on friend also in attendance: ‘We

Hospital officials said the hospital treated more than 100 people. Four died, and 12 remained in critical condition.

Ty Stanley, 37, from Baton Rouge, La., was in town for a work conference and stayed on the same floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel as the suspected gunman. He was in his room when the shooting broke out, but because of the large size and configuration of the building, he couldn’t hear it.

“I could hear commotion in the hallway and then the SWAT team came in the room and cleared it and brought me down,” Stanley said. He and other guests were brought to a theater inside the hotel, where they stayed for about three hours.

From his room several floors below the shooter’s, Ken Stringer heard the gunshots.

“I heard it all start to finish,” said Stringer, 45, also from Louisiana. “You could hear it well enough to understand there were multiple calibers in use.”

From his window, Stringer said he could see the crowd scatter, although he couldn’t see where the shots were coming from.

“It was like you stepped on an ant pile,” he said.

Local officials praised the public for generously donating water, food, and blood.

“I want to know why America doesn’t always stand together like this,” said Keith Hanoff, a police officer who responded to the shooting. “It is beautiful though.”

“I’ve seen people I’ve arrested before coming out here to donate food and water,” he added.

The hospital’s chief executive, Mason Van Houweling, said “it was inspirational how the community responded after this event.”

Brandon Jensen, 27, was among those dropping off food and other supplies at the medical center Monday. He said he felt obliged to help.

“This hit close to home,” he said. “I’m happy to see a lot of people down here helping out.”

Jensen said one of his friend’s relatives had been killed in the attack. Another friend’s fiancée was in critical condition.

“That’s what shook me,” he said. “I couldn’t sleep all night.”

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