Welcome back, this is Jen Lee the host of I Need Blue. Today is Episode 10 “Conquer the weapon”. It is the conclusion to episode 9 where I confront my unknown fear of guns. A fear which was instilled in me when I became a victim of an armed robbery. If you haven’t listened to episode 9, here is your chance. Visit [www.ineedblue.net](http://www.ineedblue.net). You will find other survivor stories, interviews with law enforcement all conducted in a supportive format.

Trigger warning: some episodes contain graphic content including violence, abuse, murder and may not be suitable to all listeners. Please seek help if needed.

Today I have 2 special guests: Ethan Sansoi, the General Manager of FrogBones located in Melbourne, FL and Freddie Von Mach an Army veteran, certified NRA Pistol and Rifle Instructor, Sig Sauer Academy Pistol Instructor, and my personal instructor who, one step at a time, has helped me conquer the fear. Stay tuned to hear their interviews.

Let’s begin today with the continuation of my experience at FrogBones Family Shooting Center in Melbourne FL.

Day 2 – 7:30 a.m. I didn’t cry this time. I drove the scenic route to Frogbones with dry eyes. There was a little knot in my stomach. Just 24 hours later, I pulled into the same parking spot. It’s amazing how different this spot felt today.

I was a few minutes early and texted Freddie to tell him I was here. He texted, “come on in”. He was waiting at the entrance door. We didn’t go upstairs this time, instead ended up at the glass counter which housed all the rental pistols. If you remember the first time I walked into FrogBones, I came in thru the restaurant entrance. I made my way down the hallway and ended up at this same glass counter. That day, there was a lot of people, muffled gun shots, someone working behind the counter.

Right now it was just Freddie and I. No muffled gun shots in the background and no one working behind the counter. I was here to live fire in the range. Freddie picked a handgun which he felt would be a good beginning option. Easy rack slide, easy to load the magazine, minimal recoil. He put a black container on the counter. The gun, without the chamber inside were placed in the bucket along with protective eye wear, earmuffs and ammunition. Safety is important and each time I visit FrogBones it is a consistent process.

We turned and were facing glass windows with a view of the range. I peaked in there knowing that is where I was headed. But first: We must wear our protective eye wear and earmuffs before entering. We then walked through 2 doors. He picked a lane. Freddie placed the gun, empty chamber, and ammunition on the counter. They were lined up in formation.

I stared down at the items before me. Today wasn’t so much about pulling the trigger as it was, the sound of a gunshot and feeling the recoil. I could feel the tears. Like a puddle on my lower lid. I was thinking if I just keep my head straight the puddle would remain there and not start running down my cheeks. Freddie saw it. He looked at me and said, “look. You are safe. I won’t let anyone hurt you.” How do I describe how those words made me feel? During the events of the robbery, there was no one there to tell me that. No one to make me believe that or even feel that, It was my job to make others feel safe. Safety was on it’s way.

The moment during the abduction that the police officers opened the door, I knew. It was the moment I felt safe. We felt safe and believed and felt no one was going to hurt us. Freddie’s words reminded me that there are good people all around us. People who want to be safe and make sure others are safe. There are way more good people than there will ever be bad. That sentiment made the tears worth it.

I had to load the magazine. It took a minute, alright quite a few minutes to remember which way to load the bullets. Sometimes the easiest things are the hardest.

I picked up the gun, the magazine and ammunition laying on the counter. I’m right-handed. I placed my index finger where it should go (not on the trigger), my other 3 fingers around the handle. The gun was on it’s side. I grabbed the magazine and pushed it into the handle of the gun. “Pull it to make sure it is secure.” I pulled down. The magazine was securely in place. “Roll it.” Freddie said. I rolled the gun about 90 degrees so I could see the chamber. I could see the bullet loaded. “Rack it.” I pulled back on the rack and released. He said,” you have to let it go so you hear a snap. That way you make sure it is in place. The gun is now live.” “Fonzie.” Said Freddie. I moved my thumb to make way for my other hand. The palm rested on the handle, my thumbs forming a single line placed just below the barrel of the gun.

I became aware of the gun in my hand. The weight. My index finger away from the trigger. The day before we talked about making a stance and how you must feel comfortable and stable. I moved my feet. “Lean forward.” I heard Freddie say. “Take aim.” So much is going thru my head. I was about to hear a gun shout, feel recoil and wonder if I was going to close my eyes, like I laughingly told my husband I might just do.

I moved my index finger and placed it on the curved trigger. “Slowly.” Freddie said. I was anticipating. My hands were sweaty. I held my breath and pulled. It was loud. The earmuffs helped, but it was loud which is to be expected. I was still standing and in my original pose. I survived the recoil. I started to breathe again. I felt the emotion as I just overcame another hurdle. My finger was off the trigger, and I set the gun down. With tears in my eyes, Freddit said “You did great! I’m really proud of you!”. I shook my head, “yes” as I was absorbing all that just happened in the past few seconds.

He brought me over a paper towel so I could wipe my eyes and hands dry. “Let’s try it again.” I picked up the gun and followed the same steps. I did a sequence of shooting 5 bullets in a row. “Bring it in.” I brought my outstretched arms into my chest, the gun position never moving. “Now what if someone is coming at you. You don’t want them to grab the gun so you bring it in. Now shoot.” Freddie said. I shot. It made sense. I moved 2 steps to the side and shot. And back the other way. I was being introduced to the basics.

We only scheduled an hour today which was good. You go from adrenaline, to feeling overwhelmed, to tired. “You did good today! You should be so proud of yourself!” said Freddie. I said, “I am” with a smile on my face. Everything was put back in the black container as it was supposed to be. We walked out to the glass counter. “Here I’ll walk you out.” We were half way to my car and Freddie says, “ I bet you feel like a huge weight has been lifted off your shoulders.” I said, “you know what. I do. Thank you for your help.”

I realized fear comes in layers. And I just shed another one!

I had one more hurdle to face; shooting around other people and hearing multiple gunshots in the same room. A few days later I returned to the range with my husband. We walked in the range, glasses on, earmuffs, black container filled with our stuff.

Immediately, I jumped. And jumped again from the sound of the gunshots. We made it to our lane. My husband laid out our stuff, hung the target and helped me get situated. It was good practice to see how much I remember from a few days prior.

My husband is an experienced gun owner and he tried to help me. I jumped again from the noise. I was slightly shaking and slowly put down the gun and fought back tears. They won. I’m glad we were in the last lane because I didn’t want anyone to see me. “We can go if you want?” my husband said. “No, I want to do this.” I shot a few more times until I started to lose my focus. We called it a day. I would get over this hurdle. One step at a time.

We visited again on Sunday. My sister came along. She too loves guns and is experienced. Freddie was there and the range was quiet at that time. He came over to me and reiterated the same steps he had taught me. My husband and sister took turns hitting the target. It was my turn, and I could feel the tears. My sister was trying to console me, but I was struggling with feeling weak and I didn’t want to draw attention to me. Her intentions were genuine and special, but I knew I was the only one who could beat this!

I could feel the anxiety start to set it, then the tears. I saw Freddy. “When you start to feel uneasy you leave. Don’t let it get to this point. It’s ok. You have only been to the range a few times. You are braver than a lot of people I know and don’t forget that!” Freddie escorted me out into an office where there wasn’t any noise or crowd. He found my husband and told him to gather up our things. I was going to make it past this, but just not today.

The next day was Labor Day. I was going to try this again. My husband, sister and I were there at opening standing in line. I tried a new gun. The range was not busy. Freddie walked by, my husband and I said “Hi”. “ I’m glad to see you back so soon. Your going to do great.” he said.

Today, I could load the magazine correctly and slowly follow all the steps in my head to get this gun ready for me to aim and pull the trigger. I was feeling more confident about these steps. I worked on my stance which will take me a little time, I worked on my aim which will take even more time. But do you want to know the biggest difference about this visit? I didn’t cry. After an hour, I told my husband I was done for the day. We gathered up our things and I said to Freddie, “this is my best day yet.” “I’m proud of you.” he said.

If there is one thing greater than my fear, it is my determination.

Freddie calls me Annie Oakley – give her 3 months and she will be Annie Oakley he tells my husband. I want you to meet Freddie too. His interview will follow my next guest:

I have the pleasure of introducing Ethan Sansoni from FrogBones family shooting center in Melbourne, Florida. Thank you for being here today. And thank you for guiding me in the right direction to start this journey.

Ethan - Thank you for having me I appreciate it a lot.

Oh, absolutely. So why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and the first time you shot a gun?

Ethan - I was born and raised in Arizona, and I lived there till I was nine years old. Then we moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where my father was born and raised. I was around 9,10, 11 years old, my dad took my brother and I to a job site in the woods where he was working. He brought a 36-hunting rifle. He took a gallon of milk, walked down range, set it up, and then came back to us. He walked us through a little bit of the safety of this firearm, and then just took a shot.

Ethan - I'll never forget seeing that thing that I used every day, explode! Hearing the sound and feeling the shockwave from it. It was the first time I was exposed to live fire which I could remember. That was the first impression of a gun.

Ethan – What I appreciate about that, in hindsight, is I think I started from day one with a very healthy respect. We talked about the word “fear”, fear doesn't have to be a negative thing. Rather a healthy fear of firearms.

Ethan - I lived there till I was 22 years old. I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I was going to Penn State and working at a teaching hospital and thought I was going to go into the medical field. Every summer I would come down to Florida help build docks and boathouses and sea walls and work my butt off for my uncle. I really fell in love with small business and building and hustling. Getting out of Pennsylvania was important because I was just kind of veering off the right track and didn't have a good group of friends and was getting into some trouble. I needed a fresh start so I came to Florida. Eventually, I linked up with Ed Andre, who owns FrogBones, building things for him and found myself helping build FrogBones physically and then staying on a couple of days a week, eventually landed in the general manager position.

Great. When did frog bones open?

Ethan - They bought the building in 2012. We started demoing it, maybe 2013 at which began a two and a half year building project. April 15, I believe of 2015 is when we opened

It’s family owned.

Ethan - Ed’s father was a Marine. Ed wanted to be a seal, yet he joined the Marines to make his dad happy. He dove a lot when he was in high school and college. Ed always had a special place in his heart for the UDT, underwater, and the seals. When he built FrogBones he wanted to dedicate it to his dream.

Great. FrogBones, is more than just a shooting range. Can you tell us what also is offered?

Ethan - Ed used to own a restaurant so he had the equipment to get started. His initial vision for FrogBones was to be a range and a restaurant. When he was younger he used to do laundry at the laundromat, he would wait around and thought to himself, it'd be cool if this laundromat had a bar.

Ethan - I tell everyone to this day thought it was the craziest idea. I didn't think it was legal or wise at all. Turns out I was completely wrong, and it is legal. We don't have any issues with that because of our checks and balances between drinking and shooting. Obviously you have to shoot first, drink last.

Ethan – Yes, we have a full service restaurant and bar. It's called Double Tap grill. A lot of businesspeople come here and a lot of families. Friday night, we do prime rib and different things throughout the week. We host a lot of events; charity driven things, community driven things, political driven events. It's become quite a place that people love to come and eat and hang out. And those who are interested can wander next door into FrogBones Family Shooting Center where there's 18 lanes and a world-class brand-new training facility.

Ethan - We have Internet Sales Department offices and retail space with accessories. We’re two businesses under one roof which make up one business, FrogBones.

That's great. I'll go back to your check and balances because the first time my husband and I were there, we put our hands underneath this blue light, and I didn't know for the life of me why I had to do that.

Ethan - We try to run our business with grace in regard to employees and a lot of things because I know we've all been extended grace and need to learn. Two things, we don't offer a lot of grace inis our hand stamping. A waitress, server or bartender, they'll be told once they must stamp a hand. It doesn’t matter if it’s an employee or the owner. If you drink, you get your hand stamped with invisible ink. When you check in at the range, they must check your hand. So those two systems are important.

During our first conversation, I asked if you had dealt with any other survivors of traumatic situations. Can you share any experiences?

Ethan - Three or four years ago, before opening, a young lady and her boyfriend were at the door. I let them in because it’s not odd for people to arrive early; we offer private classes before we open. She looked nervous, like sheepish and scared. People get nervous before classes with firearms so being nervous wasn’t uncommon. I asked the gentleman, “who they were training with and is everything ok, what’s going on?” He says, “she’s actually one of the students who survived a school shooting from a few years ago.”

Ethan - She had come in over the weekend and tried to face her fear. After all those years she wanted to shoot a gun again and try to be around it. She just kind of had a breakdown. He got her off the range and encouraged her to come back when there was no one there. I suggested to come back for a private lesson; there'll be no one in the range, there'll be no firearms going off and we can move at your own pace without the pressure of everyone else.

Ethan - I remember thinking, what a brave person she was. I wish this side of the story was told. There's so many sides of the endless gun debate that never get told. I wish the complete story of everything gets told, especially in our industry when it comes to fire or firearms.

Ethan - People can feel or experience something traumatic and run from what caused the trauma and blame it on the item. Other people which I think through healing, evolve past that, and realize that's just misplaced anger, fear, and then they overcome it, which is your story.

Ethan - I'm glad you're doing this. I'm glad I don't think I've ever seen anyone in the history of FrogBones press through so much fear and anxiety and come out the other side. It didn't just take one sitting or session, it took multiple sittings and sessions. I think you're very brave for doing it. And even braver for telling your story.

Thank you so much. It has been quite the experience. One I didn't expect because perhaps like other survivors, we don't really know that we have this hidden fear inside. We think we've dealt with all of the triggers. For me, it had been a decade. I grew up around guns, I'm pro-gun, I will say this snuck up on me. And perhaps that was part of the challenge.

Ethan – That’s why we're here; the education and training of the community is something that we take very, very seriously. It's very important to us that we are an asset to our community. I'm very thankful you're telling that side of our story, it’s an important part of who we are, which needs to be communicated to the public. We're here for you. We're here for you beyond purchasing your firearm. We're here for you for moments like these, or if you just want to brush up on your skills. If you haven't touched a firearm in six months to a year, it's just good to get refreshed on the basics.

That’s what my husband did. You offer concealed carry classes, which is what my husband took as a refresher, and then private classes, which is what I took. There is something for everyone. How many trainers are at FrogBones and what type of training or experiences do they have?

Ethan - So right now we have four to five trainers. The difference in skill, experience, and training is vast. That’s what I love about it. As far as veterans, people that have been here and been training for a long time, Freddie's one of the newer people to train at FrogBones. It doesn't mean he hasn't done it throughout his life.

Ethan - We have veterans that have been training at FrogBones from day one and then people that have been actually training for 30 years at other gun ranges and they have different credentials. All of our trainers are NRA certified and are also sent through different manufacturers trainings. One of our big partners is SIG, and SIG flew down their Academy instructor who is like Boston PD, military, former Marine, and trained our guys in a week long, extensive training program. We are constantly training.

 Ethan - Each one has a strength, and I'm glad that you got to get paired up with Freddie. There's a personality side of training too which is very important and something you just can't teach. You got a good one there with Freddie. He's very patient.

Yes, that’s very true. Freddy was empathetic and that's hard for some people normally to have that type of empathy, but he did. It was amazing. FrogBones is a family shooting center, what is the youngest age allowed to shoot and are their kid training classes?

Ethan - We are thinking about offering to the community in probably 2022, where we do once a month child classes. They must be accompanied by a legal guardian or adult and open our training room. A child who is at least 10 years old, has a legal guardian with them whom they listen to, and can handle a firearm somewhat safely are allowed to shoot. The legal guardian must demonstrate they're competent and comfortable doing it too. I think in the industry, from an insurance standpoint, that is the age which has been set.

Ethan - It's a tough line for us to be honest. We want kids to get comfortable with a firearm, to fear it to understand it, and to be aware of what it can do. We can't do that. It’s not our job to train someone's child, that all lands with the parents. But we also don't want to get in the way. We don't want to turn people away. A couple of weeks ago, I was walking by the range, and I happened to look in. There is a lady with her arms around a young girl, maybe 10 years old, 11 years old, and she was training her how to shoot. I just stopped and watched it. I watched the excitement on this little girl's face. I watched the excitement on, what turned out to be her grandmother's face. And I watched the patience. This little girl was just enjoying it and very, very attentive. I thought to myself, “that's why this place exists.” I ended up finding out it was the little girl's birthday, and we took a photo with her and gave her free range cards and a bag. It was just so beautiful, and this little girl loved it. We exist because we provid a place for one generation to train the next generation. That honestly is the ideal situation because we don't have enough trainers to train everyone in Brevard county, but we love being a place where you can bring your son or your daughter or your grandson, your granddaughter and teach them the things that you've learned.

That's great. What is required to shoot at your range.

Ethan - A US citizen needs a valid ID. You rent your firearm if you don't have one. We rent eye and ear protection, or you can buy an ear protection. You can’t be intoxicated or high. You can bring your own firearms. You can bring your own ammo if its brass or we can provide all those things to you.

I remember signing a waiver.

Ethan - You do have to sign a waiver. When you rent firearms, we have several to choose from. You can test drive something and swap it for something else to try within the same visit. It’s like 10-15 dollars to rent a pistol. I always recommend trying out the firearm because there's things that happen when you're firing the firearm that you can't duplicate while you're just looking at it in the range counter, the recoil, etc.

Having the option to try out different handguns is so essential, especially to someone like me, who is not familiar, and being comfortable with your gun and understanding how it works is so important. It goes along with the confidence. Do you have Ladies Night?

Ethan - We’re going to do a lady’s event in October. We'll put the all the details on our social media on Instagram. I think on Instagram, it's FrogBonesFSC and on Facebook, you just search for FrogBones family shooting center. A bad ass instructor, Hannah, directly from SIG is going to come down here and do a lady specific weekend. She is amazing and such a wonderful human being full of energy. She's trained so many different agencies and was a former federal agent.

That sounds great. I'm going to sign up for that one. I have been to FrogBones about five times now. Each time it is just as welcoming, professional and customer focused. For someone like me environment is critical because it's easy to succumb to the fear and walk out the door and never come back. I'm thankful our community has a place like FrogBones and trainers such as Freddie, individuals like you Ethan who want to be engaged in our community and allow someone like me a chance to share my message. Hopefully let someone know out there that they are not alone. And that we are fortunate here in Melbourne, Florida, to have a place where we can go and learn how to protect ourselves. Can you share some closing remarks with us, Ethan?

Ethan - I was 22 years old. I had someone with guns around me who were roughing me up and robbing me. I had a firearm on me. It was concealed carry firearm. I remember the feeling of like, gosh, I hope they don't find this. What do I do? My life's not in danger so I don't want to pull this thing out and start shooting. It was one of those situations where I was technically robbed. The gun wasn't drawn on me, but they had guns. I was robbed and it ended well.

Ethan - I remember taking a class years later with an instructor. He was telling me I did the wrong thing. He was like no, you should have pulled your gun out taking charge of the situation, and yada yada. I just remember thinking well it ended with me losing like $10 and everyone keeping their life. Those situations can send you in 2 different situations. It can send you far from firearms or they can make you an extremist where you're like “I've got to, you know pull out my gun every time I see there's a dicey situation.”

Ethan - The reality is that everyone I know, respect, trust, and look up to in this industry live in a healthy balance. Most people live in the healthy balance. That's not the narrative on the news. That's not what you're going to read in the paper on Facebook or an Instagram. But that's the reality of our industry.

Ethan – I really appreciate people like you to just come down here experience a very friendly, normal, healthy environment that happens to have firearms in it. Just come down and whatever level you're at, whether beginner or experienced, we try to create a place for everyone. A very inclusive place. We have our good days, we have our bad days, we have some employees that have had a bad day. And hopefully we're not judged by our worst Google review.

Ethan - I'm thankful there are people like you that have had good experiences. We didn't know you were coming. We haven't treated you any different than anyone else. I'm glad that you're telling this story. It's more powerful coming from you. People listen to me, and they're like, you're just trying to pitch your business or sell something. But I'm really not. I'm happy you're telling our story from your perspective.

I appreciate the opportunity. The class started out about Florida law. So that is another benefit of taking a class because the laws are different depending upon which state that you live and the class provides some information.

Ethan - Precisely. At the end of the day, it is a lot of common sense. I remember being in that situation, I wasn't thinking about the law, just thinking you're looking at a human being and a life. You know, do you really want to take a life. Nobody, not any healthy person wants to take a life. They want to save a life. Firearms, I think are not meant to be an offensive weapon unless you're in the military. I think most firearms in America are meant to be defensive. That may be a controversial statement, but that's my perspective on it. I'm not saying that represents everyone's perspective at FrogBones. I'm just saying there's room for all kinds of perspectives here.

Ethan - I hope people come out and check out our facility. Check us out online, [www.frogbones.com](http://www.frogbones.com), or just go next door and get some wings and drink some beer. You just can't shoot that day after you drink.

Absolutely. Thank you. This is Ethan from FrogBones Family Shooting Center in Melbourne, Florida. You can find all the information on [www.frogbones.com](http://www.frogbones.com).

 Ethan, thank you so much.

It is now my pleasure to introduce my instructor and my friend, Freddie Von Mock, thank you so much for being here today.

Freddie - Thanks for having me.

How long have you been with frog bones?

Freddie: I've been with frog bones a little over a year, but I've been with them since they opened as a customer and the shooter.

Okay, great. So they saw you one day at the range and said, “hey, you're really good man. We need you.”

Freddie - I think they stuck and they needed somebody. They approached me and asked me if I wanted to be an RO.. That's how I started as a range officer.

What does it take to become a range safety officer?

Freddie - The range safety officer has to have knowledge of firearms. I already had my NRA certificate for training. I've had that for almost four years now. They knew that by me going to the range and shooting and shooting.

So how common is it for people like me, first timers, to be nervous?

Freddie - Everybody is nervous men or women the first time out. Even if they just come in for their concealed license. When we go downstairs to shoot everybody is shaking, everybody's nervous. They forget what to do. That's normal.

Freddie - There was one person a woman before you. Right after I first started, she had a big problem, emotionally like you did. Her husband was incarcerated, I guess he was some sort of jerk or used to beat her or whatever the case may be. He got hit with some heavy time.

Freddie - She got remarried, had a son. When her ex-husband got out of prison,

he looked her up, found out where they lived. He shot her husband and their baby and proceeded to cut her throat and left her for dead. She came in to talk to me and she wanted to learn how to shoot. She was probably just as emotional as you were. But she got through it. Tough woman just like you.

What do you find is the most challenging part of dealing with somebody who has more emotional trauma than the normal person?

Freddie - Well, what I like to do is step out of the picture and look into it. Everybody's their own person. You have to try to figure out what they're really looking for, how they feel. I try to adjust to that. That's all you can do. You know, they have a lot of problems they want to help. You know, now they're trying to fix themselves, at least trying to protect themselves.

 You do private classes, but you also teach concealed carry classes. My husband attended the conceal carry class and said it was very informative. Youtalk a little bit about Florida law, correct?

Freddie - yes, we go over a lot of PowerPoints for the concealed carry classes and we also do it in the privates classes. Even to do my class, I tell them that I work for them. That's what I'm doing. You're paying me, I work for you. When we go downstairs to qualify for your concealed carry, I don't work for you anymore. You must listen to what I tell you to do and be able to perform it well. Otherwise, I can't give you your certificate, you'll have to come back.

Freddie - I tell them that I'll come in on my day off and show you. You don't have to pay again. Just to make it easier for them. I want everybody to carry a gun, every law-abiding citizen. I know the police could use as much help as they possibly can. I rather see everybody but we're not going to give it to you if you're not proficient with a firearm. Absolutely not. That's not going to happen.

Freddie, I have to interject real quick because I'm really excited. On my website under the “gallery” tab there is a video of me demonstrating how to safely load a firearm. It is a testament to everything that you have taught me. Check it out ineedblue.net “Gallery” tab, scroll down to the videos and there you will find it.

How was your childhood growing up?

Freddie - My childhood growing up was horrific. If that's the right word. I was emancipated at the age 15 which means I don't need any parents to sign for me. I was already homeless. At 17, I joined the army. The only reason I joined the Army is because I had no place to live. I figured I would join the Army, or I was going to take a big rock and throw it through a jewelry store window. Either way, I wanted to get out of the cold. So I joined the army.

Freddie - I was in for six years. I got out of that started my own business, a painting contracting business in New York. And life goes on from there.

How was your relationship police officers then versus now?

Freddie - When I was a kid, I was a troublemaker, I was a bad kid. There's no question about that. The state of New York put me away for about two and a half years when I was 14.

They didn't like me because my father was a jerk when he was younger, and he was incarcerated. They all knew him, so the last name followed.

Freddie - After a while, as I grew up, and get out of the Army, I had a daughter. She actually got engaged to a friend of mine who moved in next door to where I lived. He was a cop. I became good friends with him to the point where we got into business together; we started a carpet cleaning business together.

Freddie - My daughter wound up marring him and having two kids. I got to know a lot of the cops and what they must do and what they must go through. I gained a lot of respect for those guys from there. Absolutely.

Freddie - As a kid, I didn't know any better I flunked out of school. I never even made it to junior high. But as I grew up and seeing what they must do and what they must go through with the police, absolutely nothing but respect for those guys. Absolutely.

That's great. I thank you for sharing that.

Freddie - Not a problem.

Can you tell us what a range safety officer does, what your responsibilities are?

Freddie - My responsibility in the range is to keep everybody safe from themselves and others. To make sure they don't hurt themselves and to keep the firearms pointed in a safe direction. That's what I do all day. And that's why I wear a bulletproof vest. Everybody's usually pretty cautious, but you always get that one person that doesn't have any idea what they're doing. Even people that have their concealed carry.

Freddie - Many people call me over to the booth. “Excuse me, sir, can you show me how to load this?” And I would ask have you ever fired a firearm before? “No, no, I have my concealed carry. I just don't know how to load it.” I ask, “Where did you get your concealed carry from?”

 Freddie - A lot of people go to the gun show 1-2-3 they're in line like cattle. They just marching right through. They shoot a 22 suppressed into a bucket and they are given a concealed carry. We don't do that at FrogBones. We give them the class; we make sure they know how to shoot otherwise they don't get it. They won't have to pay for the class again, but they will have to come back and show us that they're proficient with a firearm. Simple as that ain't getting it.

Yes, that's what I went through. I had to prove I know how to safely load the firearm, aim, etc.

Freddie – Yes, otherwise you’re going to end up shooting yourself or worse the wrong person. God forbid something bad was to happen. You got to know what you're doing. And even when you get your license, you still must train. You must stay on top of it. If you don't have the money to go to a range, you can practice at home with a snack table in front of the mirror. Yes, make sure the ammunitions on the other side of the house. Buy some snap caps or dummy rounds, we can't call them anymore, we have to call them nerf rounds. But by snap caps and train.

Can you give an example of a time when you had to say escort somewhat out of the range?

Freddie - Well, there's quite a few. I usually give them a second chance, depending on what the violation is. Gun out of the booth. They're done. They must leave. Absolutely. Especially with their finger on the trigger. I would say 10 times a month, there's somebody that turns and points their firearm, whether at me or one of the other RO’s with the finger on the trigger. Not because they're doing it viciously but because they're not used to it and they don't really know what they're doing.

Freddie - We don't want to be a range where everybody gets thrown out. But we do want to be a safe range.

Have you had a lot of kids in the range?

Freddie - I had quite a few kids. It's a little bit of a challenge, but it is a lot of fun. They're very nervous in the beginning but after a while they really warm up fast. They don't have any bad habits. They don't know anything. So, what you show them they listen to and they

follow instructions. They’re perfect when it comes to stuff like that. They don't have any bad habits.

When's the first time you shot a gun?

Freddie - Oh, I shot a gun when I was a kid. Yeah, as a juvenile.

I've always carried a gun. Even in New York. I used to work in the Bronx Terminal Market in New York, which is a really, really a bad part of town. And we tried to get concealed carries for the business. The owner of the business was trying. All they did was just give you the run around and run around and run around, it took forever.

Freddie - We all carried anyway, just in case. Like the saying I rather be judged by 12 than carried by six. Soon as I got my Florida license, I ran to the gun store to buy a gun. Talking to the guy I purchased from, he stuck his hand out and said, “welcome to America.”

Freddie - What a true statement. Unbelievable comparing New York to Florida. Unbelievable. Everything. I mean, even the people, even the people here are much better. I'll never go back to New York, ever. I wish my daughter would come down here. But maybe eventually, maybe eventually.

There is always talk about the gun laws. Do you think, in regards to gun violence, that it starts with redoing the gun laws?

Freddie - All the law abiding citizens have to jump through hoops to get their gun. Right?

Which is good. In one way, I think everybody should have some training before they buy a gun. That's the only thing I object to. All you need is a driver's license and to be 21. You could go into a store and buy a gun with a 3 day cool off period, then you go pick it up. It should involve some training.

What’s a cool off period?

Freddie – It’s 3 days. They do a background check on you. If you're mad at somebody, you can't go to the store, buy a gun, pick it up and walk out with it, because you'll run over to the house and shoot him dead with it. At least with the three days, it gives you time to cool off to think about what's going on.

Freddie - A lot of people want constitutional law, which means you should be able to go buy a gun, which is a good thing. But there's no training involved. There should be some sort of training for everybody. Besides that, it shouldn't be like it isn't New York, forget it. You got to give a lung and a kidney in order to get a concealed permit.

Not here.

Why do you think that is?

Freddie - I have no idea. If there were more good people with guns, the bad guys wouldn't stand too much of a chance. They don't jump through hoops to get a gun. It's pretty simple. No matter what the gun laws are, the bad guys are always going to have guns.

Freddie - I wanted a gun when I was in New York, they would give me the permit. I had one anyway. I had no training back in New York.

Is there anything else that you want to add?

Freddie - No, I think I'm pretty cool.

Thank you for joining us for such a special episode today. Thank you to FrogBones, Ethan and Freddie for being part of my journey. Thank you for listening. You can find I Need Blue podcast on our website, ineedblue.net, as well as on all of your favorite podcast platforms. I do have a private Facebook group. “I need blue podcast community.” Feel free to sign up, join, be part of our conversation. We would love to hear from you. Thank you so much.