

1 GVP8 Latosha Davis

2 D: Hello, please state your name.

3 L: Latosha Davis.

4 D: And Latosha, have you experienced gun violence in any form?

5 L: Yes, I have.

6 D: And how, what was your experience?

7 L: My son was killed June 26th, 2017. Um, by a stray bullet while standing outside of a, a
8 convenience store [in Sherman Park].

9 D: I am so sorry. How old was your son?

10 L: He had just turned sixteen the month before.

11 D: Oh wow. And—wow. Um, and did we find out who did this?

12 L: Yes, we did. Um, (cleared throat) it took the police a week to find exactly who the perpetrator
13 was.

14 D: And what was your son's name?

15 L: His name was Emani Jamal Robinson and we called him Flash because he ran so fast.

16 (laughter)

17 D: And what was that day like when this happened?

18 L: Well, he was shot on the 25th. It was—I can still remember that day because two days prior I
19 had to take him to the emergency room because he had strep throat and I kept him in the house
20 and that Sunday, which was the 25th, he wanted to go outside because he was so cooped up, he
21 couldn't be around people because he was contagious. So, he was outside and he was around the
22 house and he was playing like he normally would do. I guess the neighbors was going to the
23 store and he asked if he could go with them. And they said, "Yeah. Come on." And he jumped

24 on a hover board and he rode with them to the store while they was on their bikes. While they
25 were in the store my son was still outside on his hover board and somebody came from out the
26 store and tried to rob somebody else. And an argument took place. They started shooting and my
27 son actually got caught in the crossfire.

28 D: Oh no, so they were trying to rob someone outside the store or--?

29 L: Mhmm.

30 D: Okay, outside the store.

31 L: Mhmm. Mhmm. And my son was on the hover board. He got struck. Twice.

32 D: Oh my god. So, the neighbors ran to you? How did you find out what happened?

33 L: Well the neighbors that he went to the store with, they was inside the store. And when they
34 came out the store, (pause) I just remember my, my door was beaten down and people was
35 running in my house, telling me that my son got shot.

36 D: Mmm.

37 L: So, I immediately jumped and we ran around the corner and I couldn't get to him. Because
38 they already had it taped off, I mean that was, it was quick. It was that quick they had it taped
39 off. They wouldn't let me see him. So, I automatically thought he got hit by a car, you know, you
40 just don't wanna take people's word for...

41 D: Mhmm

42 L: --what happened. The police wouldn't let me get to him so I could see exactly what was going
43 on because they said one of the bullets hit a gas line along the side of the store. That was when I
44 knew he had gotten shot. The police wanted the spectators away for everybody's safety, but I did
45 see from a distance the paramedics working on him.

46 D: Okay.

47 L: I still had hope that you know, everything was okay. So, I got to Children's Hospital—well,
48 actually Froedtert. And my son still wasn't there, I actually beat my son to the hospital.

49 D: Hmm.

50 L: And uh, while everybody was there comforting and supporting me the neurologist, the police,
51 and the other doctors, detectives pulled me in a room and that's when they told me that there was
52 nothing that they could do for my son because my son was shot in the head.

53 D: Oh no.

54 L: I just froze and run out the hospital.

55 D: Oh.

56 L: I made them run every test they could possibly do before they pronounced my son. June 26th
57 is when they did all the, the tests to make sure his brain didn't have activity. So, we had to
58 pronounce him, on the 26th that he had passed away.

59 D: I'm so sorry. (pause) So, on the 26th, when you realized that he had passed away, um, I know
60 you had to make arrangements for him.

61 L: Yeah, he was an organ donor. I gave his organs to people that actually needed them. He
62 wasn't a bad kid, he did what he normally do on a daily basis, was go to the convenience store
63 every day. I would've never dreamed that he got shot just standing outside of it, not even five
64 minutes after he got there.

65 D: Hmm, so uh, the beautiful part is that you shared—you gave life to other people.

66 L: Yes.

67 D: Were you able—did you ever follow up to see who the organ donors were?

68 L: Well, I got a letter from the Donor Network and um, they told me which organs went to
69 whom, but of course they can't disclose the information unless uh, the people wanted to meet me
70 or whatever, but, and I helped out a lot of people with Emani. Well, with Emani's organs, so.

71 D: Yes, he did.

72 L: Yeah.

73 D: He provided life.

74 L: Yes, yes, he did.

75 D: And he still lives. That's beautiful. Have you thought about—well that's kind of tough
76 because if you request to know who the owner—organ donors, or receivers are, it, they could say
77 yes--

78 D & T: Or they could say no.

79 L: Yes. Yeah.

80 D: That would be tough.

81 L: That's tough. I—I wanted to initially meet them.

82 D: Mhmm.

83 L: But then I thought about how they, you know, I'll be real upset if they told me, no that they
84 don't wanna meet me.

85 D: Right.

86 L: You know, so. So, I just left it alone.

87 D: Yeah, I—I, you and I are in the same boat. I, I'm not ready to hear, "No."

88 L: Yeah, I'm, I'm not ready for that, you know. And that's, I think that's what scares me the
89 most.

90 D: Mhmm.

91 L: So, I just told the Donor Network if they wanted to reach out to me, you know, just lemme
92 know and I can give them my information, we don't have to meet in person, we can, you know,
93 talk on the phone or via email, you know.

94 D: And they said okay.

95 L: They told me okay, it's just up to them, you know.

96 D: Okay. That's, wow. So, what would you say to a mom or dad or someone who has
97 experienced the loss of a loved one to gun violence?

98 (pause)

99 L: It's devastating. It's completely devastating. It's a hole that could never be replaced. He was
100 my youngest child. My family—me, you know, carrying him, giving him life and takin' care of
101 him and raising him impacts people but it also impacted me the most. And I would never wish
102 this on any of my worst enemies. I just wish that people have an argument, agree to disagree.
103 You don't have to use guns and everything, because you're hurting innocent people and you
104 actually takin' away our future. I will never get the opportunity to see him walk across the stage.
105 Or have a girlfriend, or go to prom, go to college because he was on the football team in high
106 school and he always talked about, he wanted to go to college and he wanted to be recruited to be
107 in the NFL. I would never get the opportunity to see anything like that. His older sister has
108 babies. He's an uncle. I have two twin grandbabies that he will never got the opportunity to meet.
109 He was there through her pregnancy and she gave birth to them two weeks after he passed away.

110 D: Oh no. Mm.

111 L: So, yeah.

112 D: What would you say to legislators in reference to responsible gun ownership— (laughter) —
113 or responsible gun laws?

114 L: (pause) I think the screening process should be more, um, vigorous than what it is now. It's—
115 it's so easy for somebody to get a gun out here on the street. Somebody can say, "Hey, I'm
116 selling one." And somebody can just buy it, without going through the proper steps, not going to
117 the gun range, not going to sign up. People need their backgrounds completely checked, you
118 know. It's felons out here that's carrying, I mean, I'm all for the CCW and everything like that,
119 to protect yourself or your home. But look what has happened. I mean, it's getting ridiculous out
120 here with the guns, people just don't care anymore. They just shoot, they don't talk—they don't
121 say anything. And then like I said, it's innocent people out here hurt and getting hurt. And you're
122 not just losing a loved one, you know, dying, you're losing people that's going to jail and
123 everything like that, their families are also losing in the long run as well. I say, take 'em off the
124 street! People that's responsible enough to have them, so be it, let them have 'em. But people
125 that's irresponsible and have no business having 'em, I say, "No, hell no!" Hell nah.

126 D: I-Is there anything you'd like to add?

127 L: (pause) I need these people in Congress, Senate, whatever they gonna do, to get it together. I
128 need our aldermans and everybody to step up and say, "This is not right. This isn't cool." Us
129 mothers out here shouldn't be losing our kids to senseless violence like this. I don't want my son
130 to be another number, a statistic. I try to keep my sons name out there. I still talk about my son
131 because in the reality, my son is my legacy. And I'm gonna make sure I carry it on. I'm still
132 trying to get justice for him. We're going through—we're still going through the court processes,
133 the first jury trial is next month. And like I said, I'm just still trying to maintain and be strong for
134 my other siblings because I know my son wouldn't want me to sit here and be depressed or
135 anything like that.

136 D: Thank you.

137 L: Thank you for listening.

138 D: Oh yes, of course.

139 L (Added after the recording, June 6th, 2019): March 2019, the trial and sentencing are finally

140 over. The young man that tried to rob the individual was given 43 years with an additional 18

141 years of supervision. He will be done with the prison by the age of 88. Of course this will not

142 bring back my son, Emani, but at least it brings a little closure and “Peace” to my family as well

143 as myself.