

## **RACING FOR MY LIFE**

***Marty Algrim***

When I met Roland Osborne back in 1983, I never realized how influential the journey would be as life went on. I happened to meet Roland as he was just completing the first issue of Chrysler Power Magazine. We instantly hit it off and became close friends. We had many years riding the Direct Connection/Mopar wave along with many family get togethers. We did what we did to help the Mopar enthusiasts. Chrysler Power Magazine was slated to be an information "how to" magazine for Chrysler products only. From front end torsion bar tech and front end rebuilds to bypassing lean burn ignitions, and installing basic electronic ignition components. Talking torqueflights, the birth of 2 inch under chassis A-Body Headers to the Poly intake and stroker kits. Chrysler Power Nationals at LACR in Palmdale, California being filmed by Speed Vision hosted by Dallas Raines. Later on, Roland would make the East Coast Tour to cover Carlisle, Mopar Nationals and the rest.

When Roland's mother passed away, Roland inherited one half of the farm where he grew up. He chose the half that had the barn, and through a couple of years transformed the barn to a shop below and living space above. Things were going well and Roland and his family eventually moved from SoCal to the farm in Pennsylvania. It wasn't long after that when Roland's wife, Jane, had a heart attack and passed away at a very young age. Roland was devastated to say the least. In all my years with Roland, I never saw him so lost.

At that time, Roland stopped publishing Chrysler Power Magazine. We have always been believers in God and Jesus Christ, so as the dust settled, Roland decided to publish Christian Motorsports Magazine. A few years later, I met Roland in Las Vegas at, then, Mopars at the Strip, which Phil Painter created. Roland mentioned he was getting many requests about Chrysler Power Magazine: Is it still in print and where can they get it? We went to the CP trailer and discussed doing CPM again, and Roland wanted my thoughts. We talked in depth and came to the conclusion that if we did CPM again, it would be more about the car's journey, family and faith. We would obviously include tech articles with the rich Chrysler history, but focus on the people and family.

I have yet to hear a story about a car or truck and the families involved that wasn't interesting and in some cases life changing. One such story crossed my path and I'm positive it was not by accident. Recently, I had the opportunity to cover a portion of the Paul Rossi story, and was able to see the 1970 six pack Challenger number 2 being born. I followed Paul on social media when, he and John Yost with Desktop Muscle Cars went to Carlisle, The Woodward Cruse, Dodge Garage and some drag racing. In doing so, I was able to see Geoff Turk, who was doing some exhibition runs with the Blackbird Challenger. I had noticed Geoff had a young girl sitting in the Blackbird, as Geoff was explaining to this young girl how things worked. I had responded to Geoff that this girl could be a future drag racer. Geoff responded saying "She already is!" Well, this is not a typical car story, and this is where the story truly begins.

Madi Turley is a remarkable young lady. This is a story about faith. This is also a story about the journey we all take to get to a point of understanding. The beginning of this story tells how my journey with Roland, in part, gave me the insight to the Turley Family Faith. Madi's parents Mark and Kennitha Turley were gracious enough to put their story together for me to review, and after reading it, I don't believe I can put it together any better.

*Kennitha Turley*

We got pregnant with Madi in January of 2006. Immediately, we knew that something was wrong. Physically, I just didn't feel right. At our 12-week checkup, my blood test came back high for possible open spine. After several ultrasounds, the doctors said that her spine was completely closed, and they couldn't find anything. They said they knew that something was wrong, but they just couldn't figure it out. They felt it was in our best interest to abort her because, they said, even if she lived, she would have no quality of life. Madi wasn't supposed to be able to walk, talk, eat, etc....and most likely would be confined to a bed with no real knowledge that she was even in the world. We let them know

quickly that the physical condition Madi would be in was irrelevant. We were Christians and we don't believe in abortion.

During this time, I kept explaining to them that it hurt bad when Madi kicked me; not like it normally would. They said that it was normal, and the only unusual thing was the amniotic sac was small for its size and thought something might be wrong with her kidneys or bladder. They did several tests and at first, they said she didn't have a bladder. Then, they said she did have a bladder, but no kidneys. Then, they decided, she did have kidneys. It was something like this at almost every visit.

Finally, at one of our last visits to the doctor, they had flown in a specialist from Chattanooga to look at me. He did some tests and told me he wanted to put me in the hospital for a few days and give me some IVs to get me more hydrated. He told us not to be in a hurry; to go home and pack, see our son and take care of what we had to do and head to the hospital. About 3 hours later, we arrive at UT Hospital in Knoxville, and they are having a fit. They are wanting to know what took us so long to get there and do we not understand what is going on. We told them evidently; we did not know what was going on. They brought in a doctor who told me I would be staying there until I delivered Madi. She wasn't due until October 16, 2006 and this was August 9, 2006! Our son was to start kindergarten in just two weeks, and he had never been away from us except to spend the night at his grandparent's house.

Madi only made it a week and the amniotic sac became too small; they had to take her at 24 weeks. When we went into the delivery room and they started the c-section. They said my placenta had ruptured, had multiple hemorrhages, and was dying. She was only getting about 10-20 percent nutrition the whole time she had been in the womb. She weighed 2lbs 9oz and was 15 inches long. She didn't even weigh that much until I took two steroid shots to increase her weight rapidly. The doctor said that she would be gray and for us not expect to see her because they would have to rush her to the NICU. But the nurse brought her over and she was a beautiful tan color, and Mark even got to hold her. We almost lost her on the third day, but the Lord pulled her out of it. She never had to be intubated; she only had CPAP and nasal canula. She spent 66 days in the NICU.

After we brought her home, I had to quit my job and stay with her 24/7 until she was 9 months old. Madi required around the clock care with her oxygen, and tons of doctors' appointments each week. I would have to wake her up at night and feed her because the mechanism that tells her to eat had not had time to develop, and she would not wake up on her own. She also had to wear a monitor 24/7 for several months that would beep if she stopped breathing. There was a certified letter put on file with the local 911 dispatcher that if there was a hang up call from our house, they were to respond immediately due to the fact I was most likely performing CPR and couldn't talk to them.

Madi took two years of physical therapy just to learn how to walk, six years of occupational therapy, two years of vision therapy, has dyslexia, dysgraphia, and a handful of learning disorders. She also developed a blood disorder while in the NICU called idiopathic thrombocytopenia (ITP). She started seeing a doctor from hematology/oncology from Children's Hospital for her blood disorder. At that time, they were afraid that it was going to turn into aplastic anemia or leukemia. As of today, her blood counts are almost completely normal on their own, with no medicine and no cancer. They even had to put a stop to her childhood vaccinations because every time she took a shot, instead of getting immunity; she took the disease. We almost lost her the second time due to her live vaccines that she was given shortly after she was a year old. At that time, they had not stopped the vaccines and we had no idea why she got so sick every time she took one. The doctors had us to call in the family and our pastor that night because they were sure she only had about three hours to live. But again, God saw fit to spare her and show the doctors that He was in control of her life.

The third time we almost lost her was in December 2012. She contracted hepatitis from someone not washing their hands well and preparing her food, most likely at a restaurant. They had to put in a pick line and feeding tube and she had several bed sores from being in the hospital for so long. They even thought she might have to take physical therapy to walk again, but she didn't.

From kindergarten until 5<sup>th</sup> grade, she was homebound for most of each year (except for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade). Her immune system was so compromised that she couldn't be around that many children at the same time. She was continually being admitted to the hospital with pneumonia, stomach virus, etc. For example, in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, she missed 40 of the first 60 days of school due to illness. She was still having several doctors' appointments each month, and now we had also learned she was almost blind in her left eye. She was having terrible stomach problems with rectal prolapses, intussusceptions and chronic IBS. We knew at that time that we had to do something. I quit my job and came home as a full-time mom, and we started homeschooling. Since then, she is finally on grade level in school and has only been in the hospital 2-3 times since fifth grade and is currently a sophomore. She finally weighs 78 lbs and is 4'10"; probably the smallest 16-year-old drag racer out there lol.

Madi's love for drag racing started as a small child. She was probably 3 or 4 years old the first time we ever took her to watch a race. She loved the smells and the sounds. Our local car club rented out English Mountain Dragway just for fun, and she went down the track with a friend of ours in his Hellcat. She's been hooked ever since. We let her try other sports/hobbies: basketball, ballet, piano, gymnastics etc., but nothing ever stuck. She started out wanting a junior dragster, but she was so close to getting her permit and driver's license that we wanted her to wait and get a car.

In the winter of 2022, we found a 1967 Dodge Dart GT in Crossville, TN, and we purchase it from the owner of Twisted Metal Fabrications, Jimmy Allred. Madi and her dad have been tirelessly working on it all year, and now it is back at Twisted Metal getting the roll cage, brakes, shocks, etc. put in. In May 2022, we were at the NHRA competitions at ZMax Dragway in North Carolina. It was in between rounds that we saw on the jumbo screen an ad for Junior Street. As soon as we got home, I printed the application, and we scheduled a time to come to Bristol Dragway and let her get her license.

Her test was scheduled for July, and during that time we found her a 2012 Dodge Challenger R/T. It already had long tube headers, cold air intake, and a small tune on it. Obviously, she passed, and they let her compete in her first drag race that night. She came in second in her first ever drag race! After that, one of her best friends, Doug Collins, started calling her Mopar Madi and the name has stuck with her ever since. She is now on Facebook (Madi Turley), Twitter (@MadiMopar), Instagram(mopar\_madi), Tik Tok (@moparmadi06) and YouTube (Mopar Madi).

Since then, she has competed at several tracks: English Mountain in Newport, TN, Bristol Dragway in Bristol, TN, Beech Bend Dragway in Bowling Green, KY, and London Dragway in London, KY. At her last race in London, she placed in the top 5 of the late model Hemi class. At Beech Bend, Madi got the chance to meet Geoff Turk, the driver of Blackbird. She had text back and forth with him for quite a while, but never met him in person. He is really a great guy. He let her sit in and crank the Blackbird, and he was very helpful in giving her racing tips and getting her name out there. They have messaged each other back and forth quite often since then. She also keeps in close contact with David Davies of DHDR Racing and his crew mate Erik Granado, Mark Pawuk with DSR Racing, and Alan Scruggs, who also drag races with his Drag Pak. All these men have greatly influenced Madi, and she is proud to call them her friends and is their biggest cheerleader.

Future goals that Madi would like to accomplish are racing in the Factory Stock Showdown; being a teammate with Geoff Turk or maybe DSR; winning a Wally; having her first big win; competing at Roadkill Nights on Woodward Avenue; and gaining a sponsor. After high school, Madi plans on going to TCAT of Morristown and study auto mechanics.

The Lord is already using Madi so much. She was saved last year at a communion service and was baptized on Father's Day of 2021. She loves telling people her life story in the hopes that it will lead them to Christ. She is very active in her youth group at Morningside Baptist Church in Morristown, TN. She loves her youth pastor, Josh Boling and his wife Sara, very much and her whole youth group is one of her biggest supporters. We pray that the Lord gives Madi a platform in racing on a big level so that she can tell others her story, and that they, too, will know the power of Jesus and His redeeming love. At first, she was racing for her life; now, she is racing for Christ.

*Mark Turley-*

This is not really my testimony or Madi's testimony. This is our family's testimony. We always wanted a big family. We had always worked with kids in church and were always around children. We didn't have a specific number of children that we wanted, but we knew that we would like to keep them around 2 years apart of each other and a lot of them. We had our son, Josh, first. He is now 22 and he was a textbook baby. We had no problems whatsoever. We kept trying after we had Josh, but were unable to get pregnant with Madi until 6 years later.

It was funny how we found out that Kennetha was pregnant with Madi. When she was pregnant with Josh, she could not stand the smell of bacon. It would make her sick, and after she had Josh, it was gone. We are sitting at a restaurant one night, and Kennetha gets a funny look on her face. She pushes her plate back and says, "I smell bacon." I said, "do you think you are pregnant?" and she says, "I think so." We are in a huge open space, and I'm thinking I don't think anyone is eating a side of bacon this late at night. The funny part is, I got up and went to the bathroom on purpose to see if I could see any bacon. The table right beside of us had bacon bits on their salad, and that is what she was smelling. So, after we left the restaurant, we went and got a pregnancy test and sure enough she was pregnant.

I laugh and tell people that she was in her "pregnant mood." I would come home, and she would say you don't want this baby, you don't talk to anyone about the baby, and when I was pregnant with Josh, we couldn't shut you up. I knew that something was going to be wrong with the baby because God had already told me something was going to be wrong, and that I needed to be prepared. This was before we ever had any tests ran. I guess that was what was on my mind, and I never talked about it. Several of these occasions happened, I would just let her vent and finally one day I had all I could take, and I told her what God had told me. And that I wanted the baby just as much as she did, but I told her that I hadn't mentioned it because I didn't want her to worry. She said that God had told her the same thing about a month ago and she wouldn't tell me. We didn't know what was going on, but that we had to be ready.

The first sign that something might be wrong was that Kennetha's stomach never formed. With Josh, she looked like she swallowed a watermelon, but with Madi she just looked like she was overweight. Kennetha got sick one day when pregnant; coughing and vomiting. She said she felt liked something ripped in her stomach, but later felt fine. That may not have had anything to do with it, but she never forgot how that felt. We kept going to our regular doctor's appointments, and they called Kennetha one day after she had some bloodwork done. The place where I was working at that time didn't have good phone reception. When I got about a mile down the road where my phone would pick up, it started ringing and it was Kennetha. She was crying so hard I couldn't understand her. She said the nurse had called her and told her one of the tests had come back bad. She said the baby had a certain percentage of something being wrong. I told her if something were terribly wrong then the doctor would have called and not the nurse. The nurse said there was a high possibility Madi would be born with an open spine and have all these difficulties. So, I called the doctor and he said he didn't know why the nurse had called us, but yes, the numbers were high. He said he knew we wouldn't be satisfied until we came into the office and talked with him.

We met with the doctor and discussed the things that could possibly be wrong. We had already decided what would be, would be and that we weren't playing God. They called back in a few days and told us she didn't have kidneys; then a few days after that they called again and said she did have kidneys, but no bladder. Same old story again; a roller coaster of emotions. They called us in again and said she does have kidneys and a bladder, but they are not working. That is when they tried to get us to have an abortion. We told them again that we were not playing God, and we were not having an abortion. With both of our children before they were conceived, I hit the alter one day, and whether I got to hold them for one minute, see them walk across the stage to graduate high school or college, or get to walk down the aisle at their wedding; I want to give them back to God. So, I prayed a similar prayer with Madi and that God would strengthen my faith to deal with this and be ok with whatever the decision would be.

The doctor in the next town over, said they were going to fly a specialist in from UT Chattanooga to look at Kennetha. His name was Dr. Adair. He did an ultrasound. He looked at Kennetha and looked

back at the screen. He asked her if she had been losing any fluid. She told him no. Have you been bleeding any? She told him no. There was only one nurse in there with us at that time and he leaned over and whispered something to her. She left the room and came back with 4-5 more nurses. I could tell by his face there was something wrong. When Kennetha saw all the nurses, she went hysterical. They were trying to keep her calm. He said I am going to send you to UT in Knoxville and let them keep you for a few days and evaluate you. Then, they'll probably send you home and you will be on rest until the baby is due. He asked us if we had any other kids and we told him about Josh. The doctor advised me to go see Josh, pack your bags, and head to Knoxville. How do you explain to your 5-year-old that his world is about to be turned upside down? We did the best we could. We packed our bags and headed to the hospital.

When we arrived, we walked in the room and Kennetha was in front of me. Two nurses grab her and started yanking clothes off and putting on a hospital gown and hooking her up to all these monitors. I am standing there like what in the world is going on. One of the nurses came over and said "Dad are you ok?" I said, "I don't know; we don't have any idea what's going on." The nurse said, "I don't know what they did or didn't tell you, but this is something to be concerned about, and you will be here until your child is born, full term or not."

They monitored Kennetha for a few days. Our son Josh (who had never been away from home) is starting kindergarten the next week, and now he is having to deal with this, too. Josh was struggling a lot. The teachers would call us and tell us how he was doing and what a great kid Josh was. How he would share with the other kids and just a wonderful child. But they noticed that when this happened, he wouldn't play with the other kids and would just sit in a corner. During this time, I was staying with Kennetha and my parents would bring him down every night to see us. I didn't realize until that night how bad he was struggling. My mom said to Josh, "Go and tell your mom bye because we must go." He just stood there, and she told him again. Kennetha was starting to get emotional and upset, and he finally came over, and she gave him a kiss. Josh pulled away and went and stood at the door. Maybe I should and maybe I shouldn't have, but I saw how upset Kennetha was getting, and I was worried about Josh's mental health. So, Josh and I walked outside the door by ourselves. Josh would never cry as a young child. I said, "Josh; mom and I don't even understand what is going on" I said, "Are you mad at mom?" and he shook his head no. I said, "Are you mad at me?" and he shook his head no. And I said, "Do you just not understand why your mom and I can't be home?" And he broke down and started crying. I went back inside and told Kennetha that he was really struggling, and I was taking him home.

On the way, he was quiet and not saying anything. I was trying to figure out, once we were home, how to make it somewhat normal. Once home, I sat in my chair, he sat in his and I put Kennetha on loudspeaker with the phone in her chair. That seemed to help a little bit. But still, he just wasn't himself. We went to bed that night and I let him sleep with me. He was tossing and turning. And finally, he laid on top of me, chest to chest and put his face in my neck and Josh went to sleep. God showed me something that night about divorce and separation. "You and Kennetha will eventually be back together, but for most of the families, that doesn't happen and look how it affects the children. Look how it tears their world apart".

In the meantime, I am going back and forth to work, and Josh is going to school. It takes Josh a year or more to get back to normal. And they are still daily monitoring Kennetha. One day, they take her to be checked and they say there is no fluid around the baby, and we must get her out. Also in the meantime, there's a phlebotomist who would come and draw her blood. Kennetha is a very hard stick, and she would ask for her and they became very good friends. This went on for two weeks of blood work and daily checkups. This other doctor, that I believe was truly not saved, just couldn't believe how well things were going.

So, it finally came time and we couldn't wait any longer. They were going to have to take Madi by C-section. They handed me some scrubs and said you must put these on before you can come back here. They had already rushed through with Kennetha and I'm thinking I'm going to miss it, but I didn't. I'm sitting on this little stool next to her head and on the other side of her is the anesthesiologist and the respiratory doctor. They are just sitting there and having a conversation. I see one of them look at the other and nod their head towards the monitor. The other guy looked at the monitor, looked at Kennetha,

and looked back at the monitor. He said something is not right; she would be dead if it were. I looked at the bottom number and her blood pressure was 30. And again, being young and stupid, I don't know why I didn't say, hey you need to manually check it, but I didn't. Also, they told us before we went in for the C-section, we wouldn't get to see Madi; she would be blueish gray and they would need to rush her straight to the NICU. Well, that didn't happen; once born Madi was as tan as I was and they said, "Dad do you want to hold her?" I said, "sure I do." Not only was Madi tan, she was breathing at 24 weeks They took her to the NICU and put Kennetha in recovery.

At 24 weeks, most don't live. So, they said we would have to take it day by day and see how it goes. Madi had an open valve in her heart. The way they explained it is that by some miracle when a baby is born, that valve will automatically close and Madi's did not because she is not supposed to be here yet. So that's why it's still open. The doctors said they could give her some medicine to make the muscle relax and hopefully it will close on its own, but if it doesn't, then we will have to operate. So, we were only allowed to stay so many hours in the NICU; we couldn't be with her all the time. Some time went on and the valve still wasn't closed. We asked them to give it one more day. They did, but it still wasn't closed, and we asked for another day. We came back the next day and the doctor came in smiling. He said you can pat me on the back if you want to, but we know who closed that valve.

Fast forward, the first two weeks were just hell on earth. One day she is fine, the next day she had a few hours to live. And it was back and forth like this all the time. Another thing God showed me during this time, as the nurses gave us a room in an old part of the hospital for us to sleep while we were there. I hadn't slept in several days. I decided to go and try to rest. I was walking down a long hall and there was a Coke machine on the end. I just sat on the edge of the bed with the lights out. I said God I can't pray anymore. I don't know what to say or how to pray. And He said you don't have to. There are people praying for you and standing in the gap. That is why we need a church family.

At that time, in that room I was wondering if there was something I could get out of that Coke machine just to give me some sleep. And God said. that is why you don't judge the alcoholic, or the drug addict. They didn't set out that morning and say I'm going to be an alcoholic or an addict today. Yes, you have done right today; you turned to me. But those people don't have me. But God can take this tragic situation and use it to glorify him.

But back to the phlebotomist story, Madi is a hard stick like Kennetha, and when she would see Madi's name come up on the board for bloodwork, she would make sure that she would get her. Later, she would come up and tell us how Madi was doing. She was getting ready to leave one day and she stopped and turned around. She said, I don't know what it is about that baby, but I can be having the worst day and I can go and hold her, and it erases every bad thing that happened to me today. But God said, look, that baby can't help itself; it just lays there. But look at how I have used it to bless this lady. If you will just get out of the way, I can use you too.

So now I am back at work, Josh is back at school and Kennetha has come home. We were only allowed to stay so many hours a day with Madi, so we developed a new routine. I am self-employed, and started quitting work early every day. By the time I got home, Kennetha would have Josh home, so we would sit down and play and eat supper. At 9-9:30 pm we would take him to my parent's house and put him to bed. Then, we would drive to Knoxville and stay with Madi until 3-4 in the morning; come home and get a few hours' sleep and start the next day again. That was the schedule for several weeks.

As a parent, its ok to ask why, but not to the point you are worrying yourself sick. That's when it becomes a sin. One night God told me to open the Bible, and I thumbed through until I got to the story of Gideon. And God said to me, see there, that is what I'm doing. I said, Well God you are going to have to show me what you mean. With Gideon, God kept dwindling his army down until he only had a few men to fight his battle with. I showed him it wasn't his military tactics, his weaponry, the number of men he had; it was me who fought his battle and won it. So, I am going to use Madi to show this world and the doctors that I am still the great Physician, I am in control of life, and I am going to use the dumb to confound the wise. It's not their fancy tools, their PhD on the wall, it's not their medicine, but it's Me. And a lot of times when we go to see her hematologist, he could never understand how she can be doing this good. She

came home from the NICU in 66 days. She never was on a ventilator. We took her to Vanderbilt one day for a checkup and in checking her pituitary gland and they found nodules in her brain. The doctor said there is nothing to worry about, but I think I should tell you that it proves she is definitely a 24-week preemie because that is why they are there.

Job 42:5 says, "My ears have heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you." And boy have we ever seen Him.

### *Marty*

Again, to our readers, this is not the common car story. This is a success story. This is about a journey of faith in God. This is a story of how God uses us for His glory. Because of the Turley's faith, Madi is here and she is an accomplished drag racer driving her 2012 Dodge Challenger. Madi has a great future in drag racing for sure. She is a bright light and a testimony of God's handywork. God will bring us difficult challenges for sure. Not to weaken us, but to strengthen us. In the most difficult times, we can feel very much alone, but God is always there loving us and waiting for us. In a broken world where right is wrong and wrong is right, we need to seek God through his Word. God brought his only son, Jesus Christ, to die and shed His blood for us. Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins and give us salvation. John 14:6 "Jesus told him, I am the way, the truth, and the life No one can come to the Father except through me."

We all have a story and I hope this story reaches many in a positive way. This is about saving souls and building the Kingdom

Marty Ahlgrim  
Chrysler Power Magazine