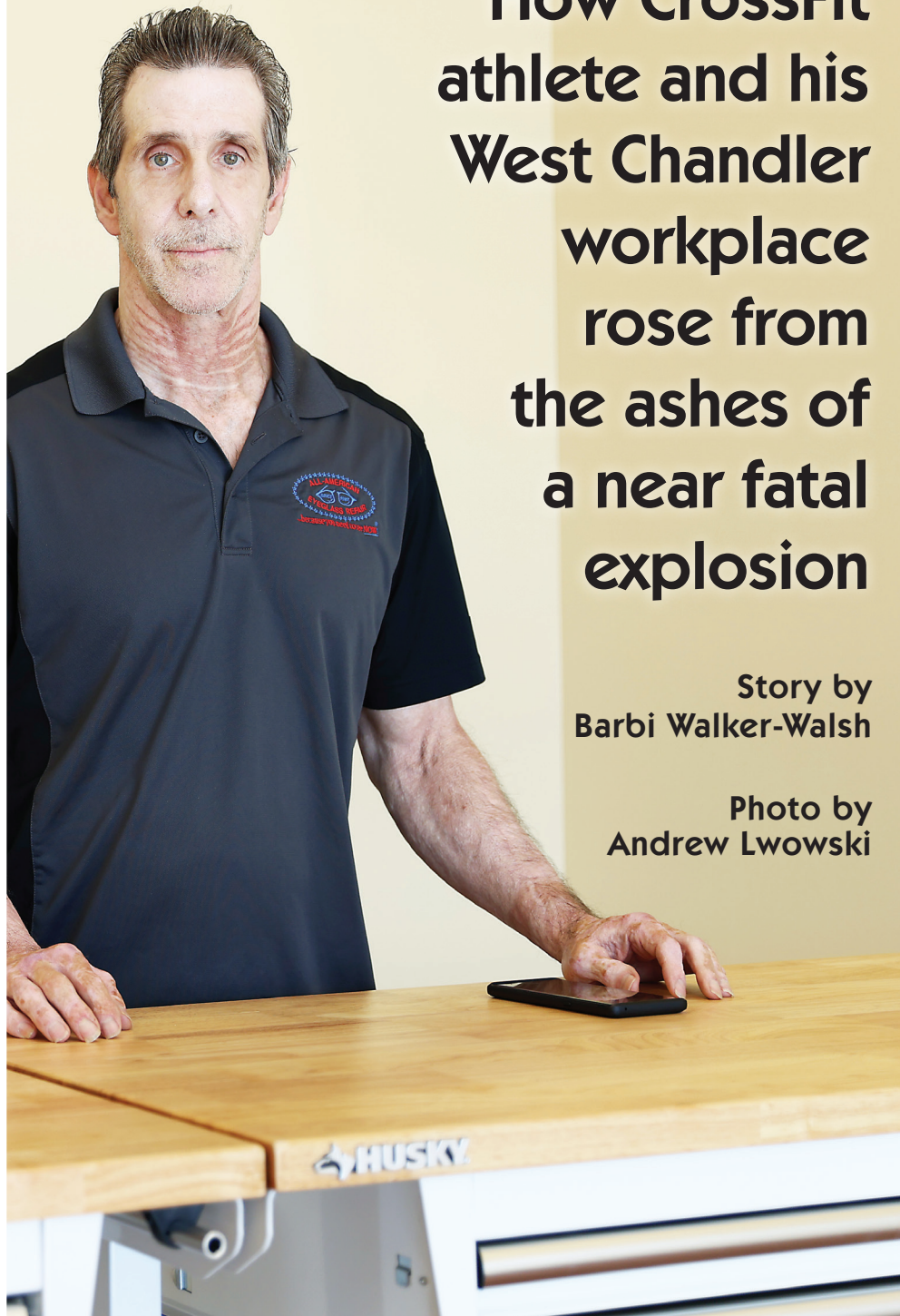




How CrossFit athlete and his West Chandler workplace rose from the ashes of a near fatal explosion

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Navigating the scorched remains and heaps of debris in the sweltering 1,000-degree plus heat, Glenn Jordan recalls the sensation of his back seemingly ablaze when a natural gas leak triggered a colossal explosion one early August morning.

His first attempt to escape the inferno was through the back, but it was blocked. He turned and headed toward the front. Once he reached the storefront—its windows and door obliterated, leaving a huge void—he instinctively enacted the familiar mantra: stop, drop, and roll to put out the fire on his back.

But his back wasn't on fire; instead, his shirt had melted to his skin, a result of the intense heat.

Examining his hands, equally scalded and agonizing, he saw the skin gone—Jordan had sustained second and third-degree burns covering 30 percent of his body.

Now, two and a half years later, Jordan stands once again in that very spot at All American Eyeglass Repair alongside his friend, John Gutierrez.

At the time of the explosion, Jordan hadn't opened for the day yet. He had just started a call when he was thrown backward by the force and greeted by a thunderous boom. He remembers nothing prior to the explosion except for his location and the act of leaving a customer a message, which encapsulates the chaotic aftermath.

The gas leak originated from Platinum Printing, adjacent to the eyeglass shop, resulting in both establishments being consumed by flames and debris. The incident, on Aug. 26, 2021, collapsed Platinum Printing's roof and damaged the eyeglass shop and neighboring businesses.

"Insulation covered the parking lot," recounts Gutierrez, son of the family-owned eyeglass repair shop's owner. Gutierrez was late to meet with Jordan and arrived shortly after the explosion. Gutierrez says he's never late.

He arrived at a chaotic scene. Once parked, he ran in the direction of the store, calling John's name. He found him sitting on the



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sidewalk and was relieved to see him talking and alert.

Among the victims were Dillon Ryan, Andrew Ryan, and Parker Milderantt, employees of the printing shop. All four men were rushed to Arizona Burn Center.

Investigations revealed a nearby gas line had succumbed to degradation in the hot desert environment.

Not the first time this had happened.

Jordan was in an induced coma for 26 days. Once having regain full consciousness, Jordan, an avid CrossFit athlete, leveraged his CrossFit mindset toward recovery. He embarked on a grueling 40-day hospital stay and subsequent months of rehab. Supported by his wife, family, friends, and his-gym buddies, he faced the challenge head-on. Gutierrez, unwavering in his belief in Jordan's recovery, also harbored no doubts about reopening the eyeglass repair shop in the same location with Jordan at the helm.

The Chandler store, previously the corporate

hub for all town stores, came to a standstill post-explosion. With the store rendered unusable and equipment and inventory lost, the rebuilding process loomed large. According to numerous news accounts, a recent undisclosed settlement was reported involving the victims, businesses, Southwest Gas and Chevron-Phillips, the manufacturer of the faulty pipe.

In the now-rejuvenated shop, freshly painted in a slightly warmer color than its original white hue, Jordan and Gutierrez reflected on the explosion while contemplating a grand opening celebration. Despite tempting opportunities to relocate, Gutierrez said, "No one ever even considered going anywhere else." With roots deeply embedded in the neighborhood, the eyeglass shop is more than a business—it's a family legacy.

As they discuss the future and the prospect of a cake for the grand opening, Gutierrez highlights the shop's blank canvas status. Technological upgrades have become a priority, a facet overlooked in the pre-explosion era. Despite options to start anew

elsewhere, Gutierrez insists even though they had the opportunity to go around the corner, their commitment was to to this location. "When we talked about it, it was like, yeah, we'll just rebuild it," Gutierrez said.

Rebuilding is a common theme, paralleling Jordan's personal journey, where he transformed from post-explosion injuries to completing a challenge with over 2,000 pull-ups for the fundraiser Raise Your Bar for the Arizona Burn Foundation at the Hub, two organizations that are dearest to him. The decision to rebuild the business mirrors this resilience.

Come Feb. 4, All American Eyeglass Repair, under Jordan's guidance, will resume operations. Same location, same commitment to customer service, and the familiar presence of Jordan behind the counter.

A business reborn, incorporating the past while propelling it into the future, ensuring the continuity of the family legacy and commitment to the community who supported them.

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