[Snap Judgment]

**Glynn:** Daily Show correspondent Dulcé Sloan and writer Josh Johnson are best friends who rarely agree on anything. In the new podcast called Hold Up with Dulcé Sloan and Josh Johnson, they turn their hilarious, unpredictable and legendary office banter into a war of words about topics big and small. Mostly small from texting versus calling, to club bangers versus conscious rap and everything in between. Listen to Hold Up with Dulcé Sloan and Josh Johnson from the Daily Show every Thursday on iHeartRadio app, Apple Podcast or wherever you get your podcasts.

[pensive music]

So many times, the first casualty of loss is truth. Instead of a clear-eyed reflection of what happened, we avoid talking about the thing. Head in the sand, full of speed ahead, don't look back. Or even worse, people, well-meaning people will revert to platitude. Thoughts and prayers. You will never receive more than you can handle. Or they might even tell you that time heals all wounds. And I think that's why I love today's story so very much, why it's so beautiful because it finally tells the truth about one of the hardest subjects ever.

And even still, this is not a story about suicide, this is a story about a boy. A boy called Finn who loves to fish and play baseball and write poetry, embroider. It's a story about what happens to a small Vermont community as it staggers forward after unspeakable tragedy. And I love the people who opened themselves to share their truth. It's a true gift to all of us. And I know when you hear it, you're going to love him too. From our friends at the Rumble Strip podcast, today on Snap Judgment, we proudly present Finn and the Bell.

**Tara:** He'd write little notes to find in weird places. He'd write notes on logs so when we would, deep in the winter, go out to get wood for the fire, there'll be like a, "Hi, Mama. I love you." I found one of them this summer. I was afraid I was going to, but also really wanted to. I couldn't decide which way I wanted to go with that. He just recognized coziness, and was always trying to create what the blanket felt. It was important like, "Let's get our pajamas on," "Can we make cookies?" He just recognized the importance of little things he could do to make day-to-day life so much exponentially better. And he was determined to do that all the time.

He appreciated leaving the light on all night, so there will be a bunch of moths in the morning. Or, he appreciated a perennial garden and would say like, "Look at their perennial garden." [chuckles] Or a compost pile. A perfect song being played at the perfect time.

**Erica:** What did he look like?

**Tara:** He wasn't very tall. He was 5'7". When he was little, he had really long hair, like down close to his hip bones probably. And then as a teenager, he would let it grow down past his shoulders, cut it, let it grow long again. But then, about a month before he died, he cut it. That's something I think about a lot.

**Erica:** That's Tara, Finn's mother. Finn Rooney killed himself on January 3rd, 2020, in the afternoon after school. This story will not explain why he did this, as if anyone can explain why a person takes his own life. Suffice to say that not a single person in his life predicted this. There were no signs. The closest one can say is that there was a flash of high emotion that comes with youth, and there was a gun nearby and bullets. This is not a story about suicide. It's a story about a boy called Finn Rooney who lived in Walden, Vermont, near Hardwick with his mother, Tara, and brother, Lyle, and occasionally his father, Alex, who is long-haul truck driver. A boy who loved to fish and play baseball. He played the euphonium, not very well. He was the student body president. And right before he died, he had an idea about a bell. This is Finn's friend, Alex, talking about the town of Hardwick.

**Alex:** Well, Hardwick is more like a-- they got pretty much everything to a certain extent. There's couple grocery stores, but they aren't big by any means. There's a Walgreens. There's a couple banks, two hardware stores, gun shop, a Ford dealership. So, there's not a whole lot but it's definitely more than what Greensboro has.

**Erica:** What are the people like in Hardwick different from Greensboro?

**Alex:** Well, Greensboro, I've come across from working at Willey's over here in Greensboro. The Greensboro folk are a little more high class, I guess, you can call it. Their pockets are a little deeper. They're a little more liberal, I guess, you could say, than Hardwick. We're just a bunch of hicks, [unintelligible [00:06:31] of them.

**Ally:** Hardwick, it's the perfect combination of hippies and rednecks, hippie-redneck combination type of thing.

**Erica:** This is Finn's friend, Ally.

**Ally:** For a lack of better word, like a cesspool. [laughs]

**Erica:** What was Finn?

**Ally:** Finn was a total hipneck. He was the most ideal combination of a hipneck you can get because sometimes there's some that are like 70%-30% hippie-redneck. Finn was 50/50. He was right in the middle. If you needed him to help you weed your garden, he'd do it. If you needed him to help fix your truck, he'd do it. He was very much in the middle, could do anything you asked him to do.

**Mack:** He partook in activities of every single crowd around.

**Erica:** This is Mack.

**Mack:** He was the star baseball player. He was the student council president. He liked to go and fish and hunt and work on his truck. He did everything. That's why he was friends with everybody.

**Erica:** Again, here's Finn's mom, Tara.

**Tara:** It's a farming community, a logging community. People have lived here for six generations. There's like last names that are last names. Finn was like, "How long would it take for Rooney to be like a Hardwick last name?" And people were like, "200 years maybe?" [laughs] We were like, "We've got to work cut out for us." So, he was active in Bread and Puppet, a theatre group in Glover as a really little kid when we first moved here in 2010. He really wanted to do that. So, he joined the band. He would play in parades and stuff that first year we came. But he was also looking for establishing himself in Hardwick and that's a different trajectory. So, he joined the volunteer fire department. He was a junior firefighter when he was, I guess, that would be the first year we moved here. Butch, our neighbor, was the assistant fire chief, and had been in the fire department for 50 years or something. And offered Finn to go. We had a pager. The pager would go off in the middle of the night, and Finn would get his gear on real fast and go out in Butch's truck and Butch would take him to these fires.

**Butch:** And he was very interested in everything.

**Erica:** This is Butch.

**Butch:** He paid attention to every last thing that was going on and he wanted to learn everything that was going on. When you're at a fire, he was right there, wanting to see how everything was done and why it was done. And that was him. He was 17 but his mind was, I think, way more than 17.

**Aaron:** I first met Finn when we went on fishing.

**Erica:** This is Aaron.

**Aaron:** We had our fishing spots. And people always wanted to go with us but it was usually just a me and him thing. It was really fun going trout fishing with him because he knew the rivers pretty well.

**Tara:** That's as much as Aaron wanted to say to me. I asked if instead of talking, he could take me to one of their fishing spots.

**Erica:** This is good.

**Aaron:** So, this is one of me and Finn's fishing spots.

**Erica:** Where are we?

**Aaron:** We're at one of me and Finn's fishing spots.

**Erica:** You're not going to tell me where this is.

**Aaron:** No, I won't tell anybody where this spot is. It's me and Finn's spot.

[Bread & Puppet Circus sounds]

**Erica:** This is the sound of the Bread & Puppet Circus.

**Tara:** He wrote poetry, drove his truck really fast, pissed off the neighbors. I remember he would go out sometimes when I was making dinner and pick like seedheads, put them in a mason jar and stick it on the table, light candles without asking. He likes a well-set table.

[coach and audience cheering]

**Erica:** This is Mirko, Finn's baseball coach.

**Mirko:** Finn had this glove that was given to him. And during the game, the strings would break and we'd restring it and we try to give him a glove and he's like, "Coach, this is the glove." Then, he had these cleats that were duct taped up. There's a new pair of cleats that were given to him. We never had metal cleats, and at this level, they can wear metal. And then, I see my practice, he's wearing his old duct tape cleats up, and I'm like, "Finn, you got a new set of cleats." "Coach, those are for games only. I wear those for games." So then, after every game, he'd take them off and wipe them down and put them back in the box. We'd [unintelligible 00:11:50] some teams in New England and we represented Vermont. And the coaches from the other team would come up to me and say, "Who's that centerfield? If I had nine players like that." So even coach coaches that never coached him could see his work ethic and his love for the game. [sobbing]

[throwing ball sounds]

**Tara:** Lyle and Finn would every day for hours, that was the sound of summer, was the sound of a ball getting into a glove. "Come on, Lyle. Let's go outside." I find baseballs on the yard, on the field all the time still because before we had the sheep, the grass would just get too big and they'd lose them. The ball, that sound, [ball sound] I'd give just about anything in the world to hear that.

[throwing ball sounds]

**Glynn:** In just a moment, we're dropping to the heart of a community. Stay tuned.

[crickets]

**Glynn:** Welcome back to Snap Judgment, Finn and the Bell. A story about the families and the community's response to the death by suicide of one of their own.

[crickets]

[throwing ball sounds]

**David:** It was a Friday evening. And I was at home and the phone rang.

**Erica:** This is Hazen Union High School principal, David Perrigo.

**David:** It was our Director of Guidance telling me that she had some horrible news. And I said, "Okay," and she said, "We have reason to believe that one of our students took their own life this afternoon." And I shook my head and just said, "How do we know that-- what do you mean we? We have reason to believe? And who are we talking about?" And when she told me that we were talking about Finn Rooney, [chokes up] I just didn't know what to make of it. Within a couple hours, we had confirmed that it had had happened. And I went to bed that night thinking, "I don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I want to wake up and I want this all to be gone." And I went to sleep that night, and when I woke up this morning, I was like, "We've just had a terrible thing happen to our community. It's really big and we've got to step into this and figure it out."

Finally, that morning, in a conversation with Finn's mom, Tara, we had to have that conversation about how we were going to deal with this in the community. We had to communicate to the larger community that this had happened. But from the very beginning, Tara was very clear, we are not going to back away from the fact that this was a suicide. This was a suicide. And I can't tell you how helpful that was. I mean, that lifted such a burden from our shoulders about trying to pussyfoot around some kind of gentle way of breaking this to people, that was going to be half true because everybody in this community knew exactly what had happened.

I give Finn's family enormous credit. They were generous in their grief. And that was so helpful to the rest of us who are trying to figure out, "Where do we fit here? Where do we fit in?"

**Tara:** People just rallied around us, like a GoFundMe and a MealTrain and somewhere for us to stay for a couple of weeks. Boxes of like toilet paper and tea and bourbon. So much bourbon. And Lyle plays basketball, and I went to the games, which I can't believe now because I was in serious shock still then. And we would walk in and there would almost be like a sea parting, but not obnoxious. I can't explain it. It was just like reverence almost. That's not the right word. Reverence isn't the right word. It was just care. They'd play the national anthem, which is obviously like a big thing for baseball. And I was a mess, like sobbing every time they play the national anthem. But then, whoever I was sitting by would put their hand on my shoulder, and whether it was like a logger, or like a mom or-- people just held us.

Tom Gilbert up from Black Dirt Farms set up this bonfire where he burnt rafters from his barn, like 100-year-old, very special rafters, and hundreds of people from town came and there were snow machines and there were farmers on John Deeres singing the hippie songs. It was deep during the primaries, so politics were just really ugly at that time. Finn was so eager for that to be over just so people can have a bonfire. He used to say, "I just wish we could all have a bonfire." And there it was, and it was really beautiful. Really transcend that and really sad.

**Erica:** Finn was student body president at Hazen Union High School, and in the months before he died, he heard a story about a bell. An old bell that used to hang in the belfry at Hardwick Academy in the middle of town, before the school was knocked down in 1970, and Hazen Union High School was built right up the hill. He heard that they would ring this bell when Hardwick teams won away games so that the whole valley knew about the win altogether. Finn Rooney loved this idea, which maybe isn't surprising. He was a kid who had some notion of community being something inclusive and participatory. A verb even. He wanted to live in a town where there was a bonfire and everybody came.

**Tara:** Finn was not a fan of smartphones or the internet in a lot of ways. So, this was a way that people communicated that was different than posting it on Facebook. And he really loves that idea. He also thought that it could bring together different people in Hardwick. The whole election and stuff was really bumming him out, and he thought this was a way of everybody would be excited to hear the bell.

So, he ran for student body president, and that was sort of his main platform, was that he was going to get the bell back to Hazen, and there was, "Yeah," and actually everybody was like what-- kids didn't know about the bell, but he explained that there used to be this bell and that he was going to get the bell back. But he also didn't want to just to be for sports that he was going to make it like if somebody won a spelling bee, or if somebody was born, that they would ring the bell. We talked about it a lot at dinner. His dad says he remembers Finn being in his truck and talking about the bell, like it was just this thing. And so, then when he died, quickly, there was a lot of talk about getting the bell. It sort of took on a life of its own.

**Speaker:** Finn passed away in early January, the first week of January. And his passing just rocked the community at a level that was inexplicable. No one would have ever believed that this could have happened to Finn. So, when Finn passed, the community was in shock for quite a long time. And this memory, this dream that he had about the Hardwick Academy bell began to resonate with people.

**Erica:** It turned out some people in town didn't want to give up the Hardwick Bell. But then, Dave Perrigo got a call. There was another bell lying on the bank outside the Greensboro Town Hall. It was the bell from the old Greensboro School, which also had closed when the schools unionized and Hazen was built. And the people of Greensboro were glad to donate it to Hazen.

**Kim:** The fact that he felt strong enough that Hazan's community could use a bell that would bring the school together for all of our high points, games and graduations, just to ring out, I think that's a wonderful thing. And surprisingly no one had come up with that before.

**Erica:** This is Greensboro town clerk, Kim Greaves.

**Kim:** Everybody was supportive of having our bell taken care of in a way that obviously we had not done. And I mean, it's got a wicked beautiful tone, and I think it's going to be spectacular. As old as it is, it's an incredible tone. So, it's going to-- hopefully, all the games and the graduations that will ring forever and it will be restored to its glory.

**Alex:** My truck is an '83 Chevy K-30. It's a single-cab long bed. It's an eight-inch lift, 40-inch tires, makes about 500 horse. It had some transmission problems recently but let's hope it holds together for today's mission. Finn wanted to bring this bell to Hazen, and Finn's family asked if I wanted to haul the bell with my Chevy. I mean it is a real sharp-looking truck, but--

**Erica:** Are you nervous?

**Alex:** Yeah, I am. I don't know if my truck's going to hold together. I got the whole town of Hardwick and Greensboro on my shoulder. So, I don't need to mess this up by any means. But if I do, if my truck does die, then Finn wouldn’t definitely appreciate that.

[background chatter]

[parade band music playing]

**Erica:** On a rainy day in the spring, people gathered in the parking lot at the Greensboro Town Hall for the moving of the bell. Baseball players, Butch and the Walden Fire Department, town clerks and farmers and the Bread and Puppet and Alex with his enormous bright red truck.

[background chatter]

[parade band music playing]

**Speaker:** Thank you all very, very much for joining us on this very special occasion here today. When we began to launch this bell project, one of the things we thought of was that we might get our own bell. We might have a bell made for us special. And then, when this bell appeared, we realized what a gift. Not a new bell, a young inexperienced bell.

[laughter]

But a bell with maturity and spirit, a bell that has rung out to the community of Greensboro throughout its history, and the bell that will become our bell in Hazen. So, we're incredibly grateful to the town of Greensboro for this. So, in our appreciation today, we would like to present this letter to the town of Greensboro.

[applause]

**Speaker:** Dear Greensboro Selectboard and residents of the town of Greensboro, on behalf of our entire union, we would like to extend our deepest thanks to our friends and fellow union members of the town of Greensboro for your gracious gift of the former Greensboro school bell to Hazen and the entire union. The gift has allowed us to advance a dream first articulated by our former student body president, Finn Rooney, to bring a working bell back to Hazen to once again ring out over the hills and the valleys of our community. To inform, to celebrate, to unify and to heal, a theme that is tremendous part of our beloved Finn's legacy. Today, we plan to welcome your bell to its new life as our union's bell. [sobbing] We commit to caring for it in its new home and respecting its great history as it begins its new life and mission to once again and into perpetuity sound its golden tone across our beloved greater community. Thank you.

[applause]

[parade band music playing]

[background chatter]

**Speaker:** If you would like to motivate and inspire this group of people with the revving of your truck, [laughs] [crosstalk] that'd be cool. That will get people like mobilized and realizing that we're about to go.

**Speaker:** All the fire trucks are already down there.

[engine starts]

[parade band music playing]

**Erica:** Alex and Lyle and a few other guys loaded the bell into the back of Alex's '83 Chevy K-30 and the whole party along with the Walden Fire Department and the Bread and Puppet band convoyed down to Hazen Union to deliver the bell to its next home. Just like Finn wanted.

[crickets]

**Tara:** It never felt clumsy. It was so not clumsy in a town that maybe a lot of people consider clumsy, and sort of Hardwick. I mean, there's all sorts of jokes about Hardwick. It was sort of that idea of Hardwick that was actually the most beautiful, real human experience of my entire life. I'd walk to go to my mechanic and he was sobbing and like, "Can I change your oil?" [chuckles] Or like the diner has a sandwich named after him. The one-year anniversary, there were people making snowflakes with his name on them and taking them all around town. The bell. [sobbing]

[wind and rain pouring]

He came home. I was on the couch. Normally, as soon as either of the boys come in, I would check in with them. Look at their face and ask them how their day was. They very rarely even got up the steps without us talking for 10 minutes or something about their day. But this day was different. And his dad caught him at the door. It was winter and we needed wood for the fire. And I said, "Finn, can you grab some wood for the fire?" He said, "Yep." He went back outside and grabbed some wood for the woodstove, was coming in through the mudroom, and I said or his dad said, "Hey, do you want to go out to get something to eat?" And Finn said, "Nah, I'm not hungry." And he went upstairs. His dad and his brother and I were all sitting downstairs in the living room next to the chimney and the chimney went through Finn's bedroom. So, we were probably down there for five minutes. The sound went right down the chimney.

And it took a long time to sort of-- It probably was half a second, but in my head, I knew. And then, we all started screaming pretty much. Except Lyle, he was just standing there, "I'm just going to go get Butch. Butch will know what to do. He's on the fire squad." I went outside, it was snowing, it was beautiful. I put on whichever boots I could find, they were mismatched and one was Finn's and one was Lyle's, like BOGS. And they were both left feet. It was like I was watching it all like, I can't explain but not what-- it's not that I wasn't present. I was fully present but also watching it at the same time. I don't know if that makes any sense. But I got to the barn. They had this big floodlight on their house.

I got there and it was snowing. Sometimes, when you look up at a light and it's snowing, it's so beautiful. And I stopped screaming. I had been screaming this whole way. And I looked up at that light and it was snowing and it felt like there was no time, like at all. And the whole life flashing before your eyes thing, I guess there was a part of that because I could see Finn at all of his ages all at once. All at once. And me all at once and everybody I've ever met all at once. Like volcanoes, like dinosaurs and the Big Bang, seasons rapidly changing. Like me getting old without him, him being old like-- [uncontrollably sobbing] It kind of was like me, Finn, and God. I'd say that’s the best way I've ever described it. [sobbing] And I felt like Finn was gathering all of what was left of him, like the energy that was still everywhere because he was just such a big person. And I was sort of waiting kind of patiently almost for it to all gather and that it was like [makes buzzing sound] it just sort of got in me somehow, is how I felt it. I've explained this very few times.

It was infinite compassion for every single person that ever lived, including me and including Finn for doing this. I remember saying out loud, "Oh." [sobbing] I understood for just a second there, why we were alive and it felt like it was for each other. [sobbing]

[background chatter]

[bell tolls]

[crickets]

**Erica:** I want to thank every single person who talked with me for this show. All of these interviews were important in ways that is hard to describe. I especially want to thank Finn's mother, Tara Reese, whose openness and insights were astonishing and generous. I also want to thank my friends, Amelia Meath, Tobin Anderson, Clare Dolan, and Mark Davis, without whom I could not have made this show. And if you liked this story, please send it to people who you think might like to hear it too. Thanks a lot for listening.

[upbeat music]

**Glynn:** That was Finn and the Bell. Produced by Erica Heilman for her podcast Rumble Strip. This is a podcast you need to know about. Big thanks to Tara Reese for her insights and for her courage in the making of this show. And thanks to all the people of Hardwick and thanks as well to the Bread and Puppet Band.

Now, if you or someone you know needs support, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number is 800-273-8255.

Since this show was made, Erica and Tara and their friend, Rose, have started an organization in Hardwick called The Civic Standard, whose mission is to give the people of Hardwick plenty of excuses to get together and to make events where everyone is welcome, and everyone comes. For more about Finn and the Bell, and to read people's reactions to this show, visit *rumblestripvermont.com*. After the break, we sit down and talk to Finn's Ma. Stay tuned.

[somber music]

Welcome back to Snap Judgment. My name is Glynn Washington. We just heard the amazing audio story, Finn and the Bell, from the Rumble Strip podcast. And right now, I'm lucky enough to sit down with Finn's mother, Tara, and really just speak to her about opening up.

Thank you, Tara, for coming on Snap. I really appreciate it. Every parent that listens to your story, they have to put themselves in your place. And I'm a parent. Imagining that space that you were in and knowing myself, I know that my world would get smaller and darker. But you went the other way and you let people in. I guess the way that you dealt with this situation, was that an echo of Finn?

**Tara:** Yes. [sighs] Sorry, I'm trying to form thoughts. He was still so present. He was so present with everybody right off the bat and everybody wasn't afraid to feel his presence. And it was remarkable and then everybody knew it was remarkable. And so, then it just kept growing, and that felt like Finn. But it was like everything felt holy. A baseball game afterwards felt-- like everybody was just a little bit closer to truth.

**Glynn:** Wow. You said holy. You all set up the bell as a monument to kind of Finn's desires, his wishes. What do you feel when you hear that bell ring?

**Tara:** It's complicated. Truthfully, even the bell happening is complicated, was complicated. The bell, I actually rang it yesterday. [chuckles]

**Glynn:** Really? Why?

**Tara:** This bell because the rope is usually wrapped up but the soccer team must have won a game the night before and they hadn't wrapped it back up, and I teach at the school-- well, I facilitate a class. And the woman who I facilitate the class with, it was the anniversary of her father's death. And we were walking outside and the rope was dangling, and I said, "I'm going to ring that bell." It was the middle of the day at the school. So, I told the attendance lady, "Hey, it's not some wily teenagers ringing, it's going to be me." Then, I went out and rang it. I had never done that before. It's beautiful. When you're right underneath that bell, it's amazing. There's a whole other story after about everybody who banded together to make to get that bell refurbished and actually hung and people working together to actually make that happen was a whole other thing.

**Glynn:** That's kind of what I wanted to ask you about. One of the words that keeps coming up is 'community'. It feels like you had an embrace in a way that maybe I certainly didn't see coming. I wonder how it felt to you.

**Tara:** Yeah, I also didn't see coming. I was expecting to be ostracized, to be honest. And I don't know where that idea came from. I think, well, I know I had preconceived ideas of what kind of teenagers killed themselves if I'm honest, and I'm sorry to be blunt.

**Glynn:** You've been blunt with us this whole time. I appreciate it. You really have been. I think that's the guiding light of the story. You've told us your own truth. So, please don't stop now. I thank you. I think everybody in Snapnation thanks you for just telling the truth.

I wept with you, and we've never met before. And I laugh with you too when I think about this brilliant, beautiful boy. I've got a brilliant, beautiful boy. A ridiculous boy. I was actually with him when I was listening to some of your story, and it made me squeeze on him really, really, really, really, really, really, really tight. I felt love from your story. I felt like it gave me power to just squeeze at this big old huge kid I have and hug on him without-- there wasn't the darkness of that, and it was a gift that you gave. I want to run away from the darkness and you've let me turn a look back into it a little bit, and look at it for what it is. Did you do that before this? Was that part of you before?

**Tara:** Yes. That was sort of my way of enduring before and the way that I taught the boys. Lyle said, "You always tell us to pay attention to everything." But now, what that means is that everything that I pay attention to reminds me of Finn. I can't turn away from everything that reminds me of Finn because I would just-- I mean, a black hole would still remind me of Finn. I also think that part of the reason it turned out the way it did for me is that when your kid kills himself, I cannot-- guilt is for every motherly miscalculation, whether big or small, is pretty much unbearable. It continues to plague me, but in order to keep going, you have to start forgiving yourself, and what that did for me is also made it easier for me to forgive everybody else.

**Glynn:** Does that mean forgiving Finn?

**Tara:** I haven't gotten to the point where I'm angry with him, and that's a true statement. I think most of us have been in very dark seconds and Finn had a gun. And that wasn't his fault. That was a real-- a real-- [sighs] I always bought organic strawberries, but he had a hunting rifle. Something that makes absolutely no sense to me now. I can't even say it, it sounds so ridiculous but that's just how it was. He never even hunted. He would walk in the woods with a hunting gun, because that's what the boys around here did.

**Glynn:** You mention despair, and how so many people are going to benefit from hearing you speak so openly about your experience. It's such a gift.

**Tara:** Thank you.

**Glynn:** It's such a gift. I guess it's one of those things. No one ever wants to talk the truth about certain situations, and you actually are, and it's so rare and so honest and so true. And you also talk about the truth about despair. And I'm wondering, where's your power coming from? Where is this light coming from right now from you?

**Tara:** I have amazing friends. I have Lyle who is still getting out of bed every morning and throwing a baseball. Lyle is a big part of it. Solitude. I spend a lot of time trying to figure things out. I can choose to explore what this is like, and that's what I'm doing. And I can choose to tell people because I couldn't find-- I mean, google the shit, excuse my language, out of like-- parents wanting to talk openly about what this was like, and there's not a lot out there because I looked. There are support groups and stuff, but that doesn't work for me. I'm not disparaging it. If it works for somebody else, go get them. But for me, this feels like it's my job and it's my duty to Finn. This was a spontaneous, really bad decision that we are all left with living for the rest of our lives. And that's not going to stop. It's a hard reckoning. I know that death is a universal thing that happens, and suicide is different.

**Glynn:** Well, Tara, is there anything that I haven't asked you that you'd like to talk about?

**Tara:** No. Yeah, I know I'm not the best Interviewee, I sort of--

**Glynn:** You're the most amazing interviewee of all time.

**Tara:** Thanks, there you go.

**Glynn:** Tara., I am blown away. I am honored. I am grateful. Erica made a wonderful story. I'm in audio and I hear a lot of stories. And I love this story so much. And I really, really thank you for your openness and allowing it to be made.

**Tara:** Thank you. And endless thanks to Erica and for you to be giving this for her as well.

**Glynn:** Well, I can't wait for everyone to hear it. And love to your entire family, seriously.

**Tara:** Thank you so much. Take care of you and yours as well.

**Glynn:** I'm taking care of them a lot better, thanks to you, a lot more consciously.

**Tara:** Excellent. That's all I can hope for, for everybody. And I appreciate you telling me that. Thank you.

**Glynn:** It's true.

**Tara:** Thank you.

**Glynn:** Have a good day.

**Tara:** You too. Take care.

**Glynn:** Thank you, Tara. Thank you, Erica. To learn more about Finn and the Bell, visit *rumblestripvermont.com*.

Think about where you've just been, what you've just heard, what you felt, and know that hours of amazing journeys on the Snap Judgment podcast are available right now wherever you get your podcasts.

And please know that this is not the news. No way is this the news. In fact, you could tell everyone that you care about how much you love them. You can tell them right now, right this minute, even the ones you're angry with. Especially the ones you're angry with. You could do that, and you would still not be as far away from the news as this is. But this is PRX.

*[Transcript provided by SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription]*