

1 GVP15 Gloria Nichols

2 D: Uh, please state your name.

3 G: Gloria Nichols.

4 D: And Gloria, have you ever experienced gun violence in any form or manner?

5 G: Yes, I have.

6 D: And please share your story of your experience.

7 G: Well, my son, he was killed in um, August of 2014. Um, from gun violence, uh which was
8 one of his tenants that was getting ready to rent one of his properties out. And uh, gave him the
9 security deposit and the first months' rent and decided that he didn't want the property. And I'm
10 guessing that my son didn't give it to him quick enough and he went to one of the rental
11 properties and shot him.

12 D: Oh my god. So, um did—was the tenant ever caught?

13 G: He was caught, um, he was gonna do a plea deal of 20 years. Uh, me and his dad said no, that
14 wasn't enough time. Uh, because my son had did so much in the community and had helped so
15 many people, so people were in loss and I was totally at loss with the loss of his death and the
16 guy decided to take it to trial after we said, "No," well, he said he wasn't takin' 20, and he wasn't
17 uh, takin' anything, he rather take it to trial 'cause nobody seen him do it. So, he took it to trial,
18 the trial lasted four days and they came back and found him not guilty.

19 D: Oh my god. So, why wasn't the fact that he already, he had agreed to the 20, sufficient
20 enough to put him away.

21 G: I think his family told him not to take that. Um, I'm suspecting that his family knew the
22 trouble that he had been in, in the past.

23 D: Mhmm.

24 G: And from my understanding, um, when he was incarcerated, this guy I know, um, was
25 incarcerated with him, and said he couldn't wait to get out to kill somebody, that he wanted to
26 kill somebody. And that he normally gets away with killin' somebody 'cause nobody see him
27 does the killin'.

28 D: Oh my god. So, he admitted that he's a murderer.

29 G: He did, but he didn't admit it to any of us, so it would never stand up in court. There's no
30 heres—heresay in court.

31 D: Oh my god. So, when he admitted it, did he admit it to a friend, or—

32 G: He admitted it to somebody that he knew, that we knew.

33 D: Okay.

34 G: That was incarcerated with him.

35 D: Okay, and that wasn't sufficient enough for—

36 G: I don't think it would have been. I—and I didn't hear this until after he was found not guilty.

37 And it was like a year later that I heard, heard about it. And um, it was a y—year later that I was
38 told that the guy that stayed over where he killed my son at, seen him puttin' the gun together but
39 could not come forth with it because he didn't want the guy to come after him.

40 D: Oh my god, so, then that wh—so, you guys couldn't reopen the case with that witness 'cause
41 he wasn't willing to come forward?

42 G: No.

43 D: Oh wow. So, out of the death of your son, you've created something pretty special. And it's
44 Robert's Way. Tell me about Robert's Way, how it began.

45 G: Well, first of all when I lost my son to gun violence, I thought that the world was, was over,
46 you know, a mother should never hear that news about her s—her child. So, you just feel like

47 you're lost and I had to look at my kids fallin' out in the streets because we—we're a real close
48 family and we never leave the house without saying we love each other, we never get off the
49 phone without saying we love each other. And if we do, we call back and say, "Oh, well I forgot
50 to say 'I love you.'"

51 D: Oh wow.

52 G: Umm, and to hear that news is the most devastating thing that any mother wants to hear. So,
53 when he—when I lost him, I—I, I, I knew of all these people that had came to me and told me
54 that he helped them, um, get people off the street and put 'em into places, he went into the
55 community where we grew up at, and where he grew up at and pull those people off the streets to
56 get to, to train 'em to put up drywall and to do painting and floors and, so I had this one little kid
57 to come to me and say, "Robert is gone, what am I gonna do now?" And, I'm like, "What do you
58 mean?" He said, well Robert took him shoppin' every year for school and now he don't have
59 that. So, I was tellin' my daughter that I needed to do somethin' in the community to keep Robert
60 legacy goin' and to keep his memories alive. And so, we came up this name, and the name we
61 came up with was, "Robert's Way".

62 D: That's beautiful.

63 G: And so, this will be the fifth year, um, of doing and what we do is twice a year we give back
64 to the community where we celebrate his anniversary of his death, every August 19th. We do a
65 big event where we give back to the community, we have vendors to give out information on
66 stuff that's goin' on in, in the community. And then we do the Christmas event every 27th of
67 December, where we give back to kids who lost their parents to gun violence or are incarcerated.

68 D: That's beautiful. Take me back to the day that you lost Robert, what were you doing that day
69 and where were you when you found out that he was gone?

70 G: Well that day that he was killed, he had just came to my house. And he told me he was gonna
71 come back and eat dinner with me and I remember this day, just as good. It was like 70
72 somethin' outside, but with the humidity it was like, 90. And I grabbed him and I hugged him
73 before he left. And he said, "Mama, I see you later." And I said, "I love you and I want you to be
74 back to eat dinner with me." And about 5 o'clock I decided to put the food on that I were gonna
75 cook. And I said, "Lemme run to the store to get a soda," and, so we could have somethin' to
76 drink. And as I was leavin' out the house, I had got a call that Robert had been shot. And I was
77 so shocked, I just ran out my house with no shoes on and grabbed my niece and we ran down the
78 street. And when I got down there, I sai—it was so many people down there and I kept askin' to
79 see him and they said, "No because we don't want you to have the memories of, of him layin' on
80 that ground." And so, I began to look around and I said, well, "If somebody knows somethin'
81 please tell because they took a good man out your community." And nobody could tell, say
82 nothing. But I'm stud—lookin' at my kids, his siblings fall out. Um, which is the hardest thing.
83 No mother should have to go through that, no mother should have to experience that. And I can
84 remember this day just as good, and this is a day I will never forget.

85 (pause)

86 D: When you said that they wouldn't let you see him, at that point the police were there?

87 G: The police was there, yeah. Uh, I think when they made that phone call-- the police heard the
88 shots, it was six shots. Well, they have those sound barriers on the poles and they heard 'em. But
89 people was callin' in. And when I got down there, i-it had to been like, over 300 people. It was
90 people he rented to, people that worked for him, um, people who heard the shot that ran—I never
91 heard it. And I'm like, "Well, what was he killed with?" Well, later, I found out he was killed
92 with a AR-15.

93 D: Oh my god.

94 G: Which is, never should be on the street for anybody to carry.

95 D: I agree.

96 G: So, when he shot him one time, he shot him in the groin are—the, the, up, up under his eye.

97 D: Okay.

98 G: And it came out his h—it came out his head., the back his head. And then he shot him the
99 second time, and it shot him in the stomach and it came out of his, travel throughout his whole
100 body, it came out uh, his groin area. The bullet did, but he also shot one o—one of the shots into
101 his car tire and one went in the house and uh, I don't even know where the other ones went, but
102 the lady on the death certificate, she said, well, "All he felt was a burning sensation, he was dead
103 within a second."

104 D: Oh, so he—

105 G: So, he never suffered.

106 D: Thank God.

107 G: No, mm, he never suffered.

108 D: Thank God. Um, what would you say to those who uh, are legislators, in reference to how
109 they could prevent gun violence?

110 G: Well, here's the thing. I know shootin' been—killin' people been around from before my
111 time.

112 D: Right.

113 G: But, it can be slowed down. And my thing is, if these people, people are havin' these AR-15s,
114 AK-47s, and y'all nine times out of ten they don't get the guns back. They're still floatin' around
115 for other people to get killed with it. But if you know that they had this gun, these people are

116 havin' these guns and y'all let 'em walk. They need for every person that has been caught with a
117 gun and has not recovered it, they should be blamed and sentenced like they did have it. Like
118 they were found. Um, what they need to do is take that carry and conceal weapon, that needs to
119 be reversed. Because people took this the wrong way, they went and got those gun licenses to
120 carry and conceal weapon, but they're usin' them in the wrong way. Carryin' a conceal weapon
121 is to protect your home, that's what I believe. It's not to carry 'em, it's not to be seen. But they
122 need to change these gun laws and they need to take these guns off the streets.

123 D: Would you say that in changing the gun laws, are you requesting criminal background checks,
124 private citizen gun transfer checks, uh, do you have any specific changes that you'd like to see?
125 And maybe even, which I think is a good one, remove AK-47s off the streets?

126 G: AK-47s uh, RA-15—AR-15s. They need to put a hold if a person come in and ask for, wanna
127 buy a gun? That should be put on hold until all background checks are checked, from state to
128 state. It's just like when you go to prison and you get ready to get released. Well, they gotta
129 check all over the world to see if you got a warrant before they release you. And I think that's
130 how it should be when a person purchase a gun, they should not get it right away. It should be
131 held until a formal background come back, a thorough background check.

132 D: I agree. Uh, what would you say to a mom or a dad or someone who recently lost someone to
133 gun violence?

134 G: I'll tell 'em that, right now, when, when they, when you lose a child, you feel like God let you
135 down. Because you, you lost your child. But I will tell them to pray because only God can fix us,
136 only God can heal us. No matter what I say to that mother, if she's a strong believer in God, she
137 know God got her, 'cause I know he had me. Because from the d—the, the time I knew about my
138 son getting killed and being at the site, I never once hated the guy that killed him. Because I

139 don't know what issues he had goin' on in his head, I don't know how much he, hate he had
140 towards my son, but I know I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doin' today, if I kept that hate.
141 Sometimes I do, do during the holiday, I get to the place where I say, "I hate the guy that killed
142 him." But then I later ask God to remove that hate from me. Because that's not the way it's
143 sup—it shouldn't be no hate in the world, but it is. But I will say to that mother, just continue to
144 pray and ask God to lead you the right way. God is gonna carry you no matter what, no matter
145 how you're feelin', he's gonna carry you through this time. That's what I would say to that
146 mother.

147 (pause)

148 D: Is there anything that you'd like to add?

149 G: I just wanna say for all those that lost their kids to gun violence, their husband to gun
150 violence, anybody to gun violence—look up to God for, for s--for help. Look up to God for
151 strength. Look up to God for faith. Because without that, without him, we couldn't make it. We
152 couldn't make it. But you're a perfect candidate to get out and, and fight against this gun
153 violence. You are.

154 D: Thank you, Gloria.

155 G: You're welcome.