

19. Marshmallow Tundra Revisited: Allyn Pierce & the Panda One Year Later

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Last year, devastating wildfires swept California, destroying the community of Paradise, California. Allyn Pierce, a local nurse from Paradise, drove his Toyota Tundra – AKA the Pandra – through the flames several times to help his neighbors and colleagues make it to safety. We check in with Allyn to learn what life is like one year later, how he's enjoying his new truck, and his experience meeting the people who built it.

Full transcript below.

<MUSIC INTRO>

Tyler Litchenberger: Hi, everyone. Before we get into this episode, we wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the multiple wildfires across the State of California. Our hearts go out to everyone who has been impacted. And we are extremely grateful to all of the firefighters and emergency workers who are working tirelessly to extinguish the flames and who are helping people to safety.

Toyota has made a donation to the American Red Cross and the California Community Foundation Wildfire Relief Fund. In addition, Toyota Financial Services and Lexus Financial Services are offering payment relief options to lease and finance customers affected by the fires, including extension and deferral assistance. We are proactively attempting to contact our customers via email and web messaging to inform them, but we also encourage affected customers to call us if you want to discuss your options. TFS customers can call 1-800-874-8822. And LFS customers can call 1-800-874-7050. You can also email TFS and LFS using the Mail Center function after logging into ToyotaFinancial.com or LexusFinancial.com

So, let's get into it, but just remember, as you listen to this episode, we will be talking about California wildfires that happened a year ago. Thanks, everyone.

Allyn Pierce: I literally got to meet people that torqued bolts on my rig. They got a bunch of people that actually worked on my truck as it went down the—as it went down the line. And I got to meet them and thank them. It was actually pretty emotional. I hope I was able to convey that to them, like how—how—how important it was to me that they did their job. It was my favorite moment, just to be able to, like, thank the people that, like, allowed me to see my family again.

Kelsey Soule: Hey, everyone. Welcome back to another episode of Toyota Untold. Today, we are revisiting one of our most popular stories from Season 1: Marshmallow Tundra. Last year, devastating wildfires swept California, leaving complete destruction in its path. And Tyler, as social media manager was scanning through our mentions, and that's where we met Allyn Pierce, a local nurse from Paradise, California who drove his Toyota Tundra, called the 'Pandora,' through the flames several times to help his neighbors out of the fire's path.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. And I'm glad you called it the 'Pandora', Kelsey, because that's what he knows it as. 'Marshmallow Tundra' is really kind of an internal name that we gave it. And so, we actually found out about his story, we just started to see my email inbox on a Saturday just kept dinging, right? And it was going. And on the weekend, I was like "This is a lot of emails. What's happening?" And we used a platform that, basically, when someone mentions us it tells us, you know, who that person is and what they're saying. And I saw all these other people saying "Hey, give him a truck, give him a truck, Toyota!" And I was like, "Who are they talking about?" And so, I went and found the original—his original post. And I was like "Oh gosh, we have to do something" So, I-

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Tyler Litchenberger: I sent off an email to the truck team here, to a bunch of different departments saying, "Hey, here's what's going on. It's kind of blowing up." And if you listen to the first episode that we did with

him back in Season 1, Episode 2, he had about a hundred followers when we started. And when I saw it on that Saturday, he had 4000 followers.

Kelsey Soule: Wow!

Tyler Litchenberger: Now, he's at about 90,000 followers-

Kelsey Soule: Yeah.

Tyler Litchenberger: ... on Instagram. And so, we just—we contacted him. We got his number from the dealer. They gave it to us. And we were able to get him a brand new Tundra. We had—knew we had to do it quickly in about ten days. It was crazy.

Kelsey Soule: Wow! So, it only took ten days from seeing the tweet to getting him a new truck.

Tyler Litchenberger: To getting him a new truck. Yeah, we gave him at the day before Thanksgiving last year.

Kelsey Soule: That's awesome.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Kelsey Soule: It's honestly so cool how we've also really made a friend for life in Allyn. I mean really, doing our best to make the best out of a terrible situation. And from what I understand Allyn is truly part of the Toyota family now.

Tyler Litchenberger: Totally.

Kelsey Soule: He comes to several of our events every year to tell his inspirational story and to show off the Panda, his new Panda. Tyler was able to catch up with Allyn at our Toyota National Dealer meeting in September where we learned what Allyn's life looks like after the fire.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yes, Kelsey. But one last thing, we have to add this disclaimer. Allyn is going to be discussing various vehicle modifications that he chose for his truck. So, everyone, please be aware that modifications on vehicles can void warranty, impact performance and safety, and they may not be street legal.

All right. Toyota Untolders. I am here with Allyn Pierce. We are one year later from the Paradise fires in Northern California. I have to thank everybody who listens to us because the Marshmallow Tundra episode was our most popular episode ever on Toyota Untold.

Allyn Pierce: Cue, applause sounds.

Tyler Litchenberger: I know. Are you excited about that?

Allyn Pierce: I—I mean, it's exciting to know that I—that really told the story.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: It was—it was pretty raw at that point.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: I think it was pretty soon after, maybe like within two weeks.

Tyler Litchenberger: What do you—what do you think hearing it back?

Allyn Pierce: I heard it back once. Once accidentally while my kid was in the car, while I was driving her to school. And I had to turn it off-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... because she started crying because-

Tyler Litchenberger: Because she's hearing the story?

Allyn Pierce: She's hearing the beginning where I'm talking about being trapped in the fire. And I had to—I had to turn it off really quickly. She got really quiet. And I-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: I forgot it was just cued up in my phone. I didn't mean to play it.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And I was just dropping her off at school. And I was like, "Oh, it got quiet. I gotta turn that off. Sorry, babe."

Tyler Litchenberger: This is not a comparison by any means, but it's like when inappropriate music comes on my phone. And I'm like, "Oh, that's not it. That's not appropriate."

Allyn Pierce: Yeah. So, I immediately turned off the—the podcast and—and cued up some Cardi B, so.

Tyler Litchenberger: Obviously. That's the next natural-

Allyn Pierce: Progression.

Tyler Litchenberger: Exactly. So, how are things in Paradise? What is it like one year later?

Allyn Pierce: Paradise. I've only been up there probably a handful of times.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: When I first went up there, probably like a month later when they were opening it up, and when I went back to the hospital, it was just kind of just destruction. Everything's flat. Trees started coming down. They were working on getting new poles up for a while there. And I think the goal is to bury all the power lines in the town, which would be amazing.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And, hopefully, get things like regular infrastructure of normal towns like sewage and stuff in the ground. Well, you know, while the—while the town is in this kind of reboot.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right. There are people that have decided to rebuild, right?

Allyn Pierce: Yeah. And I—I do hear about houses going up here and there. The water quality is still—I wouldn't even say questionable. The water quality is still isn't up to any kind of par. There's-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: There's a lot of plastic piping that got too hot and leached benzene into the—into the water system. And so, everything, you know, especially off the mains to houses does not check out.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: Our own actual house, I saw it maybe a month and a half ago.

Tyler Litchenberger: In June, yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And—but since then, they were working on—on our block at that—at that point. And they call it scraping because they just scraped everything with concrete foundation. They just grade flat.

Tyler Litchenberger: Whoa, weird.

Allyn Pierce: So, where your house was is now just the red clay under—under the house. That was probably almost weirder than seeing the house burned down. Like that—it just—now, it's nothing.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And then, you go up there like a week or a month after that, and, now weeds are growing up in those areas. So, it's like it was never there in some ways.

Tyler Litchenberger: That must be interesting.

Allyn Pierce: The whole thing about this fire is it happened after 7:00 in the morning.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: Like it was starting to hit like after that time. So, a lot of people were getting up for work. People were getting ready for school or headed to school by-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... the time, you know, any of this was happening. So, people will comment, "This is why people need to pay attention to evacuation warnings." There was no warning.

Tyler Litchenberger: No warning, yeah.

Allyn Pierce: It—there was a fire miles away. And then, there was a fire in your front yard.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah

Allyn Pierce: So, people didn't have time.

Tyler Litchenberger: It was the speed with which it moved that I think a lot of journalists wrote about and people that there was no time.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah. And in my videos, the—the fire moved sideways. You couldn't even escape the fire by going out into the street because it was blowing across the streets.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: Like not over it in embers. Like flames across the street.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: And that's why vehicles were catching on fire in the middle of the road.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: What I was trying to get to is that if this fired happened two hours earlier, then it would have been a whole different story the news would have been reporting on. I mean, we lost, like, over 80 people. Some of them like, you know, near—near and dear to people I know personally. And that was so much loss, but it could have been in the thousands-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: if it were just an hour or two earlier.

Tyler Litchenberger: Last time we recorded in the new Pandora that we gave you, we had just given it to you that day. It was a 2019 Tundra TRD Pro. And we gave you the option because you had an SR5 before, right?

Allyn Pierce: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I wanted a pro, but I couldn't get it. I couldn't get one at the time.

Tyler Litchenberger: So, we gave you the option. We said you can have a 2019 SR5, and we can work with you on all the modifications, and the specs, and stuff because you had worked done on your truck before, but it's gonna take us some time, or we can give you the Tundra TRD Pro. And then you had had offers originally from when you went from a hundred followers to 80,000 followers plus. Offers from Rockstar Garage and others to rebuild and help you rebuild it the way you wanted to. And you said, "I'll take the—the Pro, and then I'll do it." What kind of—what's happened to the Pandora Pro since?

Allyn Pierce: So, I was contacted by several, I guess, companies. And one of them is SDHQ in Arizona. They're amazing. And I actually purchased a lot of my equipment for the—for the original Pandora from them. But another one was Rockstar Garage. And they're—they're a veteran-owned company, which I like. I'm not—my—my dad's a veteran, and they're veteran. He's this driven guy. I talk to him.

I was trying to look for what kind of things can happen, like, that are positive, and we can move forward, and get new adventures, and kind of just jump start all of that. Rockstar Garage kind of came with those opportunities. And working with—with them over there, we were able to put together this kind of amazing build on the—on the Tundra where we were—we did an overland build, kind of turned up to 11, with 40-inch tires, and 20-inch—you know, 40-inch Mickey Thompson, these giant tires, Camskill wheels, like big brake kit from R1. Just—just over and over again, just these amazing brands just stepping in and wanting-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... to be a part of it, And Rockstar Garage putting it all together-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... and delivering this just kind of beast of a Tundra.

Tyler Litchenberger: And we surprised you with it too.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah. So, I was in Paradise recording with Toyota Racing.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: Those guys are amazing. And Jamie Little from Fox Sports.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And they had the OG Pandra up there. And we were just kind of walking him through how that morning and day went. Rockstar Garage drove up with the—with the new build as a surprise. And it was very intense and just a cool experience.

Tyler Litchenberger: It was a long day, I think, to begin with. And then, they surprised you with the—the Pandra Pro.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, it was a hot day, driving the original Pandra through Paradise, through the path I took that day. And it was very—yeah, it was a very intense day. And then, you know, that was just like was kind of the topper-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... you know, getting to see the two rigs like right next to each other, nose to nose, and—and seeing how they paid homage to the—to the original truck while taking the new truck in a whole—whole different direction.

People have asked me, “Is this how you would build it if you could have done it?” and I just tell them like, “I can’t afford to do what—” I mean, just the—just the fabrication alone, I couldn’t even imagine. Even the back bumper is two different companies who were cool with them being fabricated together.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: So, I got ADD Bumper that is just this awesome, like, low pro offroad bumper. And CBI Industries, they—they have their swing-aways on it. So, I have this swing-away that is holding a 40-inch tire on the back and—and a power tank on the other side that is a CO2 tank-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... for filling 40-inch tires.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And they were cool with they’re two companies being combined into one bumper-

Tyler Litchenberger: That’s awesome.

Allyn Pierce: ... which this is—I mean just—even that just is kind of like, wow, that they would—that they, you know—because this is—you know, they’re brands. They’re two separate brands

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... and with competing products at times. And they-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And they were just so cool putting it together for the—for the Pandra. And I feel so bad for people asking me about that bumper, and I'm like, "This is not a—" Like-

Tyler Litchenberger: It's not a thing, yeah.

Allyn Pierce: It's not a thing you can get for this rack at the—at this moment.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah, but I think that's kind of a metaphor for when I first met you, how you've always wanted to bring people together, right, whether it's like two companies in this bumper that doesn't exist, but like—but also, like, when you first started out, you said, "I just want to bring good things out into the world, whether it's through this, you know, Pandra Instagram handle that I have. And how can I do better?" Do you feel like that's happened?

Allyn Pierce: Well, I definitely—I've met a lot of people from this, and I'm continuing to.

Tyler Litchenberger: How's the channel doing? How's @the—yeah, @the_Pandra. Your original post that you posted got over a thousand or a hundred thousand likes.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, It's just hilarious because maybe the day—the day of the fire, I had maybe 130 followers. And then, you know, by the time you got a hold of me, it was—you said-

Tyler Litchenberger: I said 4000.

Allyn Pierce: 4000.

Tyler Litchenberger: I saw it.

Allyn Pierce: And then, it peaked out around like 81,000.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. Do patients or other people who work there recognize you and/or the truck? Because most people recognize the truck, yeah.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, I do, on time to time, get recognized, which is I'm—if you ever meet me out in public, just let me get through my awkwardness, and I promise I'll be cool at the end of it.

Tyler Litchenberger: The disclaimer. It's the Allyn disclaimer.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, there's the disclaimer. Everyone, please say hi.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: If I'm in the truck, and I don't see you, it's because I'm trying not to run over anyone because the truck-

Tyler Litchenberger: With the 40's

Allyn Pierce: Just come say hi. I'll be awkward for a moment. And then, we'll be cool.

Tyler Litchenberger: It's provided you with some cool opportunities. Toyota took you out to do some things. So, shortly after New Year's, we took your truck. We took the Pandra. And we, now, house it at our corporate headquarters in Plano, Texas. I think I prepared you appropriately that that was going to happen.

Allyn Pierce: I actually left that day that they were coming to pick up the truck

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... because it was—it was—it was a little too much for me. I think I went snowboarding. And my wife stuck around, you know, and—and, you know—and was there, and drove it out to the truck.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And then they loaded it up. And she actually shed a few tears-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... and took some amazing pictures-

Tyler Litchenberger: She did.

Allyn Pierce: ... as they loaded it up-

Tyler Litchenberger: She did.

Allyn Pierce: ... which is hilarious because she's not really represented on social media, but she got like over 20,000—20,000 likes for her one picture that I posted of hers. It was—it was a lot. It was kind of a lot to like know I was coming home to it not being there.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. But we sent you right after that to TMMTX, right-

Allyn Pierce: Yes.

Tyler Litchenberger: ... which is Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Texas. Talk about that experience.

Allyn Pierce: I want to say that's the number one coolest thing that's happened of these kind of things.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. Why?

Allyn Pierce: Because I got to—I literally got to meet people that—that torqued bolts on my rig. Like they had—they got a bunch of people that were—actually worked on my truck-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... as it went down the—as it went down the line. And I got to meet them and thanked them. It was actually pretty emotional.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: I hope I was able to convey that to them, like how—how important it was to me that they did their job-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... and that they did it with— this level that—that my own co-workers apply to like taking care of human beings because they're taking care of people's families. And—and it was—it was really moving just to see the—the attention to detail. And I was able to walk down their entire line from pressing metal, like flat-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah, stamping.

Allyn Pierce: ... flat steel into like doors and parts of cars. And then, to be able to see the people, what they did with it.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And to—to—to see all the way to testing to a finished product, and even do like a lap on their test track. Even just talking about it now, it's really hard to get out like how important it was for me to—to be there. It was—it was my favorite moment getting to—getting to—like more than famous people, and governors, and everything, just to be able to like thank the people that like—that allowed me to see my family again.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah. Another thing that we offered up is the Sonoma race was coming. And so, we said, “Hey, let’s bring the Pandra, the OG Pandra to the Sonoma race.” Fox Sports, Jamie Little, they wanted to talk to you and run a segment on you during the race, but you got to go. And—and what happened there at the Sonoma race?

Allyn Pierce: Everything happened at the Sonoma race. One of my favorite stories of the Sonoma Race is Andre got a hold of me, and he was like, “Hey, can you—can you be here at 7:30?”

Tyler Litchenberger: Andre is an internal Toyota employee on the Motorsports Team.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, awesome dude. And he’s like, “Can—can you be here at 7:30?” He was like, “We want to get you on a pace car lab.” I’m like, “I’ll be there at 7:25.” And so, I brought my buddy, Rob, with me, and we went down. And then, this Camry like comes burning up, which is not words you use together.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: But it’s in complete like Iron Man-

Tyler Litchenberger: We do in motorsports.

Allyn Pierce: Oh, okay. It’s like—it’s like Ironman Livery. It’s—it’s, I think, a stock Camry, but it had maybe some suspension wheels and tires, and made—and definitely exhaust, but it’s a good stock Camry besides that. You get—you get in here like there’s no roll cage.

Tyler Litchenberger: Oh, okay, great, yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And then, we get in the car, and we’re driving. He’s like, “Oh, it’s—” Like, “Oh, there’s Martin, he’s gonna be driving you.” And so, we get in, I get in the front seat. My buddy Rob gets in the back. And we’re cruising. We’re cruising. And he like—he just pulls out of there, and we’re just coming up the pit—out of the pit lane, and then onto the track. And he’s like, “Oh, yeah, we’re coming over on this turn. This is a weird one because it’s a blind turn as you’re coming up the hill. And you’re like—the car’s kind of like starting to drift out.” Like he’s in full control. And as we’re driving, I’m like, “So, what do you—what do you do for Toyota?” I’m like, “Do you just drive the pace car around the track?”

Tyler Litchenberger: You did not say this?

Allyn Pierce: Yeah. “Do you just drive the pace car on the tracks?” He’s like, “Oh, I’m in this race.”

Tyler Litchenberger: Y’all, it was Martin Truex Jr.

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, yeah. I’m not—I apologize to everyone.

Tyler Litchenberger: Allyn asked Martin Truex Jr. what he did.

Allyn Pierce: “What do you do?” And I’m thinking-

Tyler Litchenberger: Are you joking?

Allyn Pierce: I’m thinking like, he’s like a talented driver that drives for Toyota and, you know, all these events.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: He is part of the Toyota Motorsports Team.

Tyler Litchenberger: Right, of course.

Allyn Pierce: And because I’m—because I’m a dork. And I don’t know NASCAR. But no, no. So, I’m asking him, and he’s like, “Oh, I’m in this race.” So, it was just super fun. Like just going around a track with an actual person who knows how to drive a car on a track and just pushing this Camry to its, like, limits.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And, you know, I’m getting out of the car. It’s like, “Oh, you have a good time today.” And I’m like, “Go fast, man.” And he’s like, “Oh, I’m going to win it again.”

Truex ends up winning the entire race.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: We were like up in the box, and they’re like, “Everyone, get down. Get down to the winner’s circle.”

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And we’re getting shoved down. They take a picture with all the TRD crew. It’s like super colors and confetti.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And his car’s like right up front. And then, they’re like, “Okay, Toyota guests.” So, they’re pushing us in there. And I’m—I’m walking up. And he sees me, and he reaches down, and he said, “I told you I would,” and shakes my hand. He shakes my hand and says, “I told you I would.” I—I almost just walked out then. I’m like, “How does this get any better?” It was the most—I mean, he like—he like Babe Ruthed—Babe Ruthed the whole—the whole race. It’s like he pointed, and won it, and then shook my hand, and remembered me-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... enough to blow my mind.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yes.

Allyn Pierce: So, that was just super cool.

Tyler Litchenberger: And Rob? Rob had a good time?

Allyn Pierce: Rob had a great time. And-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... you know, he's really into cars too.

Tyler Litchenberger: He got a Tundra, right?

Allyn Pierce: Yeah, he got a Tundra after the fire. I literally just met somebody else who got a Tundra after the fires because he's like, "Just after seeing your truck, I got a Tundra." And I was just like-

Tyler Litchenberger: I feel like we've been trying to keep track on this. And it's-

Allyn Pierce: I don't know. Personally, I've met like, at least, like anywhere 7 to 10 people that have got Tundras because of seeing that picture and liked that story.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: Like-and some—and some don't know me.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And then, online, I got all kinds of like people.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: They're like, "Oh, I got a Tundra. I got a Tundra." That was awesome. But it's like an amazing truck.

Tyler Litchenberger: If people want to listen to Mike Sweers, who's the Chief Engineer of Tundra, and Kevin Voelkel, who's the President of TMMTX talk about it, we have an episode earlier on Toyota Untold called SUVs, CUVs, and Trucks... Oh My! If you want to listen to that. It's very interesting because they talk about the new Tundra as well. A new Tundra and what that might look like.

Allyn Pierce: I'm excited.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yes.

Allyn Pierce: Legit, I'm excited.

Tyler Litchenberger: Moving forward, what does the future look like for you and the fam?

Allyn Pierce: You know, we're—I'm working. I've got a—I've got a great team. I'm just going to cruise, and I'm going to work, and then I'm going to play. I like taking care of people again. I've been doing that for, what, eight months now. And I'm taking care of people. And it's—you know, because my people were almost too sick to do surgeries and-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... and barely able to, you know, do procedures on them. We're just trying to keep them alive. And now, I've got people that are healthy enough to do surgery. So, I get to interact with them like I used to interact with the family members of-

Tyler Litchenberger: Right.

Allyn Pierce: ... the patients that I had before.

Tyler Litchenberger: Before the fires, you were clearly a Toyota fan.

Allyn Pierce: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Tyler Litchenberger: You had a lot of them. You're like a Toyota family. Do you have a different perception now being so almost intimately involved in the brand, having traveled to TMMTX, having done some of the things that we've asked you to do in terms of talking to people internally? We haven't asked you to do a lot. We just said, "Hey, come experience this with us," or "Come tell your story here."

Allyn Pierce: I think what's changed is I—I feel like part of the Toyota family. You know, like I feel like I've been taken under your guys' wing, and like brought in like behind the curtains, and like-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... and like part of it. You know, it's kind of like what it felt like on my unit in—in the hospital, in my personal unit where you want to be a part of this.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: And I meet people who work for Toyota, and I get that—that vibe there. We're talking people on the line, to the people in the offices-

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah.

Allyn Pierce: ... the people in the suits. Like everyone like across the board is like engaged. But yeah, just to shift from this, like, person that's, like, just kind of always watching what are they going to do next, and just being amazed at the products, and the quality, and the—and reliability, there's nothing kind of quite like being around a group of people that love what they're doing.

Tyler Litchenberger: 100%. And that's us. Thank you for joining Toyota Untold Today and sharing your story again. Thanks, Allyn.

Allyn Pierce: Thank you.

Kelsey Soule: Honestly, that is truly a story that will never get old. Allyn is a one-of-a-kind customer. And through the power of social media, we were able to meet him.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yeah, it's crazy that someone who I didn't even know a year ago is such a great friend today. He's super popular here at Toyota, and the dealers at the Toyota National dealer meeting were crazy to meet him, it was great to see.

Kelsey Soule: Right. And as it relates to our products, and the team members that make them, I think it's a real full-circle moment to know that what they did was able to save someone's life.

Tyler Litchenberger: Exactly, you just never know how impactful your work can be until something like this happens. And even from a social media perspective, I'm just so glad that we saw Allyn's post that day, and we were able to do something about it.

Kelsey Soule: Well, thank you again for spending time with Allyn and catching us up on his story. If you want to follow Allyn's adventures with the Panda, make sure to follow him on social media @the_pandra and that's 'P' as in 'Panda.'

Tyler Litchenberger: It's a Panda Tundra, Kelsey!

Kelsey Soule: [Laughs] Exactly. Our show is produced by Sharon Hong and Alison Powell. The music you're rocking out to is by Wes Meixner. We're edited and mixed by Crate Media. Thanks again for listening. And if you enjoy our podcast, please give us your feedback. Hit subscribe, give us five stars on Apple Podcasts, and you can email us your comments at podcast@toyota.com. And if you'd like to speak to Tyler personally, you know now that you can tweet her @Toyota, because she's the one that reads all your tweets.

Tyler Litchenberger: Yes, I am.

Kelsey Soule: Alright, see you next time.

Tyler Litchenberger: Bye!