

Overcome the Podcast - Episode 8  
By Christian Bowman

Even though the film itself was not up to my standards to release it, the crowdfunding campaign had found its way through the internet to connect with this woman, who was just a little girl on the other side of that broken metal and shattered glass. This survivor who had lost her twin other half, this amazing woman who had the courage to reach out and contact me, after hearing my message, I still have a hard time believing it.

We connected 22 years later, after the accident.

Although we emailed each other and connected over social media and communicated through written words, it would still take almost five more years before we would talk for the first time on the telephone.

**My name is Christian Bowman and this is Overcome.**

Jenny: Hi

Christian: How you doing?

Jenny: Good, how are you?

Christian: I'm doing all right, I guess?

Jenny: You guess?

Christian: Yeah...

Jenny: That didn't sound convincing at all.

Christian: How are you doing, I know you were talking about watching a bunch of 911 calls or watching YouTube videos?

Jenny: So I went on this, I was looking at YouTube and this thing came up about real 911 calls, or 5 disturbing 911 calls, so I listened to the first one and it fascinated me so I kept listening to it all night long and I couldn't go to sleep. And I was like "Aww, maybe I should just be a 911 dispatcher." I relate to it because of the car accident. But this lady was driving her car and she and there was a huge flood that just suddenly came out of nowhere. And this dispatcher was like "Just calm down, just calm down. It's fine. You're just being like" "when is someone going to come help me" and she's like, and this lady ended up drowning. I think I'd be good at that. I think I'd be good at comforting them in that situation.

Christian: Yeah. I don't know how stressful that situation is. But I do know that some of the most stressful jobs in the world like air traffic control, maybe police dispatch...

Jenny: That's what my grandpa did that just died.

Christian: How was... how was he was he did it affect him?

Jenny: Not that I know of. I mean, he didn't really talk about his feelings or anything, but...

Christian: Well that might be a good thing, that might be a bad thing.

Jenny: Right, I'm sure it was...

Christian: If he clamped it all down.

Christian: Your grandfather was at Chicago O'Hare.

Jenny: Uh huh. Yeah.

Christian: How crazy would it be if he was actually on the flight that I flew in?

Jenny: Whoah, I never thought about that. Oh my god! Yeah, I.. you know, I have I've been listening to a lot of that. I listened to it all night long last night for some reason.

Christian: Are you ok, because that might be a little bit traumatizing to listen to.

Jenny: I know I don't know why I want to punish myself. But I just... maybe I just want to, I don't know. I don't know what. It's fascinating to me.

Christian: Yeah, to hear other people's emergencies and kind of makes you feel a little bit like, your own life isn't as bad

Jenny: Yeah, maybe. And also my, you know, my husband had a kid that died. So, right before he died, that was something that we bonded over... there was a show called... I don't remember what it was called, but we would watch it together and laugh and it was it was pretty much the same thing that I was listening to last night. And that makes me think about Patrick.

Christian: Yeah.

Jenny: I don't know. And then and then I think like, Okay, what would I do? It helps me think about like, what what would I do in that situation and Should I have done in that situation? or What will I do if I'm ever in a situation

Christian: You mean in a situation as a dispatcher?

Jenny: Yeah, like the people that are calling in.

Christian: Like the people that are calling in the emergency? Yeah...

Jenny: That's interesting to listen to over different reactions that people have like some people are just very calm and very matter of fact. And then some people are having a heart attack.

Christian: Yeah.

Jenny: That's interesting. Like... I wonder what I would do.

Christian: The responses to emergencies.

Jenny: Yeah.

Christian: When your husband's son died, was there a situation where you guys had to call the police or 911 call?

Jenny: No, because we knew it was happening. And so he was staying at his mom's house because she married some rich guy who had this Fancy mansion.

Christian: Yeah.

Jenny: And so he hadn't even. But before, before that before he got really sick. He was with us, you know, five days a week. And then he got so sick that he couldn't walk because he had bone cancer. So he had a tumor, a huge tumor in his hip. He couldn't walk. So, so like the last weeks of his life, two or so weeks of his life, he was staying at his mother's house because it was just nicer and bigger and it could accommodate him better.

Christian: How old was he? When he died?

Jenny: He was he was about the same age I was when the accident happened. He was nine. About to turn ten, nine and a half

Christian: And when the accident happened that was right before your birthday?

Jenny: Yeah... How you doing? I feel like we've been talking about me this whole time.

Christian: I'm good. I feel like you know, it's it's actually been a huge relief to, to tell this whole story. It's kind of crazy that...

Jenny: I'm gonna be honest because I did not listen to all of it because it's I have to listen to it in small pieces.

Christian: It it gets better.. like the first two episodes.

Jenny: I know.

Christian: The first three episodes are like really, really hard to because it's the accident. You know what I mean?

Jenny: Right.

Christian: And I have tried to tell the story so many times. I have tried to write books about it. I made that stupid movies, it just kind of failed.

Jenny: Really? Aww that's a shame.

Christian: Well, it didn't, it didn't live up to my state. I never released it, you know.

Jenny: Okay.

Christian: But it, but I, I have tried to, like approach the story so many times and almost every time I get, just like when we first started talking, I would get to the, to the accident. And then it was so overwhelming to deal with that, that I couldn't really move past it.

Jenny: Yes. Right. I get that. I know

Christian: And like, and when we started talking, it was... you remember when we first started talking, it was like, just tears for hours, you know? And, but then we got through it. And then we were able to keep talking and then we've developed this friendship And I think that was really important and that's kind of what helps with this situation was...

Jenny: Right.

Christian: Well it was the perfect storm? I didn't have work, summer hit, I was done with school. The only thing that I have to do is just go surfing, look for jobs and write. And Brittany has been really instrumental in kind of pushing me to open up and talk about my feelings more and..

Jenny: Oh good!

Christian: Yeah, so she's listening. She's been listening from like, not just as a subjective point of view where she knows me, but also an objective point of view. Like, how would this help someone else... if there's somebody that's going to listen to the story, if hearing this, just like listening to to the to the dispatch thing last night for you... somehow that car helps you to recalibrate how you feel about the emergencies that you've been through. And, and kind of say, Okay, I'm equalized on this playing field where I know what other people might be going through. And then you still question you're like, well, what would I do? If there was a plane crash? What would I do if there was a flood? What would I do?

Jenny: Right?

Christian: Right, but at the same time, you've... YOU have been a survivor. I've been a survivor, and we have survived some serious fucking shit. And so was that such an extreme compared to everybody else? Was that something that was abnormal? And by hearing other people's stories, it doesn't necessarily normalize it, but it does give me the ability to connect with others that have been through something and say, I can relate. And...

Jenny: Yep!

Christian: And now, I don't feel Isolated now, I don't feel like this was

Jenny: Oh it does help! It helps so much.

Christian: Yeah, it's not just my struggle, like, everybody's kind of going through a struggle on their own. Some people's struggles are a little harder. And, and I hate to say that, but it's true. You know, some some people and and that's not necessarily the case like for everyone... some people they might have what seems like a really nice easy life, but they also have their own struggles, you know

Jenny: Right. Yeah. Some people just suffer from depression because of a chemical imbalance in the brain or, you know, right...

Christian: Right. And I was I it was a really interesting... I had two friends at the same time at one point. One friend had escaped the Congo. His family was murdered, his his sister was raped in front of him. he wound up...

Jenny: What?!

Christian: Yeah, he wound up having to like, escape all these people. He made it to the United States, he wound up going to college, and nicest guy in the world... just all smiles. Every time you talk to this guy, he just like focused on the positive of life because he's seen such intense, insane shit. And then the other side of the spectrum was this girl who her mom slapped her. And that was like the worst thing in the world.

Jenny: Her mom what?

Christian: Her mom slapped her on her face when they were in an argument once and for her that betrayal from her mother. That was...

Jenny: It just destroyed her?

Christian: It destroyed her. That was the hardest thing in the world for her. And so even though this other guy who, you know his entire family was murdered, and he watched his sister get raped, and this girl who just got slapped by her mother, both of them kind of, it's like pouring sugar into water. I mean, at one point, there's a saturation point. And you can't get any more sugar water and all the rest of it just kind of sinks to the bottom. And...

Jenny: That's a good analogy.

Christian: Right. So I think that to have like, yeah, like the to operate as a human being in society and to have the ability to think cohesively and coherently you have to, you can't keep trying to stir the sugar, but every once in a while the sugar gets stirred, and it's like fuck it's muddy. You know what I mean? And it's like, is this gonna settle down? Am I going to get back to my clear sugar water kind of point or am I get stay muddy? And, and when you when you see

Jenny: What do you think is what do you think makes the difference? You know..

Christian: Like triggers? Or in terms of how much?

Jenny: Like who..., you know, like some people...

Christian: I don't know that there is a difference. I think that there's there's a situation with everybody's life where everybody has a level of trauma. Everybody has a level of tragedy that has affected them, that has shaped them. And some people's are a little bit more defined and easier to pinpoint. Other people's are a little bit more difficult to say "That was the moment" for you and I we got into a car accident when we were young and that was the fucking moment

Jenny: That's a definite... yeah!

Christian: Yeah, I said, you know what I mean? Like, it is a completely clear mdefining moment for you and I.

Jenny: Yeah.

Christian: Whereas, for some people, it may have been a long time of systemic abuse from their father or their mother or whatever it was, and... but at the same time that it is still affected them in a way that they think...

Jenny: And, well, also like the chemicals in the brain... some people people.... You know.

Christian: Yeah, the cognitive psychology and and the the chemical imbalances and everything that... the human body and the brain are incredible things and, but, but they're, you know, when it comes down to hearing the stories of other people surviving

something that, especially when it seems like it's bigger than what you went through... when you hear somebody else surviving something like a huge accident, and then they are okay. It provides hope for people who are in, in a situation where their level of trauma, even though it's just as strong for them inside their heart and their mind. It doesn't... it's not justified by society because it's not such an extreme.

Jenny: Right, right. Yes. Right. Yep

Christian: And so when you hear about these other stories about people who are dealing with people who have really been through some tragedy.

Jenny: Especially when you hear about people who have been through some tragic things...

Christian: Yeah. And then they are able to have a clear conversation and, and, and even more so they have gotten in touch with their emotions and they become more stable in their heart and their mind because of this extreme level of events. And now they're like, okay, you know, everybody else who listens to that story, it's like, holy shit. If they can do it, I can do it too. And it kind of gives me inspiration and, and that's why we watch a lot of movies, we see these, these reluctant heroes that are, you know, faced with these crazy circumstances, overcome their obstacles, and then it makes us feel a little better because we've just gone on this journey. We've seen somebody else can like, have a

tougher slice of shit than we've eaten. But everybody eats crow at one point, you know, in everybody has “Ughhhh”

Jenny: Right. Yeah.

Christian: Yeah. You know that moment. But sometimes it's hard to say “I'm, I'm fucked up because of this” when somebody else has been through something that ‘seems’ a little harder, but but it still gives them it still gives them hope. And I think that that's part of what this whole podcast idea for me was, has been like that.

Jenny: Ok, yeah, I like that.

Christian: Well you remember whenever I was saying that I posted up that you and I had the phone call... because it took like five years for us to actually talk on the phone. You know, and what we finally did and I, I, you know, I posted up on the on on some social... I posted up on Facebook, that Yeah, you and I had the phone call and that, you know, your forgiveness was just life changing for me. That that was something that I had not... I didn't realize how much I needed that until I had it and and then when it did...

Jenny: You always had it but I didn't tell you... I didn't know how to meet you. You always you always had my forgiveness... Since the beginning. I really looked, I looked you up many times. I looked up. I tried to reach out to you many times and... well anyway,

Christian: Well, I'm very thankful that you were able to find the Overcome trailer and Indiegogo and...

Jenny: So like every couple years, I would look you up or just look up the car accident.. And then be like, Oh, Christian Bowman. Okay, that's his name. And then I tried to find you. And so I just.. one night I said, ok, I'm going to try to find him again. And then I think I found your Facebook and we talked about... on your Facebook maybe? You talked about Overcome?

Christian: Mmm hmm.. I had the Indiegogo on the Facebook and then I had a...

Jenny: Okay that was on Facebook. Okay.

Christian: Yeah.

Jenny: And then so I wrote you a message on Facebook. And then I went to the website, and it had an email address. And then I messaged you on that... on that, I think, I don't remember.

Christian: Yeah, the next morning is when I saw it... I was walking to class and I froze and I just started crying and had to clear out before I walked in the class because I was blown away. I was like, holy shit.

Jenny: What did I say? I was just like “I was the other girl in the accident. I was the other twin...”

Christian: Yeah, you were. Yeah. You said “If you were involved in a car accident in Peoria, Illinois. I was the girl on the other car.”

Jenny: Oh, my husband's calling me. Hold on. Hold on. Can you hold on?

Christian: Yeah. yeah..

Jenny: Okay, so I guess I had to hang up on you to text him. I don't know why, but.... I haven't been drinking really.

Christian: That's good!

Jenny: Mm hmm. Yep.

Christian: Good. Good.

Jenny: I've been doing really well, actually. I just want to feel better. Well, when I when I don't drink I just feel I've worked out every day and often.. I don't feel like shit. It's great!

Christian: Yeah. Yeah, getting sober for me, kind of that also changed everything. You know, the combination of it all.

Jenny: Yeah, like the beginnings kind of sucked. But yeah. But then once you're out of it... you know, you just feel better and you have more energy and

Christian: You can think clearer. You know, sometimes, I remember fondly, how much I would enjoy numbing at all and kind of.,,, I was scared to deal with it, you know?

Jenny: Yes! I still am.

Christian: Yeah, I think well that fear... it was, it was worse than actually dealing with it.

Jenny: Right.

Christian: I had stopped drinking at one point when Bodhi was born. I stopped drinking for five years when Bodhi was born and they were some of the most productive years of my life. That's what I got on Lost. That's what I was doing Prison Break. But of course, once I started bartending again, it was, you know, game over for a while.

Jenny: Yeah. How do you not drink?

Christian: Yeah, it's almost impossible. There are few bartenders and I did continue to bartend after I quit drinking.

Jenny: That's got to be so hard.

Christian: It's not a it's not an enjoyable experience to be...

Jenny: But also, if you're sober and you look at people that are wasted... you're like "Oh, I don't want to be like that!"

Christian: That's a little what I'm concerned about you getting desensitized by doing the dispatcher kind of thing. You say you don't want to be that person that's kind of like telling somebody "You're fine" you know, but at one point, it might happen to everybody.

Jenny: You know, that was just a passing thought I.. I really don't think that would be a good thing for me... but I don't know what I want to do when I grow up. I want to do something to help people but I don't know what it is yet. Because I died too.

Christian: You died too?

Jenny: I thought I told you that... in the in the hospital.. after the car accident they... some nurse gave me way too much morphine and I died.

Christian: Really?

Jenny: Yeah. Yep. And then and I remember anything from it. I just remember waking up in the ER and then seeing the show “Wings”. Do you remember that show?

Christian: Uh huh... from the 80s, yeah.

Jenny: I remember... and this could be just a.. I don't know, maybe I don't... maybe I don't remember correctly, but I swear I remember waking up and seeing the show Wings on the TV. I don't know why there would be a TV in the ER room. But... That's what I remember from it. And then... so I woke up and then and then I heard it. And then I was like ah and then I was like “I want to go back to sleep”. And then the people being like “Get over here, she's gonna lose it!” And then the next thing I remember is waking up in a hospital bed, in the ICU with my mom and my aunt, crying over me. That was when I overdose on Morphine. So they were all crying... I could tell they had been crying. And so I didn't know what was going on. So, I didn't... But I saw that they had been crying. And I just, I remember saying “I don't want to die” and then they started crying more. And they were like “No, you're not going to die.” And then I remember the ...I don't know how long after that.... The doctor came in and told my mom, if we're going to give her this drug, she might kind of freak out or something. She might.. and then and then he gave me that he... put it in my veins and then...I just sat up and I was

like, "Get me out of here! I need to leave! When can when can we leave" and then... Am I making you feel bad?

Christian: No, no.

Jenny: Ok... And I just freaked out and started crying. I was like "Get me the fuck out of here, I can't be here anymore". I woke up at the hospital right after the accident. And I said "Is.. is Grandma dead?" and she said "Yeah" and she said... and I said "And Katie too?" And she said "Yeah". And that's it. So... so, I guess I knew... but I don't remember anything about it. Are you okay?

Christian: Yeah.

Jenny: I don't feel, can I just talk to you about it? If I were you I would feel all guilty and crap but... you know, you didn't do it on purpose. It must be so hard for you.

Christian: It took a long time to be able to accept it was an accident, you know.

Jenny: It was! It was.

Christian: Took a real long time to be able to accept that.

Jenny: I bet! I hope... I thought about you a lot. It wasn't an accident. It was an accident. It's okay, it's okay. I mean, it sucks but... I don't want you to feel like... cuz I know if I were in your position I would wanna... I don't know. It would be so hard. I'm sorry. You had to go through that.

Christian: I'm sorry too. I'm pretty lucky though. That you found me... and you know... that we've been able to actually talk.

Jenny: Yeah... I'm glad I can help you feel better about it. But it just sucks.. cuz you went through the exact same thing I did except you went through more, really. And I've always thought that, I've always thought that.

Jenny: Ugh.. stop crying... I don't know if I'm talking to you or to me. I'm talking to you.

Christian: I don't know how to thank you enough that you have been able to....

Jenny: You do not have to. You do not have to.

Christian: That you reached out and kind of... you reaching it out has changed a lot for me.

Jenny: Well, I'm happy that it did. I'm glad. Oh dear. Oh my god. I was nervous about contacting you.

Christian: When you did, you said that you'd been like kind of looking me up for a long time?

Jenny: Yeah. Yes. I had. I always wanted to let you know I have no animosity or hard feelings or anything. And that I felt empathy for you, you know? Because he went through the same things I did. Except for probably worse. That's all. So. I have wanted to contact you, for a long time.

Christian: When you did find me, was it like an immediate thing where you reached out or?

Jenny: Yes. Yeah. I remember was up in the old house, in my office... office. That word... that doesn't describe what it was.. But yeah, I was in my little room that I had to do my work and look out for similar area at this house as well. And yeah, I remember it.

Christian: Because, you'd grown up thinking that I was intoxicated from a DUI right?

Jenny: My mom always said that there was weed in your car or something and I always thought... ok, who gives a shit... I guess she thought that you were high or something but even if you were high I don't... even when I was a kid I was like.... Who cares? It... Who

cares. I know that he is struggling, like I am, you know, he's going through all the shit that I've gone through.

Christian: I thought about you guys a lot, throughout the years. I looked you up many many times. I looked you and your brother up many times again.

Jenny: You what?

Christian: I looked you and your brother up many times.

Jenny: You did?

Christian: Mmm hmm.

Jenny: Aww...

Christian: At one point I imagined that I was gonna if I would have gotten a lot of money I was gonna try to make a...

Jenny: Oh gosh...

Christian: Well, that's... that was how I... when I was young... I imagined if I made a lot of money, I was going to try to open up a foundation in you guys name... to help out.

Jenny: That's really sweet.

Christian: It never happened unfortunately. Just more and more and more shit.

Jenny: I get it.

Christian: Well, when you did find me, you said you were you were in your office. What did you think?

Jenny: I was like "Damn, he's hot". And then that was my first thought... is that bad? And then I was just like, he seems like a very... just from what I read on your profile.... I was like, Damn, I was right. He does.... He is a good guy. Because I always thought you I just always assumed that you are.

Christian: Was it hard to to send me the message?

Jenny: No. Nope. No, I was excited too. I mean, I guess I was worried about your response, but.. A little bit. But..

Christian: I think it's important for us to make sure that we... we keep in each other's lives.

Jenny: I agree.

Christian: That way. It's not just devastating every time we do it.

Jenny: Right. We're not just sitting there balling.

Christian: Yeah, just crying, you know.

Jenny: Yes, yes... I agree. I agree. Yeah.

Christian: Good, good, good.

Jenny: And it's and it's helpful on the grieving process. I feel like I never dealt with it until just recently, really? I avoided my feelings for so long. So, this is this has been very helpful, you know, to help me process everything. It's taken me what 25 years. How long has it been?

Christian: Almost 30

Jenny: Yeah.

Christian: It takes a long time to get over something like that.

Jenny: Yeah. I'm just now starting to deal with it. Is the weird thing. And I remember a counselor I went to right after the accident said that.. said something like, this might, you might just be able to face this.... you know, as an adult. You might repress everything for years and years, and it will come back up when you're older. And I didn't really believe her. But now I'm realizing that she was right.

Christian: Pretty incredible. I kind of all plays out he is.

Jenny: It is.

Christian: We adjust the best we can and try to live our lives the best we can and roll with the punches.

Jenny: Yes.

Christian: But it's really helpful to face it head on... even though it's difficult, it helps.

Jenny: Mmm hmm.. Yeah, it does. Because it's gonna come up in some way. Even if you're not facing it, it's going to come up in different ways. And affect your life somehow. So it's better to just face it head on... but it's hard.

Christian: It is. And if you don't face it head on, it comes out in sometimes destructive ways.

Jenny: Yeah, yep... it is true.

Christian: Well, I'm very thankful that you and I are able to have these conversations and have this relationship and be able to talk about it.

Jenny: Me too. Me too. I don't know that... I would be able to. I don't know if I would heal. Completely if we didn't talk.

Christian: Yeah... yeah... Well, I know you have to go get ready to hang out with the kid now...

Jenny: Yeah, I gotta get ready to go hang with a kid..

Christian: We'll touch base next Monday, how does that sound?

Jenny: Ok, sounds good.

Christian: Ok, I'll talk to you soon.

Jenny: Ok, Bye.