

GREG SIMPSON: Growing up,

I was a pretty good kid. I did well in school, and I wasn't into drugs so my parents didn't have any problems with me. I probably had my first drink during my senior year of high school. For me and my friends,

that was normal. We didn't think anything of it because we were just celebrating after a school dance or graduation. In college, I drank much more frequently. And I guess I could say I became a little reckless. But I was in college, and that's what we all expected of each other. Don't get me wrong, I

didn't hurt anybody. But I could have. I lucked out my junior year in

college when that cop didn't give me a DUI, just a warning. That wasn't the first or the

last time I drove when I shouldn't have, though. So anyway, that was college. When I graduated, I met

my wife, Tanya. And eventually, we were able to do all the normal things that most young married couples

do because I had a decent job as a paramedic. I was good, too. Always had a knack for

helping people. Anyway, you can't imagine the kinds of things that you see while on the job in the middle of one of the most dangerous cities. Crime doesn't stop and neither

do the injuries. We had to help them. I could be working on a guy in

the middle of the road, giving them CPR, and I would have to

look over my shoulder and make sure there wasn't  
someone else  
who might fire another shot. Even when I was able to  
help  
that person, there was another one, and then another  
one. Some the same, some different. Every day was a different  
made me  
day, but it was intense nonetheless. That's what  
love the job. But after a while,  
it wears on you. You're always in this state  
of constant alert. When I would get home  
from work, I would have a drink and relax. If the  
day was a little harder  
than the last, then I just had a few more drinks. It  
made sense. And at the time, I  
wasn't worried. After my 10th year on the job,  
I had started drinking a bit even before work, just  
to take the edge off. Later on, I even started  
keeping  
a flask in my coat pocket just in case. Well, one  
day I guess I had  
of  
drank a little too much. We were rushed to the scene  
responding to  
an accident and I was the one in charge of  
a four-year-old boy. He looked a lot like my  
son did at that age. Well, I was not really  
all there. Things were kind of in and out  
of focus because I had been drinking so much that  
day. I remember putting him  
didn't realize that his  
leg had been cut really badly. He was bleeding  
everywhere,

his fingers in my hands even all over me. But I just didn't see it. I had

look, and he looked up at me right in the eyes with this

And then, he was gone. He died because I was too drunk like he was so scared. He knew he was about to die.

no longer to realize what was going on around me. That family

too weak has a son because I didn't do my job. Because I was

alcohol instead of to handle the pressure of the job. I turned to

the day I knew reaching out to someone who could help me. That's

find a way not to that I needed to seek out a counselor. I needed to

needed only deal with the pressures of work, but now also

help in dealing with the fact that I let this little kid die. So the next day I did some

scheduled an appointment at research online and found a therapist to talk to. I

two the next available time that he had, but that was

weeks from then. I needed someone right

then and right there. I then decided to talk

better to my wife about it. She tried to make me feel

by explaining that death is a part of my job, but

the she didn't really know how to help, especially with

shocked to hear drinking aspect of my problem. She was pretty

just how bad it had gotten. Maybe she was just not

paying attention or didn't want to see it. I mean,  
everything happened,

too, gradually over the years. Still, she offered to  
take all

the alcohol that I drink out of the house, which was  
nice. But I knew that she still

planned on having a drink when she came home from  
work every

now and then or even just a glass of wine with  
dinner. Why would I have her change

her lifestyle because of my problem? I eventually  
called a friend

of mine who was recovering from an alcohol  
addiction. He gave me the number to this

treatment center, and that's why I'm here today.