The events of the last week have had a profound effect across the nation and across the globe. Such a tragedy has touched each and every one of us in its own way. Some more so than others but you wouldn’t be human if you didn’t feel some form of emotion over this catastrophic event.

Those 29 people have become a part of my daily thoughts and prayers. I feel like they have become a part of my family. My heart aches for them, my tears fall for them and my hands pray for them. Most conversations start or end with Humboldt. We all in some way can relate to how this could have been our sons, our daughters, or our husbands. It could have been any one of us.

I grew up in Saskatchewan. I grew up driving those open roads where the sky went on for forever. The wheat fields were a staple in the horizon. And the sun was like a blanket on your face continually warming you. The Hip playing in the background as the sight of the open road went on for miles. Those are memories that are forever engrained. I can close my eyes and put myself back on that SK highway in an instant. Amazing how an instant changes everything. Those moments define us. The moment we took our first step, the moment we learned to ride a bike, the moment we got our drivers licence, the moment we graduated high school and college, the moment we got married, the moment we welcomed our children into this world, but one moment we never want to experience is the moment of saying good bye to a loved one taken too soon. Nothing in this life prepares us for that moment. No book, no wise words from your dad, not even Google can help with that one. No words can express the pain, the sorrow, the deep down in your gut anguish that comes along with this misfortune.

I didn’t know those boys, men and woman that were on that bus but I feel emptiness inside of me. I spend my days mourning 16 people I never knew but feel like I know now. Every day brings new emotions, new tears, and new anguish. I feel a loss that the whole globe is feeling. The whole nation feels as though the Humboldt Broncos are their team. The genuine warmth and support that has been felt nationally and internationally fills my heart. Every stick I see on a porch brings a tear to my eye. As I walked through town today it was such an unspoken bond between everyone wearing a jersey and the only interaction was a simple nod of the head as we passed.

We all get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life. We all think we have tomorrow. We all take ourselves and our loved ones for granted at some point in our life. As a hockey family we even take the game itself for granted. The skates, the sticks, the helmets, the early morning practices, the late night drives, the hours spent on the road, the away tournaments, and the home tournaments. We take it all for granted. But it’s not just the physical things we assume will always be there, it’s the hard work, dedication, responsibility and work ethic that comes from the game we all so deeply love that is deemed to be engrained in our souls. All 29 of those wonderful people had those qualities; as I said I did not know them, but to be involved in Canada’s game those qualities just go hand in hand with hockey. So I would like to say thank you to those 16 amazing people that lost their lives, thank you for reminding us all how precious our lives are, how precious our time here is, how those attributes of dedication and devotion are not a privilege but something to work towards and most importantly thank you for bonding a nation and a globe in a way that will never be forgotten.

So to the city of Humboldt and all the families affected from this tragedy know that my stick is on my door step, my porch light is shining, my jersey is on and my love is with you always.