



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 6, 2017

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Goodness of America

Heroes of Vegas Horror

In the midst of the worst mass shooting in American history, heroes emerged to offer hope.

On October 1, gunman Stephen Paddock opened fire on an unsuspecting crowd at a country music concert at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival in Las Vegas, claiming the lives of nearly 60 people and injuring more than 500. While many fled for their lives, others sacrificed their own safety to help those around them.

U.S. Marine Taylor Winston, for example, helped to rescue more than a dozen people during the shooting. According to Fox News, Winston stole a pickup truck that he found on the concert grounds and used it to transport injured people to the hospital before ambulances could arrive on the scene.

Winston was at the concert with his girlfriend when he heard the gunshots. He told Fox News that he and his girlfriend ran for cover and hopped a fence, where they noticed a bunch of trucks. "I tested my luck to see if any of them had keys in it, first one we tried opening had keys sitting right there," he said. "I started looking for people to take to the hospital. There was just too many and it was overwhelming how much blood was everywhere."

Elsewhere on the concert grounds, concertgoer Jonathan Smith helped to save at least 30 people, despite having been shot himself. CNN reported that Smith took two bullets while rescuing injured concertgoers from the scene. "I'm not a hero," Smith told CNN. "I'm far from a hero. I think I just did what anybody would do."

"Was it smart?" he continued. "Probably not. But if someone else (was) in the shoes, and they see me, I would want them to come back and at least help me." After Smith took a second bullet, he was dragged to safety by another hero — off-duty police officer Tom McGrath, who used his fingers to stop Smith's bullet wound from bleeding. Smith recalls that McGrath never left his side and referred to him as his "brother." Both men were emotional during an interview with CNN, and they stated that they were moved by the spirit of togetherness that pervaded despite the trauma that was taking place around them.

"Through this tragedy I remember, nobody suffered alone. When people were dying there was somebody there who was holding their hands or holding them in their arms, comforting them," McGrath said. "When people had injuries, no matter how severe it was, (people were) trying to get them to safety, nobody suffered alone."

Superhero Photo Shoot

Photographer Josh Rossi of Sandy, Utah, made dreams come true for a group of local sick, young children. He dressed them up as Justice League superheroes and posed them for an epic photo shoot in July that they will never forget, thanks to a super cool memento.

"The whole idea was to take the things that are weaknesses for the kids such as cancer and other diseases and turn them into strengths," Rossi told PetaPixel. "I worked with 6 kids under the age of 8 and completed a movie poster style image for each of them."

Rossi determined which Justice League superheroes each of his subjects would be, based on their



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conditions. The custom replica costumes were valued at over \$10,000, PetaPixel reports, but each of them was created and donated for Rossi's good cause by designer Julie Whiteley.

He then edited the photos and blew them up to create movie-style posters for each child, which he hand-delivered one month later in August. The photos were donated by Nicols Photo Lab.

"The kids that my team and I chose have been through hell and back and have real superhuman strength!" Rossi wrote on his webpage. "It is exactly their weaknesses that make them strong! Together they form The Justice League!"

Kayden Kinckle is a five-year-old with omphalocele, which caused his internal organs to grow outside of his body and his legs to require amputation. According to Rossi's webpage, doctors advised Kinckle's mother to abort him, but she did not. For Rossi's photoshoot, Kinckle was dressed as Cyborg. Rossi explains his decision: "In Cyborg's younger years he was a healthy boy until he had a horrible accident. His father kept him alive by giving him robotic parts."

Three-year-old Sofie Loftus is fighting a rare cancer of the connective tissues. Loftus posed as Wonder Woman in her photo shoot. According to Rossi, Sofie is a "real fighter," just like Wonder Woman.

Teagan Pettit has just half a heart as a result of a condition known as hypoplastic left heart syndrome. He has had to undergo three open-heart surgeries and requires oxygen at night. For the photoshoot, he posed as Superman. Pettit is a huge Superman fan, so it was an easy choice for Rossi.

Two-year-old Mataese Manuma has a rare cancer called acute megakaryoblastic leukemia. But in August, he was Aquaman. Manuma's photo shoot had to be postponed because he awoke with a fever after a round of chemo, requiring another trip to the hospital. Rossi recalled his experience photographing young Manuma: "Since Mataese is so young and also weak from treatments his brother helped him out with some of the poses. In Photoshop, I had to do a little bit of stitching together such as a head here and a body there but in the end it turned out great. Mataese just like Aquaman from the movie [is] of Polynesian descent and so I thought it would be a perfect fit to be the God of the water."

Five-year-old Simon Fullmer has a rare form of nerve cancer called neuroblastoma. For his photo shoot, he was Batman, Fullmer's hero. According to Rossi, Simon is tough and deals with his condition like a grown-up. Batman is a perfect match.

And Zaiden Stolrow, a seven-year-old diagnosed with severe ADHD, posed as The Flash. Rossi admits that he was unsure if Stolrow's story fit the part of his photoshoot until he heard some of the sad details of Stolrow's experience. Stolrow's exuberance would often get him in trouble in school, and eventually his friends stopped inviting him to parties. His mother states she saw the "light leave from his eyes."

"I thought that turning Zaiden into The Flash would be perfect," Rossi said.

Rossi captured a video of each child receiving a superhero portrait. "It was amazing seeing the excitement on their faces!" he said.

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