

ROUTE 91 HARVEST FESTIVAL: THE WORLD SHINES A LIGHT FOR VICTIMS

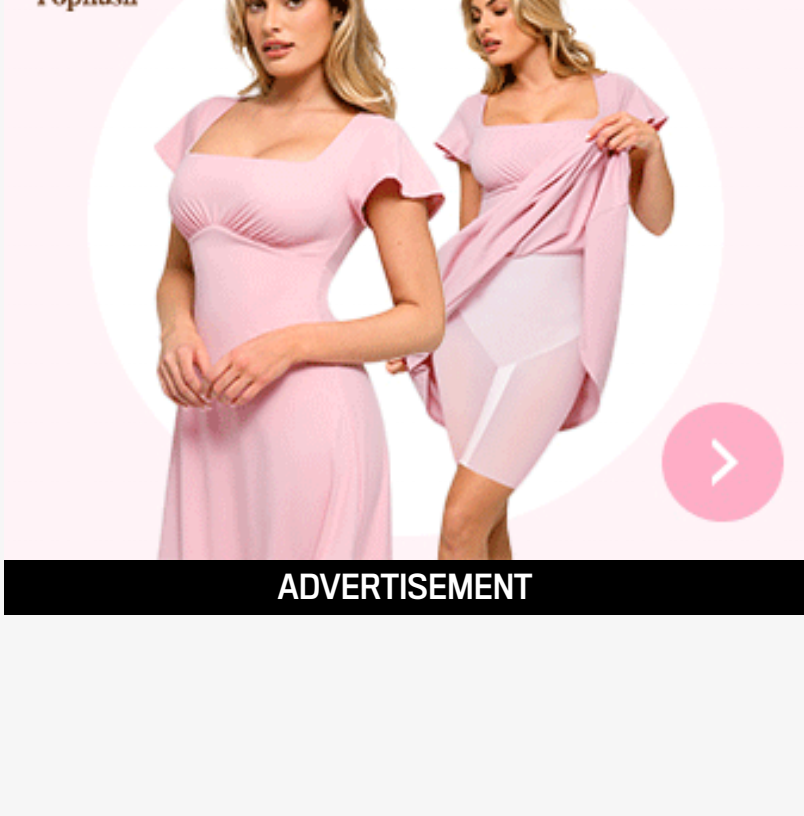
THE FALLEN ARE MEMORIALIZED AND WOUNDED HONORED IN VIGILS AROUND THE WORLD

By Lauren Tingle
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3:55 PM

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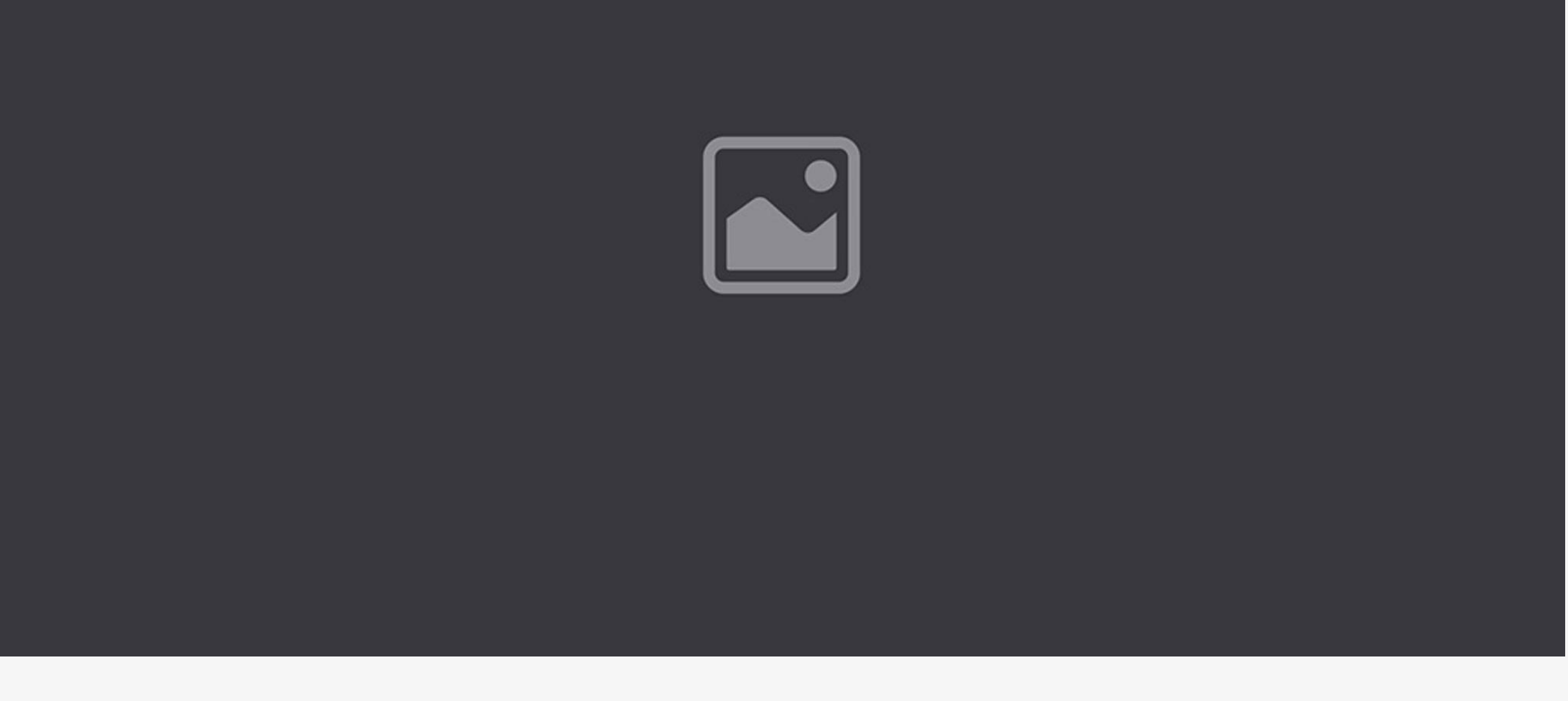
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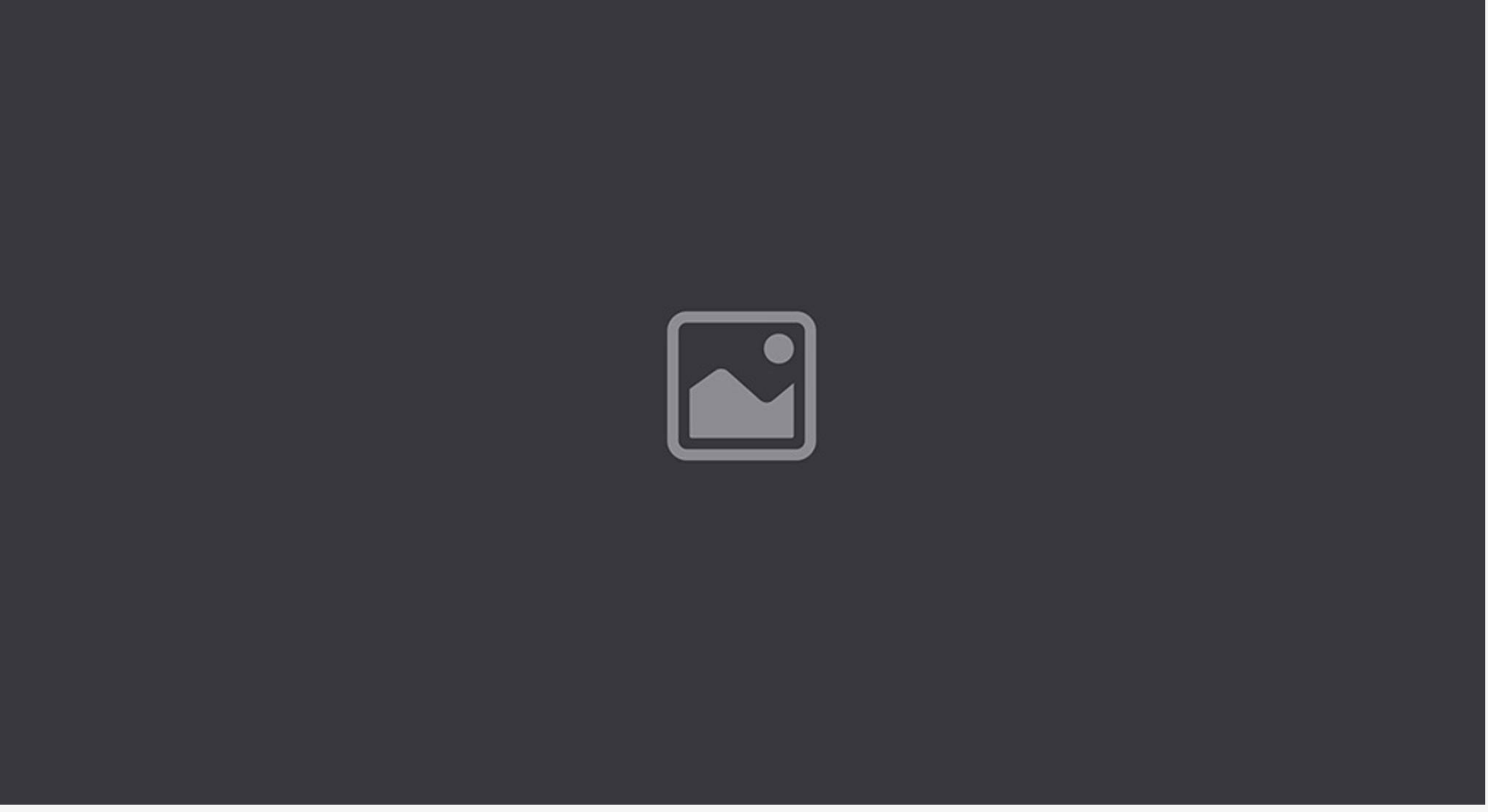
Country music is an industry, and it is a community. But more than anything, it's family.

And that family has been unified as the world mourns with the 59 families who lost loved ones and lifts up the 489 victims who were wounded in Sunday's (Oct. 1) massacre at the Route 91 Harvest music festival in Las Vegas.



On Monday (Oct. 2), much of the world's landmarks went dark to honor the innocent lives that were senselessly cut short in what is now the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. Much of the Las Vegas Strip went dark along with New York's Empire State Building and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. A single ring of orange light at the World Trade Center glowed to honor the victims.

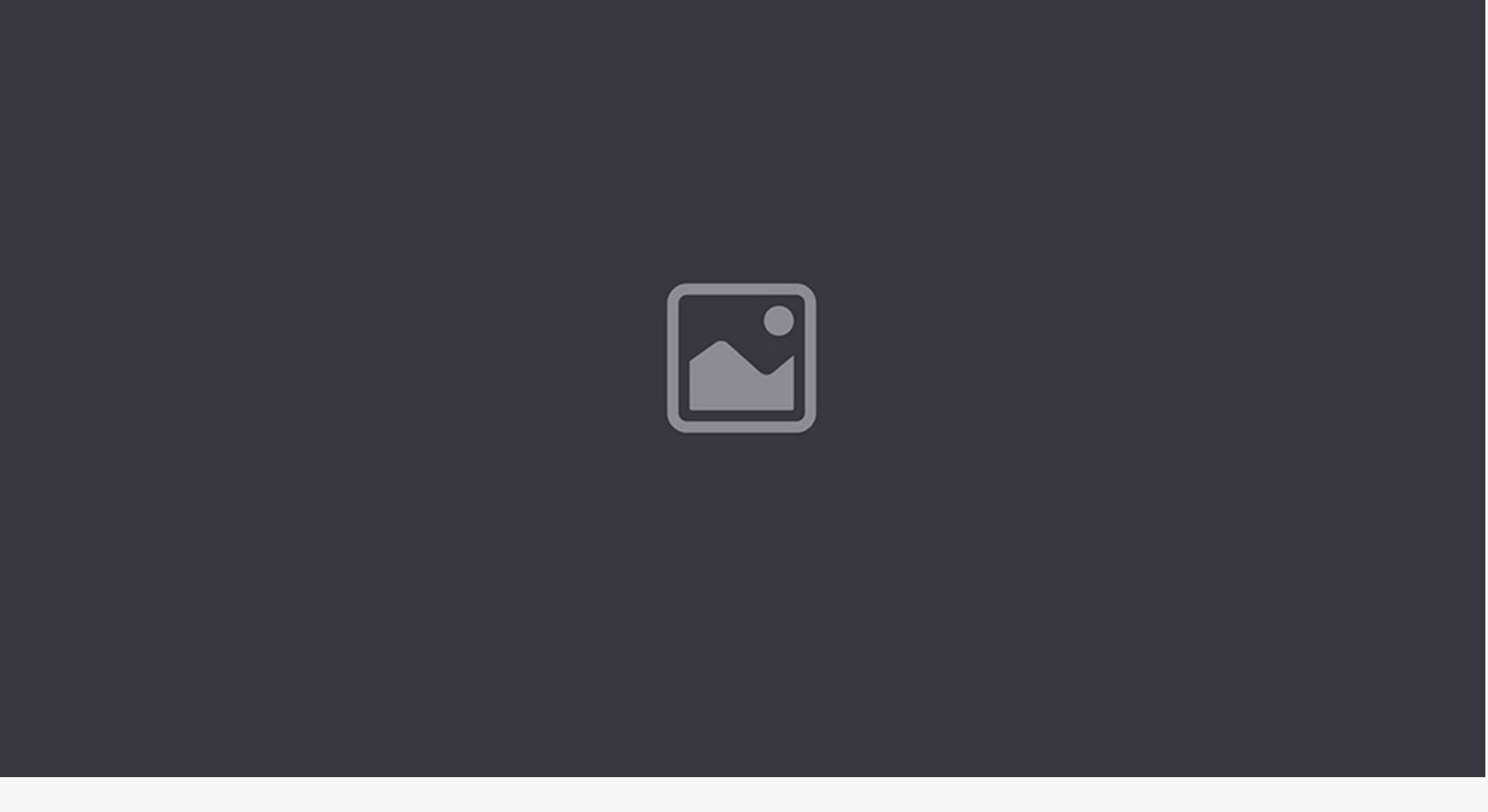
Memorial vigils were held in Gainesville, Florida, Savannah, Georgia, at the University of Nevada, and near the Route 91 festival grounds.



DENISE TRUSCELLO/GETTY IMAGES

In Nashville, Charles Esten, star of CMT's *Nashville* emceed a candlelight vigil at the Ascend Amphitheater with Vince Gill, Amy Grant, Keith Urban, Alison Krauss, Mayor Megan Barry, the Cox Family, the Grand Ole Opry's Senior Vice President and General Manager Sally Williams.

Throughout downtown, the Tennessee state and American flags flew at half-staff. And starlings sang while they roosted on electrical wires hanging over the outdoor venue. Overcast clouds hung overhead as mourners struggled to keep their candles lit in the wind.



Toward the end of the vigil, Esten made the observation that the candles mourners held in their hands were not the ones that mattered. "You go out and you be the light," he said. "You let your light shine into somebody's life through your giving, through your acts and through your love. That is something that wind can't blow out and darkness cannot quench."

Before Urban delivered a moving rendition of Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water," he mentioned that he had spent much of the day shell shocked by the tragedy. "Our nine-year-old," Urban said, "as I was driving her to school this morning said to me, 'Dad, you seem quiet,' I said, 'Yeah, there was a lot of people killed last night.'

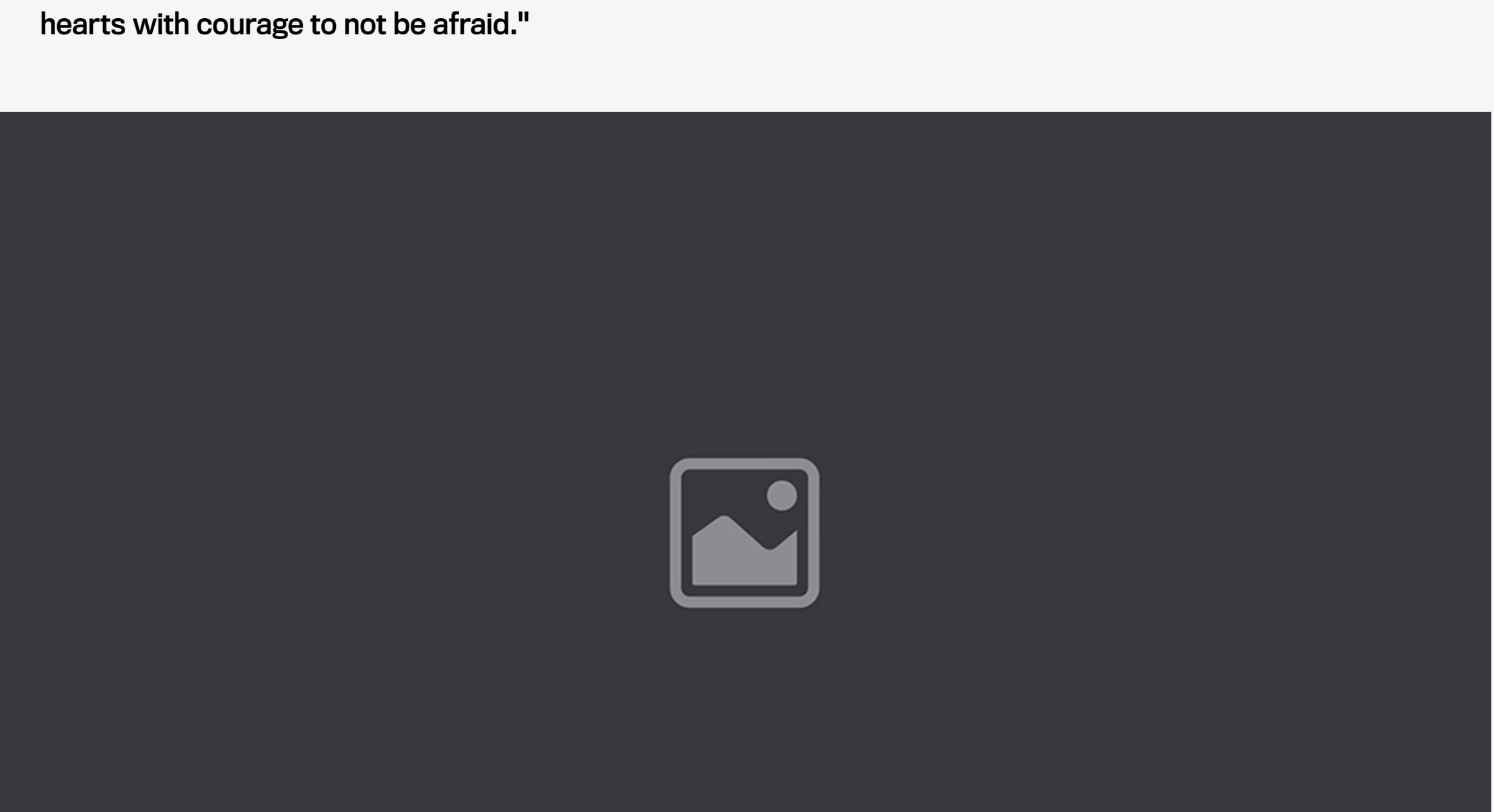
"And she said, 'Did you know any of them?' I said, 'Not that I know of.' And she said, 'Well then why are you so sad?' I said, 'Well, first of all, these were innocent people horrifically taken and secondly, they're like family.'

"It's the one thing about country music that has been at the center of it and it is community. It's about community. And so I did know those people in that way and I feel very grateful for this moment tonight to be able to put some light in the world," he said.

Gill performed "Go Rest High On That Mountain" and said he felt honored to be present as a voice for the innocent. "May we never lose our voice," he said. "May we never lose our voice for innocent people."



Grant led the crowd in prayer and moments of silence for the victims, the wounded and all the people rebuilding their lives in the wake of the tragedy. "Give us the grace God every day to see each other," she said, "to see our differences, to see our similarities, to observe to learn rather than judge and to fill our hearts with courage to not be afraid."



NASHVILLE, TN - OCTOBER 02: NASHVILLE MAYOR MEGAN BARRY ADDRESSES THE CROWD DURING NASHVILLE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR LAS VEGAS AT ASCEND AMPHITHEATER ON OCTOBER 2, 2017 IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. LATE SUNDAY NIGHT, A LONE GUNMAN, STEPHAN PADDOCK, 64, OF MESQUITE, NEVADA, OPENED FIRE ON ATTENDEES AT THE ROUTE 91 HARVEST FESTIVAL, A THREE-DAY COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL, LEAVING AT LEAST 60 DEAD AND OVER 500 INJURED BEFORE KILLING HIMSELF. THE MASSACRE IS ONE OF THE DEADLIEST MASS SHOOTING EVENTS IN U.S. HISTORY. (PHOTO BY RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES)

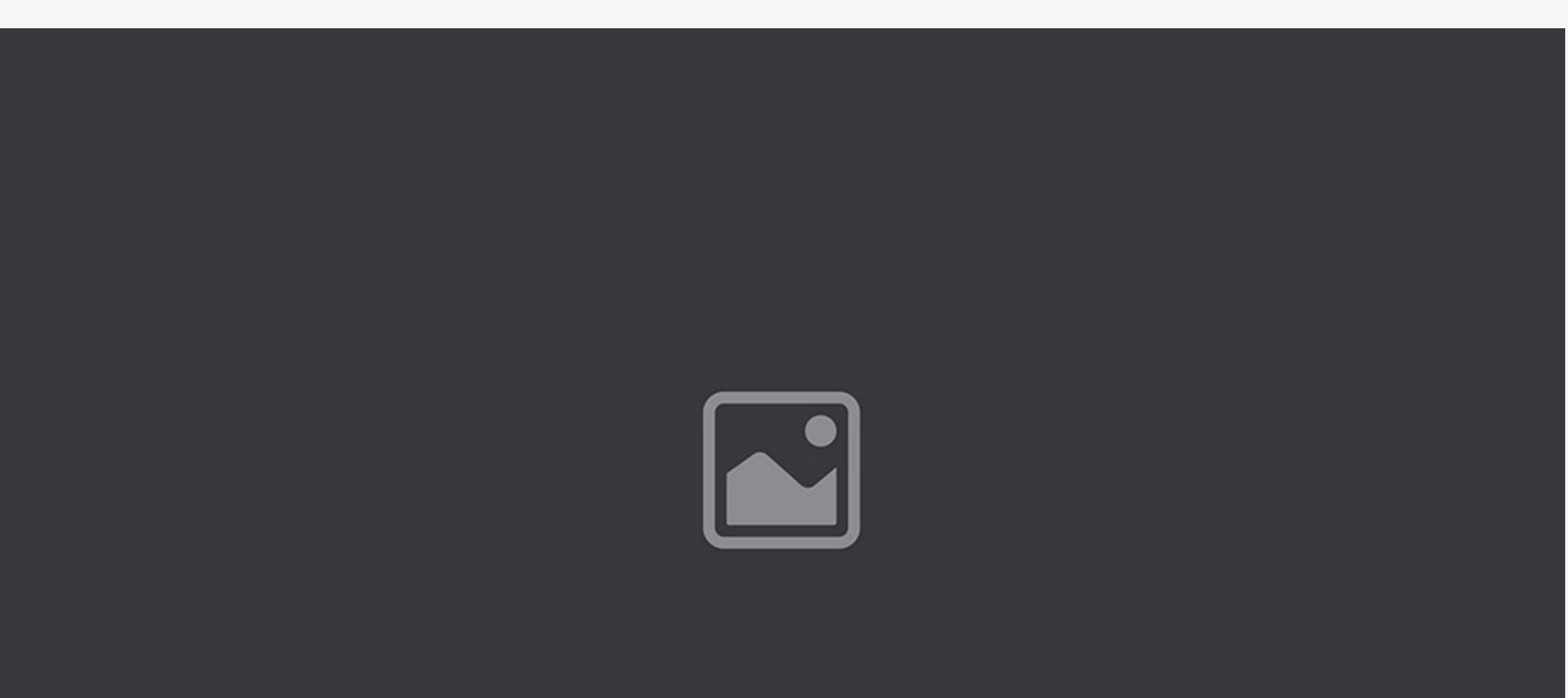
RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES

Barry mentioned that the event marked the second consecutive Monday that Nashville had held a vigil following a mass shooting. On Sept. 25, the city held a vigil for the eight people injured and Melanie Crow-Smith, 39, who died in a shooting at the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ in the nearby suburb of Antioch.

"These were people who had so much to give," she said. "So many more years spread out in front of them and so much more to share. All of those possibilities are now gone. We can't bring them back, and we don't have the answers right now. We may never have all the answers. But we can do a couple of things to honor the memory of every victim.

"We can pray for them in their time of sorrow and their time of despair. And we can do everything in our power as citizens and community leaders to promote peace, to pursue good over evil, to pursue light over darkness and to pursue love over hate because we do know one thing. Love is the answer. And it is the only choice that we have. Love is the most awesome power that we know."

Another prayer by Sidney Cox of the Cox Family preceded a performance of "Amazing Grace" led by Krauss.



"Right now we're caring about family and we are reaching out and letting them know that we do care about them," Esten said at the start of the vigil. "One of the things I discovered about this town—or discovered about music, I should say—is that yes it's entertainment, but it's so much more than that. Music is a way to carry out beyond past where words work, and music can bring healing."

As vigil attendees left the amphitheater, the Nashville city lights glowed in red, white and blue for the victims of the Route 91 Harvest music festival in Las Vegas.

To support those affected by the tragedy in Las Vegas, the Nashville nonprofit the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee has set up a [Music City Cares Fund](#). One hundred percent of donations to the Fund will benefit the immediate and long-term needs of the victims.

CMT's philanthropic initiative [CMT One Country](#) is supporting the Red Cross in the wake of this mass shooting. Our hearts are with everyone affected by the tragedy. If you are trying to locate loved one, please call the Red Cross hotline: 1-866-535-5654.

If you are in Nevada and would like to donate blood, please go to [www.bloodhero.com](#) to find out where to give.

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