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## Chargers Week 14 Media Availability

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

### HEAD COACH BRANDON STALEY

#### **On CB Chris Harris Jr. and WR Mike Williams being placed on Reserve/COVID-19:**

“They are not out for Sunday. Mike [Williams] and Chris [Harris] were close contacts of [WR] Keenan [Allen]. They are day-to-day.”

#### **On if DL Linval Joseph will be good to go’ for Sunday’s game against the Giants:**

“He’s working his way back, but he was out there at practice and had a full practice — when I say full practice, he was out there in individual, and we were able to get him into some of the team setting. He’s trending positive for this week.”

#### **On Joseph’s ‘conditioning’:**

“Good. I think that he would tell you even better than I can, but I know that he feels good. I actually got a text from him during the game that I received after the game, and he was into the game and said, ‘Coach, I’m ready.’ That made me feel good. Like I said, we were just making sure that we took the precautions to make sure that he was truly ready to go. It’s looking good so far this week.”

#### **On if Allen tested positive for COVID-19:**

“He did, yes.”

#### **On if Harris and Williams tested positive for COVID-19:**

“They did not. They were just close contacts with Keenan [Allen].”

#### **On if CB Asante Samuel Jr. ‘has a chance to play on Sunday’:**

“He has a chance. He was out there. He’s still kind of in the protocol, but he’s working his way through it.”

#### **On QB Justin Herbert’s deep passes against the Bengals:**

“The throws that he’s capable of making, and they are throws that we certainly would like to feature. We’ve had a lot of those types of throws up throughout the season. Whether or not that’s happened is more dictated by the cover systems and things like that. Any time that we can be aggressive, then we will. He certainly has shown that he can access different parts of the field than most — not only can he access them, but he can give his receivers a real opportunity to make a play on the football. I think that really on the first throw to Mike [Williams] on the pylon, that’s as good of a throw that you’re going to find. The throw to J.G. [WR Jalen Guyton], it was a longer throw. I think it was like 61-and-a-half yards in the air. He can throw it farther than that, but just to be able to force the defense to defend late in the down like that, when you feel like you have some wideouts and tight ends that can go do something with it, that’s always an advantage. The throw on the sideline to Mike [Williams], when he kind of boxed out [Bengals CB Mike] Hilton, those are those one-on-one opportunities in the deep part of the field where you have a match up — you have six-foot-four-and-a-half on five-foot-nine and you’re giving your guy an opportunity to make a play. Hopefully, that’s something that we can feature throughout every game. But, I know that Justin, one of his strengths is the accuracy in the deep part of the field. It’s one thing, in my opinion, to have a strong enough arm to get it to those places, but are you throwing it accurately and with good timing? That’s something that’s a strength of his.”

**On preparing the defense for a variety of Giants quarterbacks:**

“We have an inventory of those players, an inventory of [Giants QB] Daniel Jones. He’s been in the league now for a while and he’s been playing within that offense for two years now. Then, [Giants QB] Mike [Glennon] was able to play not only in preseason, but then in a pro game last week. We’re familiar with Mike. I was with him in Chicago. I’m very familiar with his career, what style of player he is. With [Giants QB] Jake Fromm, not as familiar with him, but you just certainly are defending their offense. They’ve had a change in coordinators, and then you’re also prepared for all the other people that can play quarterback. It’s all hands on deck, but I think, from a preparation standpoint, all you can do is assess the styles of the quarterbacks, assess the change since the play-caller change, and then go from there.”

**On if any assistants on the coaching staff faced Fromm at Georgia:**

“D.A. [Secondary Coach Derrick Ansley], for sure, being at Tennessee and Alabama, would have played against Jake [Fromm]. There’s an inventory of him as a preseason player, too. We’re familiar with him. We’ll take a look at that. There’s also the element that those other guys could play, too. We’ll make sure that our guys are stylistically ready for all three.”

**On discussing with the officials the start of the play clock following a touchdown:**

“What they made an emphasis on is that once you score, that [play] clock is going to start, regardless of how happy you are. They’re not to delay that clock based off of your joy in the moment. That’s an issue that I think the league is going to take a look at because there is a timing element to guys being on the bench, getting out to the field, getting the right group in — you saw it happen to [Bengals Head Coach] Zac [Taylor], too. It’s happened throughout the league. I take full ownership of that because we need to make sure that we do a better job of organizing that situation. It’s not easy because you can’t predict it. It’s one of those things that the people that are on the bench just have to know that when things are going down, when we’re returning this fumble for a touchdown, that we need to be all hands on deck because a coach may say, ‘Hey, we’re going for two.’ So, there has to be that urgency to get our stuff ready. I have to do a better job of making sure that we’re ready for that moment.”

**On evaluating when to start the play clock after a score:**

“I think so. I just think that there’s that subjective moment that there’s been enough time, then here we go. There’s just that acknowledgment that something big just happened. I have to do a better job. In that scenario, we were hurried. [TE] Stephen [Anderson] wouldn’t have done that had we gotten it out there sooner.”

**On C Corey Linsley being named the team’s Walter Payton Man of the Year nominee:**

“I’m so proud of him. You can’t minimize the transition coming from a team that you’ve been with your entire career, that you’ve built your reputation and built your family — him and Anna being a part of that community — and then, you transition teams in the middle of your career. They had made a huge impact in Green Bay with their CASA cause. For him to come to Southern California and to immerse himself not only within our team, but within our community in such a short time, I think that just says so much about him and Anna and their family, and what it means to them to be a part of something, and to really make an impact on something that’s really important for them. Then, spreading that to their new community. I think he’s just such a good example for how we’re trying to build this team and who we’re trying to build this team with. So proud of the player that he is, the leader that he is and the person that he is. I think he’s the perfect embodiment of a Walter Payton Man of the Year.”

**On Linsley’s experience of playing against NFC teams earlier in his career is an advantage:**

“I think there’s also the advantage of just understanding the style of play. He’s played against all of these defensive systems. [Giants Assistant Head Coach/Defensive Coordinator] Patrick Graham, to me, is one of the top coordinators in the league. I have a lot of respect for him. I don’t know him personally, but I think he’s a heck of a coach. He’s been in New England, been with [Dolphins Head Coach] Brian Flores down in Miami, so you kind of know that I’ve played against that system, that structure. Corey’s inventory of experiences can maybe help some of the other guys that are newer to the NFL in that identification process, and that collaboration with [Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach] Frank [Smith], [Assistant Offensive Line] Shaun [Sarrett], [Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Shane [Day] and [Offensive Coordinator] Joe [Lombardi] in putting a plan together and working through those adjustments. That inventory of experiences is very important when you’re playing against a quality opponent, like New York is on defense, because they do a really good job of coaching over there.”

**On S Nasir Adderley:**

"I'm going to answer that in sort of a two-part way. We're really excited about Nas, but he is nowhere close to where he's going to be. He is nowhere close to where he is going to be. He's capable of a lot. He's working through things. We have high expectations for that position, high expectations. He's really starting to embrace that, the communication and the little things that make a really big difference. I think that him teaming up with [S] Derwin [James Jr.] and Derwin being able to bring the best out of him, too, is exciting. But, he's at the beginning. The thing that he's shown is that he can be a difference-maker out there at times. Now, we have to see that establishment of consistency and performance for him, where they're not flashes, they are bursts all of the time for him. I think that what we're doing, we're also figuring out how to feature him and where those little things are in his game that we can help him with, where [Defensive Coordinator] Renaldo [Hill], [Secondary Coach] D.A. [Derrick Ansley] and [Assistant Secondary Coach] Tommy [Donatelli] can help him. He's established himself as a player that can really play winning football for us. He's the type of athlete that you want to be coaching back there. Now, what we have to do is just polish his game. A lot of it is just the inventory of experiences and playing within our system. But I like the way that he's progressing. I think he's a player that will continue to improve in the more that he plays for us."

**On if it would be 'difficult' to trim the active roster to make room for activations:**

"I don't think so because [DL] Linval [Joseph] and [CB] Asante [Samuel Jr.] are two of our best players. I think that what I've enjoyed, because we've had a lot of lineup changes specifically on defense, is that we've really gotten to establish depth for the long term. We've had guys like [DL] Breiden [Fehoko], [DL] Forrest [Merrill], [DL] Andrew Brown and all of these guys, we've kind of been able to find out about them and put them in the fire. We've been able to find out about all these secondary guys that have filled in at corner. As a coach, although it's really tough when you're going through it, there is a comfort zone knowing that you've pushed through it and you've created a real insurance policy and a comfort zone, if something happens that these guys have been in the fire and that they're ready. That's that cumulative effect of development that we really value. Our goal is to get our best players out there at the end of the season. The fact that two guys that are starters for us, and two of our best defenders, are coming back for us, I think, only strengthens us. Hopefully, they can help us to continue to play our best football."

**On if 'some of the staff' is 'working ahead' in preparation of next Thursday night's game against the Chiefs:**

"Our quality control coaches are ahead of the plan. It's a part of the NFL that, as a coach. It's such a unique timeline that full focus is on the New York Giants. Then, that tight turnaround. But, I think that the way that I've approached it, and the way that I've tried to approach it with our staff, is that you cannot look to next Thursday. That's just not part of your equation, from a game-planning process. Your mind can't work like that. You can't be two places at once. Now, there are some guys that have the role and responsibility to break down the next opponent, but in terms of our plan, our engineering, this team is really good. So, we have to pour all of our energy into the Giants. Once that game is done, then what we have to do is we have to be on that sprint to get ready for Kansas City. What's probably as important is the planning from a performance standpoint and making sure that, after the game, that all of those procedures are in place so that our guys can get that recovery. That's going to start at the stadium after the game. We've done a really good job with our performance team of being connected in how that's going to unfold. This time of the year, that's as important as the gameplan. How do you get these guys back to go play really well on Thursday? I've enjoyed that part of it last year. I was with the Rams on a similar timeline. We went at Arizona, that home against New England in December. I'm familiar with that timeline. We'll kind of lean on some of that experience moving forward. Hopefully, we do a good job."

**On how this week's practice schedule will impact next week's preparations:**

"Today, our goal was just to get off the field sooner. We had the same amount of work, but we just went walk-through into the practice so that they could get off of their feet sooner and get to the recovery sooner. Kind of open up the back end of their day. It's that time of the year where it's important that you do that."

**On next week's schedule:**

"Monday will be a pure player day off; gameplan and recover. Tuesday, we'll do two walk-throughs. Wednesday will be a walk-through into a practice. The first time we'll be on the field will be Wednesday of next week, in terms of practicing. We will only practice once next week."

**On how the Giants' offense has 'changed' since Sr. Offensive Assistant Freddie Kitchens has taken over play-calling duties:**

"Freddie has called plays in the NFL. He's a very established play-caller. We played against him when I was in Denver in 2019. He had a lot of success in Cleveland with [Browns QB] Baker [Mayfield]. He comes from an outstanding coaching pedigree with [Buccaneers Head Coach] Bruce Arians and that crew. A lot of respect for him. I think that you've seen some subtle changes in two games. The big thing was that they played last week with a backup quarterback, with Mike [Glennon]. Mike has started a bunch of games in this league. You didn't see that big of a difference, but, just stylistically, Mike and Daniel [Jones] are very different players. This offensive group is really, really good. I went against this group last year, and then they add [Giants WR] Kenny Golladay. I was in the division with Kenny in Detroit. I defended him when I was in Denver in 2019. This guy has real size. This guy looks like a pro wideout, like you want him to look. A really good player. I have so much respect for [Giants WR] Darius Slayton. Going into the game last year, Darius was a really big part of our process. He has real deep speed. Then, [Giants WR] Sterling Shephard, I think that guy is super underrated. I'm a big fan of his game. Last year, he didn't play against us. He got hurt; he and [Giants RB] Saquon [Barkley]. They added this [Giants WR] Kadarius Toney guy, who was tearing up the SEC last year. We did a lot of work on him. He's a difference-maker. This guy can do a lot of things. This Saquon Barkley guy; we had the number one run defense in the NFL, the number one defense in the NFL by a mile in 2018, and we went to New York — getting ready for Saquon his rookie year, this guy is a real tailback. He's fought his way back. He's shown real toughness. I have full respect for this player. I think that they are really, really dangerous. I have a lot of respect for the left tackle that they took fourth overall, [Giants T] Andrew Thomas, in evaluating him last year. I think that he has a real chance. When I look at this team, they have a lot of weapons, a lot of legit NFL weapons. That's not even talking about [Giants WR] John Ross [III], who runs 4.2 [40-yard-dash]. They have a ton of players. If you take a look at their schedule and you look deeper into the film, you're seeing a team that's not coaching conjecture or anything like that. This team has real weapons."

**On having a 'better record' on the road than at home:**

"I think it's more the matchups. I know we love playing at SoFi [Stadium], we love playing at home. It's always good playing in front of your own fans, that's for sure. I think it's more just a matchup than anything. I'm proud of the way that we've played on the road because I think that when you establish that you're a team that can go win anywhere on the road, then that's always going to be a big predictor of your overall success as a team."

**On OLB Kyler Fackrell:**

"Kyler had a procedure on his knee. He's going to be out this week, for sure. But, looking forward to getting him back at some point this season."

**On if there's a 'possibility' of Fackrell being placed on Reserve/Injured:**

"We don't know that yet. Like I said, he'll be out this week, for sure, and then after that, kind of go from there. It was just a procedure to clean up his knee. We do not anticipate it being a season-ender, but we don't know that timeline to return, for sure."

**On OLB Chris Rumph II aiding in edge rusher depth:**

"Similar to the secondary, I just think that us being able to take a look at all these guys. Having a guy like K9 [LB Kenneth Murray Jr.] as a guy that can flex and do some things, and then all the different personnel groupings that we can play with, from a defensive line standpoint, having the ability of [DL Jerry] Tillery to do that job, too. He's played some on the edge; [DL] Joe Gaziano and stuff like that. It'll be a team effort. It's establishing depth for that reason."

## **SAFETY DERWIN JAMES JR.**

### **On the defense's performance against the Bengals:**

"It was a day that we wanted to have. It was just our mindset. From start to finish, we went out there to take the ball away, and we did."

### **On the current status of the defense:**

"I feel like we're in a good spot to take that next step. The team that we have, I feel like we're right in the right spot. We're going through it as a team."

### **On if the win over the Bengals 'could be a stepping stone' for further progress:**

"We went in expecting to win. We expect to win every game. We're definitely going to be like that the rest of the season."

### **On preparing for Giants QB Jake Fromm to potentially start:**

"A game like this, you can't get caught up on who is going to be the quarterback and who is not. A game like this, you have to make it more about you and how you're going to come out and play. They still have good skills around that group. They make plays. They have a great back in [Giants RB] Saquon [Barkley], so we have to play. We can't think that this quarterback is going to be easy. There are no easy days in the NFL."

### **On the final stretch of the season:**

"We definitely want to win consistently. We definitely talked about it. We feel like we have everything we need to make that happen. We just need to focus on one week at a time, focus on the Giants this week, and it will take care of itself."

### **On potentially having DL Linval Joseph and CB Asante Samuel Jr. return to the lineup this weekend:**

"That's big. You know how much those guys mean to our defense. A guy like Asante, coming in young and helping us all season. Getting those two guys, with how we've been playing these last couple of weeks on defense, I feel like it's only going to help us."

### **On S Nasir Adderley's growth:**

"A lot. He's been a dog since Day 1, but he's really getting better every week. I'm proud of him. He's talking to me. It's exciting. I really like working with a guy like that. He's more confident. He knows where he has to be. He's not hesitant. He's not waiting. He knows where he has to be and he is there."

### **On if the scheme benefits Adderley's capabilities:**

"I feel like it has definitely helped him a lot. He tells me all of the time about how he loves the scheme. He feels like he's able to be free. It's fun playing with him."

### **On C Corey Linsley facing the field when in the offensive huddle:**

"I feel like that's great because he's already looking at how the defense is stacking up. As a defense, you're static sometimes. You're already where you want to be sometimes on defense, so having a guy like that, that's already one step ahead of the team, he's already helping our quarterback."

### **On being able to execute designer blitz packages:**

"We need to stop the run more in order to get there. We have a lot of packages with a lot of guys doing a lot of different things. We have to take care of the runs and make it where it's third-and-five-plus, third-and-six-plus, so that we can have fun and make it tough on these quarterbacks."

### **On calling designer blitzes on third-and-five-plus:**

"You can't call it when it's third-and-two or third-and-one. We had it up every week. We just have to get into situations where we can use them because we always have them in our back pocket. It's hard calling them on third-and-one, third-and-two where they could run the ball."

**On support along the defensive line in run defense:**

“It’s big. Those guys aren’t just coming in and doing their job; they’re coming in confident. [DL] Breiden [Fehoko] told me a few weeks back that we’re going to stop the run. Those guys are coming in with energy, and you can see it all of the way around. Guys want to play. They want to be involved. No matter whose number is called, guys are stepping up.”

**On Linsley as a teammate:**

“He’s so fire, man. He’s a great leader. If you just watch our offensive line take the field every time, they’re charging out there like they’re ready to go hunt. Every day at practice, he’s working. He’s working after practice; nobody sees him, but he’s pushing sleds and doing all of the little things that make him great. It’s great having a guy like that.”

## **CENTER COREY LINSLEY**

### **On being nominated for Walter Payton Man of the Year:**

“It’s cool. Obviously, it is an honor. The biggest thing is the publicity that goes to CASA and the awareness [that’s generated]. Maybe people that haven’t heard of CASA before or maybe don’t know about it are now interested — whether it’s because they want to become advocates or they want to donate and make a financial impact. That’s the most important thing about it. My wife and I have been involved with CASA for a number of years now and my wife does a great job with it. She does more than I do with connecting with everybody. She does an awesome job. The people who work at CASA and the advocates are the real men and women of the year. They’re the ones that deserve all of the credit because the work that they do goes unnoticed. They never get to stand on podiums and accept awards. They are the ones who go in, day-in and day-out, and have a constant impact on people’s lives. They deserve all the credit and I’m happy I can be the guy that can get them publicity.”

### **On when he began service to the community:**

“I feel like it has been a constant theme wherever I’ve been. In high school, we did some stuff. At Ohio State, I remember [former Ohio State Head Coach] Coach [Jim] Tressel having people go and visit the cancer patients at the hospital. I have been fortunate to always be in a place where giving back really meant something. It meant something to the coach. It meant something to the players. The guys on our team do an awesome job. You see it all the time on the Chargers social media. We have a bunch of great dudes doing great things in the community. They all deserve as much credit as anybody.”

### **On most rewarding moment working with CASA:**

“When we had our cases, it was rewarding to be that constant pillar in those kids’ lives. That was a rewarding experience. It’s not about me or my wife but it’s about the position that we’re in to be able to give back and give that publicity to CASA. Get the media and the word out there and the great thing those people do. CASA is all across the country and we’ve been fortunate to be involved with three great organizations. There’s a CASA in Orange County and LA. We are building that relationship now, but we have had a great relationship with Brown County for a number of years. There is CASA Wisconsin and National CASA. There are great people across the country doing great work.”

### **On his health:**

“Just managing [my workload]. My back tightened up in the game. I am just managing stuff. I’m all good.”

### **On changes in his life in the last year:**

“It’s been a whirlwind, for sure. I used to joke with my wife that she didn’t do well with the transition of leaving home. For me, it has been easy. I have always just been going with the path. Now that we have settled down and started a family, now I’m the guy that’s struggling with change and she’s the one who is managing the stuff at home and doing a great job with it. It’s been a whirlwind for me. Obviously, the kids love it out here. The past year hasn’t been a smooth ride, but I wouldn’t trade it for the world. It’s been quite the experience and we’re happy to be here.”

### **On why he stands with his back facing towards the huddle:**

“I do it just to see the defensive personnel. I can’t even remember when I started it. I did it originally because there were times where I would break the huddle and turn around and it would be different personnel. It was like, ‘Why don’t I just turn around and look and see what the personnel?’ Some of it was because [Packers QB] Aaron [Rodgers] loves to go on a quick cadence and give his quick line to catch the defense with 12 guys on the field. I guess that spurt a little of it to looking over at the sideline and seeing the, change their personal so we can catch them. I don’t do it for attention. I felt like it was a little bit of an advantage. I can tell the guys in the huddle the changes. Hopefully, that gives whoever is involved in the protection or run plan, a little bit of an edge. I feel like it works for me. Obviously, it’s been working for some other guys. I’m hoping it gives the guys in the protection or run plan, a little bit of an edge knowing them personally so they can get to the line and bypass a step.”

**On times where the strategy of standing with his back to the huddle has paid off:**

"I'd like to think that it pays off every week. Especially in our protection plan, we might be blocking a certain way that's different. In the run fit, we might have a new tight end or new fullback in the game that needs to know what to be alert for with the certain defensive personnel. I like to think it makes a little bit of a difference in those areas. I know it does for us and it does for me from an id perspective."

**On what happens if the stadium is loud:**

"[QB Justin Herbert] does a great job of communicating. It's never been that loud. Even if it is, I can lean back in the huddle. It only takes a second to tell because once we bring on our personnel, they switch fairly quickly because they want to get their guys on the field. It's not like it takes a long amount of time. It's real quick seeing who running on and off the field."

**On the team's 7-5 record:**

"I feel like the biggest thing for us is it's shows that we are in the fight, but you know, like [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley touched on today, we haven't won back-to-back games since the bye and that's something we have to do. We still have a ton of stuff to work on, we're still growing. I feel like this team is always -- since the season has started -- we've gone out and tried to improve. I remember earlier in the season it was like all these illegal shifts and motions and stuff and I don't feel like that's been a problem for a number of weeks now. Now it's 'X, Y and Z' and knowing that -- if we were comfortable with where we were in the playoff picture, but that's not where we want to be. There's a ton of ball left to play, there's a lot at stake. We're happy that we are in the fight, but by no means are we okay with where we are."

**On struggling with back-to-back wins:**

"I do feel like there is an element of chance. I do feel like maybe there is different circumstances or whatever but point being is it kind of gives us a goal in something we need to work on. Maybe it is a consistency thing, every game has a life of its own. I really do feel like we take that mindset and we take that approach and every week we have to play the game how we need to play to win. As long as we keep taking that it's really doesn't matter. Each week is its own week and we just have to win the week man."

**On the rushing attack:**

"I feel like we're not exactly where we want to be. I feel like we have had similar to our success in wins and losses -- we have had really good weeks and some not-so-great weeks. There's been, again different situations where it's like, if [QB] Justin [Herbert] slinging the rock how he is, we have to do what we have to do to win -- it's the same deal. You have to play how you have to, to win the game. We as O-Lineman -- I feel like when it's crunch time, I feel like we've done a pretty good job there. It's different things, again we have gone from assignments to adjustments to nuances within your technique to footwork you know what I mean. I feel like we've grown week-in and week-out in terms of what we are focusing on, and I feel like that that speaks to the growth that we've had. But again, if we keep having that mind set and keep taking that approach to really perfect our game and approach, that perfection that's what's going to take us over the hump."

"If you are worried about assignments -- everyone's worried about assignments every week -- but different adjustments on base plays that's a problem. I feel like, for us, it's like new problems come up, different situations come up every week because teams are adjusting to us and teams are playing us differently. As long as we keep growing for that, again it's going to take us where we need to go."

**On QB Justin Herbert:**

"It's awesome. I mean you saw it in camp. I've seen it since the day I got here. It's nothing new, it speaks to the way he prepares and the attitude that he takes, day-in and day-out. He's a hell of a player and I feel like -- I guess the big thing is that he wants to keep the play alive and make a play and he's doing whatever he has to do to win the game and win that play and win that down. That 'Never Quit' mentality, that's awesome to see out of your quarterback. Nothing unusual, he's done it since day one but it's just cool."

**On the number of former Ohio State players named their teams' Walter Payton Man of the Year:**

"It's kind of wild. I feel like it speaks a lot for where we came from. Again, when we were at OSU it was something that big emphasis was put on that and a lot of us carried it into the NFL, want to give back whether it's your hometown or community whatever those guys putting their emphasis on, I think it speaks highly of the character of guys that we have."



**On if opponents ever comment on him standing with his back to the huddle:**

“Yeah, there have been a few guys [that have asked about it] and I told them after the game or something and they are like, ‘Ah, that’s pretty cool.’ I’m like, ‘Yeah, I mean it’s not that big of a deal’. A lot of people don’t do it. For me, a lot of guys don’t do it and have great success so it’s just something that I feel like has given me a little bit of an edge, so kept doing it.”

**On his history with Giants C Billy Price:**

“[We didn’t play together] in high school, but I played with him for a year at OSU. We went to rival high schools. He was from the west side. Billy’s a great dude. Obviously, I’ve known him for a long time.”