

0.01-Seconds That Changed Women's Sports (and Her Life) Forever with @RileyGaines

October 6, 2026

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, would you ever have dreamt 20 years ago that today it would be controversial to have biological men competing against women in sports? I mean, 20 years ago, was anybody even thinking that? How did we get to that point from 20 years ago to today, where it's controversial for some people to say LeBron James should not be playing in the WNBA, or Michael Phelps should not be swimming against women in competition?

But now people are saying, "Well, if she just changes her name to Michelle or he changes his name to Michelle, he could compete." What do we say about this? What can we do about it, and how can we convince people to come back to reality? Well, I've got a very special guest I've been wanting to have on this program for a very long time. She's coming to us from some hotel in Texas right now because she's always on the road talking about this issue with a lot of clarity because she was actually affected by it in a very dramatic way, and her name, of course, is the great Riley Gaines, ladies and gentlemen.

Here she is, ladies and gentlemen. Actually, it's now Riley Gaines Barker because she got married, and she has a one-year-old now, a wonderful one-year-old. Riley, it's great having you on the program. How are you?

RILEY:

Let me tell you, this is, this is an honor. Really is. You have been someone who I have admired and looked up to and looked to for guidance on how to talk about some of these deemed cultural topics. So this is just a really big honor. So thank you for letting me join your show. This is exciting.

FRANK:

Well, just in case there are like five people in our audience that don't know your story, let's go back to 2022, University of Kentucky. You have actually made the Olympic trials in swimming. Am I correct about that?



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RILEY:

You know what I did, and I'll tell you, I first qualified for the Olympic trials when I was 15 years old.

So I was, you know, this was back in 2016. I was one of the youngest people there, one of the youngest women there. And so, to understand the progression of my career, it wasn't just four years in college, of course. Anyone who's competed at a high level knows it's so much of who you are. Whether you're you know proud to say it or not, it was a large part of my identity, who I was as a person, the skill sets that I had, the characteristics that I had.

The person that I was, the friends that you have, my husband, even for crying out loud, crying out loud, he was a swimmer as well. If it weren't for competing, I wouldn't have met him and we wouldn't have our daughter now. So being able to compete at the highest level is a lifelong journey. And it's something that has of course shaped who I am. But I did. I qualified for the Olympic trials in 2015. Went to trials in 2016.

I qualified again in 2020, but then COVID. Happened, and it paralyzed the whole world. The whole world was shut down, so the Olympics was postponed until 2021. I ended up graduating college in 2022. I could have held on and competed again at Olympic trials in 2024, but I was tapping out. I was done. You know, I ended my sport in a very, very good spot.

I feel like a lot of people in a sport like swimming, where it really is so grueling. There's so much time. There's so much personal sacrifice. I mean, just for a little context, I mean, we swam six hours every single day with three of those hours being before 8 a.m. So you know it's less than enjoyable at 4:45 in the morning to be jumping into a freezing cold pool where you will then hold your breath for the next three hours and stare at the same black line at the bottom of the pool that you have become so familiar with, you don't get to talk to your friends; it's a pretty daunting sport so a lot of people finish their, especially those who swim in college.

They finished their career pretty bitter towards the sport. It's kind of just like the natural progression of it, but I ended in a really good spot. I loved my sport. I felt this immense sense of gratitude. I don't know if that came with age or what because I think most of my life it was kind of a love-hate. But towards the end, I just felt so grateful to be able to move and compete and to do it well.

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And so I was tapping out. So that last race at that national championships where unfortunately, which I know we'll get into this, we had to compete against a man that capped off for me 18 years of swimming and doing it the best that I could.

FRANK:

So you were preparing for 18 years for a collegiate title, and you had to swim against a man, and this man, who now or at the time went by Leah Thomas, his real name, his original name was what?

RILEY:

William Thomas.

FRANK:

William Thomas.

RILEY:

They're never overly original. You know, Leah is of course in William. It's always like John to June. I don't know. Never that original. If you could pick any name in the world, why would you pick something that you are clearly so desperate to try and run away from? You know what I'm saying?

FRANK:

Now he was, if I remember rightly, like nationally 400th and something among collegiate swimmers when he swam as a man.

But when he swam as a woman, what happened to him or swam in the women's competition? Obviously, still a man, a biological man. What happened?

RILEY:

He dominated the entire country of women. Your analysis, how you remember it, is exactly right. This was a man who was less than average. I mean, just to be totally frank with you, he was a less-than-average Division One male swimmer, ranking in the 400s and 500s nationally, never even remotely coming close to qualifying for national championships, which is, you know, the top 1% of the top 1% make it to this meet.

He never even got close. So then 12 months later, he would go on to win a national title, meaning you know he beat Olympians, he beat American record holders, he beat, I mean, these

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aren't scrubs. They're the most impressive and accomplished female swimmers this world has ever seen. And he beat them by body lengths. So yeah, it's when you look at it like that, you know, the sheer facts on the paper in front of us, you realize that the stance that I have taken is not one that's rooted in bigotry or hatred or any sort of phobia or ism.

It's rooted in reality and merely calling out the fact that this was not a lateral movement. This was not a man who went from ranking amongst the best of the men to now continuing to rank amongst the best of the women. This was a man who was less than average who then became the most exceptional, the most dominant, the fastest woman, of course, in air quotes, in the entire country.

FRANK:

And you actually tied him in a, was it a 200 meter? What was it?

RILEY:

It was a 200 free. Yeah, the 200 yard free.

FRANK:

Okay, you 200 free. So how did that turn out when it came to the awards? Who won? **RILEY:** Well, it is pretty rare when you're racing for, you know, a minute and 40 seconds and not even one one hundredth of a second separated us. I think that's important for those listening to understand, you know, when we're talking about our sport, it's measured in very small margins.

And generally, when you're competing at the highest level, especially in sprint events like the 50 free, you've got the top 16 finishers all placing within, you know, 2 tenths of a second. It's very small. Here he and I are, and we go the exact same time down to the hundredth of a second. Which now, looking back, you can't tell me that's not divine intervention because honestly, Frank, I'm ashamed to say, had it ended right there, you know, with us competing against each other, we tied.

Had it ended right there. I really, as a very self-aware person, I really don't think that I would have stuck my neck out or taken that initial leap of faith. For clarity, not because I ever agreed with it or ever thought it was good or fair or righteous or just or moral or safe by any means. Of course not. But I just, I think I would have been apt to carry on with the plans, the career plans that I had for myself.

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I was just, you know, it was someone else's problem at that point. I was done competing. It wasn't going to affect me anymore. I'm ashamed to say I think I would have gone that path, but that's not where it ended. You allude to the awards podium in that situation. This is what you know pushed me over that edge because we go back behind the awards podium where the NCAA official looks at both him and me, him towering over me, and this official says, "Great job, you two, but you tied, and we don't account for ties.

We only have one trophy, so we're going to give that trophy to." Him", sorry Riley, you just actually don't get one. And I remember being so taken aback in this moment, right?

FRANK:

Was there any explanation for that?

RILEY:

Well, I pushed for it. No one else had done that. I mean, we had been pretty explicitly advised: do not ask questions, do not talk to the media.

You know, we had a pretty strict set of guidelines in front of us of things we were not allowed to do and to question what we were being asked or really forced to participate in. That was one of them, but. But there was, of course, a level of just sheer frustration and betrayal, quite frankly. I felt so betrayed by an institution that I loved and that I trusted, that I dedicated my life to, that I believed had my best interests at heart. And so I asked that that dreaded question, the question no one dared ask all season.

And I said, "Why? Why are you giving the trophy to the man and the women's 200 free?" I even, you know, took it further and said, "Isn't this everything that the women's sporting category was created to prevent from happening?" To which the official, I mean, he's stumbling on his words. He absolutely was not prepared to answer this question, to be asked this question.

They didn't give him a script of what to say, and so he's, you know, "Oh well, we're just doing this in chronological order." To that I say, "Okay, chronological. What are we being chronological about? We tied. We went the exact same time. So maybe you mean alphabetical. And if that's the case, then G comes before T. Why are we giving him the trophy?" To which it was this it was this moment when the official, I mean, his face changed.

He sounded sad. He looked sad. I could tell he didn't even believe what he was about to say. And he said, "Riley, I'm so sorry. But we have been advised as an organization that when

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pictures are being taken, it's crucial that the trophy's in his hands. You can pose with this one, but you have to give yours back. He takes the trophy home. You go home empty-handed. End of story." I appreciate the honesty.

I guess it was the first ounce of honesty that that we had seen as Division One female swimmers all season up until that point. But at that point, I mean, it was so. I mean, we were told outright actually. Why what was happening was happening, and I understood it so clearly that we as women had been reduced down to like a photo op to validate the feelings and the identity and the mental health of a man at the expense of our own.

And that's when I was just no longer willing to stay silent. Call it cowardice. Again, I more so just believed someone else would say something all season. I thought it was someone else's job, like a coach or someone within the NCAA. I mean, these are people who get paid pretty glamorous salaries to defend us, to uphold the law federal law, that federal law being Title IX. I mean, I just believed it was their job to handle this, not ours as athletes; the burden shouldn't fall on us to bear but it was standing on that podium sharing my placement with a man standing eight nine inches taller than me holding this trophy, I knew I had to give back when I just had this realization of you know, Riley, how in the world can you expect someone to stand up for you if You're not even willing to stand up for you. So that's the origin story.

FRANK:

So when that happened, you tied, which is almost impossible to do, and then they did this to you. And by the way, ladies and gentlemen, if you think you're pro-women, and you think this was the right thing to do, I'm not sure how you can consider yourself pro-women. Here's a young girl that spent 18 years for this moment.

To be taken from her by a man, a biological man. What happened right after that, and then how did this? It sort of really launched you into the public eye, Riley. I mean, what did you do next? I mean, did you get an attorney? Did you just talk to the media? What happened?

RILEY:

You know, I remember at the time, knowing it was wrong, of course, we did all season, and when I say we did, it was not just me. I would argue that 95% of us on that pool deck, knew what was happening was wrong. The violation in the locker room, the unfairness in the pool, the silencing tactics that we faced.

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Ninety-nine percent of us, if not more, knew what we were experiencing was wrong. But people were terrified to say it out loud. So I knew this was wrong, but I didn't really know the best way to go about this, what to say, who to say it to. You can imagine after this, I had so many reporters, which I'll provide some context.

Swimming is not a sport that often garners media attention, right? That's not, you know, breaking news here. So, that meet was unique because we had reporters. I mean. Left-wing reporters, right-wing reporters, everything in between, who were desperate to get an athlete to say something. They tried to bait us into it, but again, we had been explicitly coached.

I actually had to go to sensitivity training where I had to learn as a 21-year-old senior in college, mind you, I had to learn how to use pronouns in a sentence and how to use the correct phrasing of she/her when talking about this man, and when I, you know, wasn't complying with this, they made me continually redo this program over and over and over again until they verbatim felt like I had been properly reeducated.

So there was a level of fear, and I say that as someone who's always considered myself a leader and a very strong Christian first and foremost, but you know with that conservative, even still I was fearful. Anyways, I had so many reporters who had reached out to me over social media in my direct messages asking for a quote. I finally just decided that I was going to do something about this, despite being advised and coached not to.

And so I ended up reaching out to someone from the Daily Wire, responding to a woman there. And I was able to share with her everything. I told her about the trophy incident. I told her about the locker room. I told her about the unfairness of it, I think things that people otherwise hadn't really gotten the full scope of, and it was that that ultimately kickstarted the whole movement for me personally.

I was in this season of life where I was about to start dental school again, this was my last meet, I had a few months left of school undergrad, and then it was summer, and then I was going to dental school, and so I figured I would just take these next few months to say yes to any opportunity that was put before me before moving on with my life. And so that's what I did, and it's in those moments of saying yes that have led me to here where I am very obviously not a dentist now, yeah, total 180 from anything I thought that I was going to do, yeah.

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FRANK:

Well in that sense I'm glad that you tied, because otherwise we wouldn't know Riley Gaines, we wouldn't know all the good work you're doing, and we wouldn't have your voice out there for rationality and reality. There are so many people that actually quietly are going, "Yeah, you're absolutely correct, Riley", but some of them are still afraid to speak up.

It's amazing. So, this is 2022 when all this happens. You talk to the Daily Wire. Does a lawsuit ever come about? I know there was something in the news this week about that lawsuit. You're gonna have to appeal. Kind of bring us up to speed legally what happened after it and bring us up to the present day with regard to that.

RILEY:

Yes, oh my goodness. So I never, it never once crossed my mind, honestly, to sue the NCAA. I think for a couple reasons. I think first and foremost just the kind of person I am I don't generally think of myself as a victim, right, and I think when you're the one filing a lawsuit, that's how it's almost perceived. I've kind of reframed my thinking now to where I still don't view myself as a victim; I don't have that sort of victim mentality or mindset, but I understand that what the NCAA did to us institutionally it was dangerous, first and foremost, especially when we're talking about the locker room or in sports where there is, you know, physical collision.

You know, you're throwing something at one another, you're running into to each other. It's dangerous in that regard and it's harmful. It's regressive. It's deeply misogynistic. And so, it's unlawful in regard to Title IX. And so, it was two years ago where we decided myself and actually nearly two dozen other athletes across the NCAA who have been affected by these discriminatory policies they decided to sign on to this lawsuit with the basis of the lawsuit being again that the NCAA violated Title IX.

Title IX is, of course the federal civil rights law that prevents sex-based discrimination within any educational program that receives federal funds. It's a long process, right? I didn't understand this initially just the legal system, and I think it prevents a lot of people from ultimately getting involved and for pursuing litigation because it's long and it's confusing and it takes a toll on you, a toll emotionally and mentally, of course financially especially when you're suing someone like the NCAA, who has such deep, never-ending pockets; their money, it never ceases to run out.

And so all that to say the past two years we've been fighting this. The last year or so we've been in the discovery phase where the judge, of course, had access to, you know, internal conversations with, that the NCAA was having prior to this meet, the inner workings of the

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organization, and ultimately this Biden-appointed judge just came back and dismissed the case with the basis being that the NCAA is not subject to Title IX.

Of course, I disagree with the judge wholeheartedly on this. To just provide a little bit of color here to hopefully make this make sense. The NCAA, right? Look, I'll use like a diagram here. I hope everyone's watching this on YouTube or anywhere where you stream your show, Frank. Okay, you've got these 1100 member universities and schools and federally funded institutions here.

These are the schools. Well, they all got together. And all the presidents of the universities, and they said, how can we get around following the law, following federal law? Let's create a private organization, a private entity that we are going to run. Everyone who sits on the board of governors here is the presidents of the universities, but we're going to operate as a private entity, so we don't have to follow the law, especially when it comes to collegiate sports.

That's what this is. This very much still is the universities, but they've just kind of rebranded themselves as the NCAA. So that's kind of where things stand now. Of course we will appeal this. And this is actually the outcome that I was hoping for. I wanted this judge to rule unfavorably as it was perceived because that means this has a better chance of getting before the Supreme Court.

And I would love for it to be you know, deemed the law of the land that what the NCAA is doing and has done and is even currently still doing to their athletes their student athletes in particular their female athletes is harmful and grounds for real accountability.

FRANK:

Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is why conservative judges, or another example, as to why conservative judges are so important. When Title IX was passed, I want to say it was the 70s, Riley.

RILEY:

Yep, 1972.

FRANK:

'72 is what I thought. The word woman meant biological woman, and so when you pass a law and you're a conservative judge, you say, "Well, that's what the law meant when it was passed. If people want to change it now, they can, but they have to pass another law." A liberal judge

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can come along and say, "Oh, we're going to change the meaning of woman in that law," which of course then takes the capacity of the people.

It violates their will because that's not what they passed in 1972. We're going to say that a woman could be somebody who's really a biological man. That's why conservative judges are so important because they respect the law, and that's why your vote matters when you vote in the midterms or whenever you vote, because you want people in positions of authority to respect the law, not alter the law for their political ideology.

So I'm praying that your lawsuit will be appealed and it will go to the next level and ultimately, if it has to get to the Supreme Court, it doesn't even actually get have to get to the Supreme Court. If a lower court rules in your favor, that would be considered by other, in other cases. But yeah, if it does get to the Supreme Court, it's just another way of making it a little bit more cemented in our law.

So where does it go next? Do you know?

RILEY:

It'll go to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, which is a very favorable spot.

FRANK:

Conservative judges there.

RILEY:

Yes.

FRANK:

Okay, good.

RILEY:

At least more so. So this is, it's good news. But it's not just our suit the Gaines versus NCAA suit; there are several other class action lawsuits of athletes suing the NCAA.

There's one out of the Mountain West Conference. There's an Ivy League lawsuit against the NCAA, all for their policies that allow men and women's sports. So we hear all the time how you know this isn't really happening. This whole what conservatives are vying for, it's just a solution

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in search of a problem. There are only 10 trans athletes in the NCAA. You know, you know what I'm talking about because it's constantly in my comment section.

It's constantly, constantly what we hear purported by left-wing mainstream media. It's what we hear from elected representation on the other side of the aisle when it comes to this topic. They say it's not really happening. Of course, I know that's not the case, and it's not a one-to-one, right? Again, so let's say there are 10 men competing in women's sports at the NCAA level. I know in my sport of women's swimming, that displaced 14,000 women. 14,000 women. So to act as if our fight that we're fighting isn't a worthy one, again, it's—

FRANK:

How did how does it displace 14,000? What do you mean by that?

RILEY:

One man standing atop the podium. It's not just the woman who gets second who was ultimately—

FRANK:

Oh, I see what you're saying. Okay, yeah, everybody's pushed back a spot.

RILEY:

The girl who placed ninth she's not an All-American. The girl who placed 17th she's not an honorary All-American. He ultimately took a scholarship opportunity from a woman. Him being at that national championships it took a roster spot from a woman. Him being a part of the relays that was a woman's spot to be on those relays. So that's kind of what I mean there. Yeah, it—

FRANK:

Yeah, no, yeah, the way you put it, the way you put it that way makes a lot of sense then, and not only that I've seen stats I can't remember the exact stats; maybe you know them about how many biological men have taken trophies just trophies from women in high school and college, and it's hundreds, if not thousands. I can't remember the exact number.

RILEY:

They just actually it was a report that just came out in the past couple weeks that said just gold medals, so just first place finishes, nearly 3,000 have been taken from women by men who stole them.

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So yeah, it's to say it's not really happening is entirely disingenuous and lazy, quite frankly, and it sends a very loud and clear message to women that that we don't matter, that we're not worthy of calling ourselves champions so long as a man who claims our identity wants that title. So yeah, it's, and that's just what's reported and recorded, the number is certainly much higher than that even.

I believe in that report it said in California alone it was like 611 times girls and in this case it's yes it's happening at the collegiate level, but we're talking about high school age girls and even elementary school, middle school, which, when you think about that and how perverse that really is, that means that someone out there, some parents out there likely some mom out there has decided to affirm her child's perceived identity at, what, the age of 10 years old. I mean, it's really, yeah, it's really horrible stuff.

FRANK:

It not only affects that child negatively, it affects all the other children who are affected by it when that person is not only in the classroom but in women's sports. As you said, how many people have lost scholarships because there's a man or several men participating in their sports? How many have lost the designation All-American? How many have lost relay positions? How many are down a notch? I mean it's just a ripple effect, and —

RILEY:

It is.

FRANK:

It's so important that you're standing strong on this.

AD:

Ladies and gentlemen, October 9 and 10 this weekend, the SES Southern Evangelical Seminary Apologetics Conference is going to be in Rock Hill, South Carolina, just south of Charlotte. I'll be there, Gary Habermas, also Hugh Ross and Richard Howe and others.

Check it out. Hope you can be there. And then on Tuesday, sorry, Monday, October 12th, we're going to be doing the second War on Reality session at Freedom House Church in Cornelius, North Carolina, just above Charlotte. It will be live streamed at 7:30. We're going to be talking about why politics matters and why Christians have to be engaged in it.

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Then on the 12th and the 13th, it's going to be, let's see, University of Nebraska on the 13th in Lincoln, and then Northwest Missouri University on the 14th. We're going to be doing either the War on Reality or I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist at one of those two campuses or at each of those two campuses. And then, the following weekend, the 18th, I'll be at Green Valley Baptist Church.

That's not far from Tupelo, Mississippi. So there's a lot going on. Check our calendar out at crossexamined.org and don't forget about the conversations with the faith. That's Dr. Brady Blevins is going to show you how to better evangelize people who are involved in Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and also Islam. All right, let's go back to the great Riley Gaines.

FRANK:

You also, since then, have done a lot of work with TPUSA. You've spoken when, you know, Charlie has invited you to many events. We're going to be at an event the day this podcast comes out together. We're going to be at Make Heaven Crowded tonight. If you're listening to this on Tuesday, October 6th, Riley and I and Pastor Robert Furrow and Lucas Miles, we're all going to be at the Calvary Chapel in Tucson, Arizona tonight, October 6th.

We're all going to speak. It's Make Heaven Crowded. It's really about Jesus, and I hope any of you in the Tucson area can be there. If you're not in the Tucson area, you can go to the TPUSA probably YouTube channel and see it. TPUSA Faith. It'll be on our YouTube channel, the Cross Examined YouTube channel as well. So I'm looking forward to hearing you there as well, Riley. But tell us a little bit about the incident that occurred in I think it was San Francisco State in April of 2023.

So, you are displaced or you tie this male swimmer in the 200 free. He gets the championship. You go public with it. Then you go to a campus in San Francisco to speak about this. What was the title of your talk, and then what happened?

RILEY:

Yeah, oh my gosh, you know, just an ode to Charlie really quickly because he believed in me and he had no reason to, and it was almost like a transfer of confidence.

Frank, him believing in me, it allowed me to believe in myself. He took me under his wing pretty early on and became, I mean, like a mentor to me. He was a friend to me. Obviously, technically my boss at Turning Point USA, but he was someone who I went to for any sort of advice,

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relational advice, spiritual advice, obviously anything going on in the political realm, and he, he would provide that.

And so, I, I credit so much of who I am, the platform that I have, the way that I, I interact with others, even the way that I try and think and shift my thinking, and the things that I say, I credit so much of that to Charlie and his model and his mantra and the things that he lived by, the things that he prioritized in his life, of course were an inspiration to me.

But you're right, I went to San Francisco State University, which maybe this this shouldn't have shocked me as much as it did, given the fact that it was in San Francisco. But I was there to deliver a message to, of course, their student body, community members. I knew there would be some disagreement naturally, as there is on every campus.

It doesn't matter if you're on a small private Christian school even or an Ivy League campus. It tends to be that there will always be dissenters. I was prepared for that, but I was not prepared for the pitchforks and fire that I was met with upon delivering my message. A group of protesters. First of all, it's like a classroom setting, right? So you know whiteboard behind me. There's a podium.

Seats out in the audience. There's a door at the back of the room. No windows in the room. A group of protesters rush into the room and they turn the lights off and they ambush me. So I'm fully accosted. I'm being pushed. I'm being shoved. I'm being punched in the face by these men wearing dresses. They ended up these protesters; they ended up holding me for, I mean, for ransom for, four almost five hours throughout the middle of the night, demanding that if I wanted to make it back home to see my family safely again, I had to pay them money. You might be wondering where were the police?

FRANK:

Yeah, where was security?

RILEY:

Well, we were in San Francisco, so they were being held for ransom with me. About, you know, three hours, four in this room, I'm asking the police officers, I'm like, can't you do something? Isn't it actually your job to do something? To which—

FRANK:

Don't they have a radio? Hey, we need backup here. Here's where we are.

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RILEY:

Their verbatim answer was no, we can't do anything because we're not allowed to do anything because we're not allowed to be seen as anything other than an ally to this community, or else we'll lose our jobs.

The same community who's on the other side of these doors calling these officers racist pigs for protecting a white girl like me. Anyways, it's about midnight at this point, and the dean of students shows up and begins to negotiate with the students how much I owed each of them to be able to leave. And again, there are hundreds of students in this hallway, which, the price they ultimately agreed upon was ten dollars each, which makes me mad because I think I'm worth more than ten dollars.

Anyways, we waited in this room for, like I said, almost five hours before about, I mean, it was about 40 or so officers showed up ended up forming a diamond around me the crowd never dispersed at any point we were able to push out and get out of there. But the most remarkable part about this story, I think, is what happened the next day when the vice president of student affairs at the university sent out, you know, a university-wide email to all faculty, all professors, the entire student body.

And in this email, she said, "We are so proud of our brave students for handling Riley in the manner that they did. We know how deeply traumatic her presence is on this campus, and so here's some counseling resources for you all." Take the day off of school. Just know that we see you, we hear you, we love you, we stand with you. Nowhere in this email did it condemn violence, violence against women.

Nowhere in this email did it say, you know, we uphold our First Amendment rights, the value of free speech. No, of course not. So all that to say, over the past year, if you've been tuned in, of course you you've seen it happening. I would say the past decade, the increase of violence among left-wing protesters, that wasn't necessarily a shock, I think, to a lot of people.

But over the past few years, oh, a little over a year now, we've learned that these threats, these death threats, they have the ability to manifest into reality. And that's a really scary thought. And I'll I know I'm being long-winded here. One more thing that I haven't really talked about much at all is when Charlie was assassinated.

I was about 39 weeks pregnant at the time. When I got, I don't have many moments in my life where you'll never forget where you were when you heard the news, just being you know, at

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the time, 25 years old. That was one, of course. I get a phone call. Charlie's been shot. What do you do? You open up social media of course, and I was met with this video that I hate that I saw.

I wish I never saw this horrific graphic video. I can't imagine being there in real life. I honestly, I have prayed for you, Frank, and for Mikey, and for everyone there fervently. I mean that sincerely because I could hardly stand seeing it on a phone. Anyways, I vowed to myself at this, at the time when I saw this that I was never going to do a public event again.

Again, just struggling with this dichotomy that I was experiencing where being 39 weeks pregnant. I was about to bring life into this world. You know, you were have engaged in creation, one of the most miraculous, magical things you could possibly do. One of the most joyous times of your life. But then on the other hand, you're witnessing such darkness and chaos and evil and disorder and immorality and life prematurely being taken from the world.

And I really struggled with this dichotomy, understanding how good and evil certainly do coexist, how light and dark, how bitter and sweet coexist in the world that we live in, and I, until my daughter was born, that was the stance that I had. I was never going to do that again. I'd sat right there under that tent with them on campuses before. My priority at that point was her and being the best mom that I can be for her, and I mean quite literally being alive for her, keeping her safe.

But then I'll tell you what, Frank, she was born, and you hold her in your arms, and the way that you're thinking immediately and involuntarily shifts. It was holding her in my arms that you realize to be the best mom that you can be for her does require those things. You know what I'm saying?

[FRANK]:
Yes.

RILEY: So it's yeah, it's been the past year or so. I have had to even still dig deep for courage and for strength. And for, I don't know, I guess just the ability to continue on with full steam ahead. But it's people like Charlie, of course, who paved the way for that.

FRANK:
Now, we went to Berkeley, I call it berserkly, two months after Charlie was murdered, and Antifa was there, and you probably saw what happened there.

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The folks who say they're fighting for inclusion, tolerance, and diversity, just like the folks who were at San Francisco State are nothing about tolerance. They're nothing about diversity. They're nothing about inclusion. They wanted to shut you down, just like they wanted to shut us down. Anyway, Harmeet Dhillon in the Department of Justice is now suing Berkeley for failing to protect the event.

Is that something you might pursue through them to sue San Francisco State? Because San Francisco State apparently will not protect conservatives or people that may disagree with them ideologically.

RILEY:

No, the university police actually got back and said there were there was nothing they could do. They acted as if they had launched this big investigation and it was like the day after the statute of limitations ran out, where they got back to me and said we found nothing.

It all feels by design and I am not and it feels relevant to talk about this too. I am not big on the whole conspiracy theory world, but it does feel by design, to silence and to stifle the speech of conservatives, on college campuses. These have just become a breeding ground, a hotbed for the cultural chaos that is plaguing this country, and it's all done by design and very intentionally.

So, it's something I looked into, but ultimately the school was just not really playing ball. And the statute of limitations ran out. But I did, I talked with Harmeet Dhillon early on in this, and she has been a warrior for what is real and what is true and what is good. And so I couldn't be more grateful for her.

FRANK:

All right, well, at least it's public about how ideologically bent they are. And how they're not anything like they say. They're not about inclusion. They're not about tolerance. They're not about diversity. If you don't agree with them, they will allow other people to hurt you. And that's tragic. And unfortunately, Christians have been silent for too long on issues like this, and we need to speak up to protect even women that are not Christians.

Obviously, we believe in reality. We believe men and women are different and have different capacities. And Title IX was put forth in the federal government to protect people from protect women especially from not having opportunities, and now the transgender agenda has prevented so many people, so many women from getting that opportunity.

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It's ridiculous. Now you've got the Riley Gaines podcast going on you're a contributor to Fox News You're out there speaking. Tell us about your show. Tell us about what you do on Fox News. I saw you on Fox News a couple of weeks ago. You were on for like five hours. I don't know what that was about. It was like the weekend show, and the show kept going, and there you were.

RILEY:

You know what? It's so funny because, I mean, as I've said, this is just never where I saw myself or what I wanted to do or what I felt prepared for or qualified for. Like I said, I was in dental school to be an endodontist. That's what I was actually set to specialize in, weirdly enough, which is root canals. So to say this is a 180 would be an understatement. But I think when you have real passion, which of course I have, and just the desire to speak the truth, and to speak it with kindness and with grace and with compassion and to do our best to model that Christ-like way that Christ spoke the truth.

To lead with grace always landing with the truth, I try my best to do that. When you're able to do those things, or to the best of your ability, do those things, what I have found is there's a real desperation for that, especially among young people. We're often told that it's my generation, Gen Z, that's going to ruin America but Charlie didn't see it that way, and that's not how I see it either.

I really believe that it's Gen Z that's going to save America. I think it's the generation that came before us that ultimately failed us. What I'm seeing now is people who, young people who have burning questions, questions that AI or ChatGPT or Grok or whatever these AI models can't answer. Deeper questions, questions about our purpose and our existence.

And we're finding that we're finding that in the truth of course what is what is real you talk about reality but also in our faith. We are seeing young people return to faith and to the church and opening up their Bibles, maybe buying a Bible for the first time in their lives. There is a craving for something deeper something meaningful and purposeful, so that's what I'm just trying to provide, just to the best of my ability.

I never really know what I'm doing. I just smile. I just smile, and I act like I do. It's so difficult too when you're on, you know Fox News and you're hosting these shows for like you said hours and hours at a time, and you get these breaking news stories. For example, I was on when the Pope ended up dying you know, a year ago now over a year ago now. I was like, oh gosh, I don't know much about the Pope, but I'm going to I'm gonna do my best to convey this message.

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Or even the weekend I was on not long ago where the plane crashed, the Amazon cargo plane crashed. You just kind of roll with it, and you smile and you act like you know what you're doing, and that's what I'm doing. The best I'm trying to do.

FRANK:

Well, you're doing it well, and tell us about the podcast. Tell us where people can follow you, and then we'll end. I want you to tell us what your message is for this generation. What would you say to them? But tell us where they can follow you.

RILEY:

Anywhere you get your podcasts on all socials at YouTube.com. It's just Riley Gaines show. I appreciate you for plugging that, Frank. You know, my message for young people right now. Maybe it sounds kind of like the rebellious thing to say, but I want to encourage young people to challenge authority.

Again, that sounds like a contrarian thing to say, but I have found myself in so many rooms over the past few years where people tell me that you know you're too young, you don't actually know what you're talking about. You know, just take it from us. We're the older ones. We're the ones with more wisdom and maturity and experience. You don't know anything about this. Come back to us when you do. I would just encourage young people to reject that.

to be able to argue it intellectually and morally. All of that is important of course, but challenge authority. Do it respectfully, of course. But don't let anyone tell you that you're too young. What I have found these past few years as just one person, just one, you know, 21 year-old at the time college-age girl who had no experience or you know anything that would qualify me to take the stance beyond my personal experience you can make a difference as just one person.

And to your point Frank that we made earlier; it is a cascade effect; the cliché of courage is contagious; it's really not too cliché because it's true. One person willing to stand in the gap, you might inspire three people. Those three people may respectively inspire three more people. So that would be my message to young people in particular right now.

FRANK:

Now, as we said, we're speaking at Calvary Chapel, Tucson. Make Heaven Crowded tonight if you're listening to this on Tuesday, October 6th. Where else are you going to be speaking? Where can people see you? How do they track you online to say, oh, Riley's going to be here. I can go hear her speak.

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RILEY:

Well, I would ever encourage everyone to follow Turning Point USA. Turning Point Faith. The things that they're doing over there, on campuses, in churches, before school boards, in the community, all really, really important stuff.

I'm really proud to be affiliated with Turning Point. You can follow me on my socials at Riley G. Barker on Instagram, Riley_Gaines_ on X. Riley Gaines show on YouTube.

FRANK:

All right, great stuff. Riley, I'm glad we could finally do this, and I'm glad you're out there, and I'm glad you're being bold.

RILEY:

I gotta get you on my show, Frank.

FRANK:

I'm coming soon. I gotta come on your show soon, so we'll work that out. But it's just great having you on, and I'm so glad that you tied. I, that had to be really difficult to do to tie a man into 200 free.

RILEY:

Down to the hundredth of a second. Yeah, I mean-- I would implore everyone, get your phone out right now and try and stop your stopwatch and even less than a tenth of a second. It's impossible. You can't really do it. So to not even have one one hundredth separated us.

FRANK:

That's amazing. You must have been really good—

RILEY:

Once upon a time.

FRANK:

To do that.

RILEY:

Once upon a time. Now I call myself a swammer. It's very much past tense.

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FRANK:

A swammer.

RILEY: A swammer.

FRANK:

Okay, you were a swammer. Now I gotta ask you this: you're there's no relation to you and Rowdy Gaines, is there?

RILEY:

Actually, we're cousins.

FRANK:

You are.

RILEY:

Yeah.

FRANK:

Oh, for those of you that don't know swimming, Rowdy Gaines was, I think, in 1984 gold medalist in several swimming events, and he is always the Olympics kind of color guy when it comes to swimming.

RILEY:

He is. He still commentates the Olympics and stuff, but he's a fellow SEC guy. He went to Auburn. But we are, we're cousins but I'll tell you, I actually come from a football family, so my dad played in the NFL; all my uncles played in the NFL—

FRANK:

Really, who?

RILEY:

My dad played with the Eagles my oldest, my dad's oldest brother played, gosh, I mean 15 years with the Seahawks really went on to coach with the Chargers, my dad, I mean between my dad and his brothers, I think they've covered all 32 teams, so—

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FRANK:

What's your dad's name and your uncle's name?

RILEY:

Brad Gaines, Chris Gaines, Greg Gaines.

FRANK:

Wow, amazing. That's great. You're, that's such an athletic family.

RILEY: My dad's just the last thing here because I know I'm just talking and talking, but my dad's got a really remarkable story as well, where just like a 30 second overview when he was playing in college, at he played at Vanderbilt; there was a game against Ole Miss, an Ole Miss player ended up tackling my dad ended up breaking his neck and ultimately succumbing to the injury, passing away.

But it's a really remarkable story. My dad still to this day he goes to Chucky Mullins is his name, his gravesite every Christmas. I never had my dad at Christmas. All that to say my parents, I am so grateful for them and how they raised me and the foundation that they set and how they taught me how to be a leader and to call out injustice when I see it. I'm grateful for that, so—

FRANK:

That's amazing. Your dad's name is Chris Gaines.

RILEY:

Brad Gaines.

FRANK:

Brad Gaines. All right. Well, the great Riley Gaines, Riley Gaines Barker. Thank you for being with us. Ladies and gentlemen, you got to check out Riley at Riley Gaines podcast. She's on Fox News as well, and please pray for her as she's boldly out there talking about this issue that's very controversial and, I don't know if you know this, Riley, but when Charlie was murdered, he was answering a question about trans violence. That was the question.

RILEY:

I just, I just, it's unsurprising once you've been immersed in it, you know, once you really know what you're up against, and once you have the veil lifted, but it doesn't make it any easier to

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hear or to know how to combat, as people who do believe in morality and who and who naturally want to see the good in people. It's, yeah, doesn't make it easier.

FRANK:

Well, God bless you. Thanks for all you're doing.

RILEY:

And you, Frank. Thank you.

FRANK: All right. All right, friends. It's a great Riley Gaines. Make sure you check her out. She definitely gets a second round of applause. And make sure you watch Riley this coming, well, today, October 6th. Check us out on our YouTube channel. It's Make Heaven Crowded Calvary Chapel, Tucson. All right, friends, great being with you. We'll see you here next time. God bless.

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