

1 GVP25 Karin Tyler

2 D: Hello, please state your name.

3 K: My name is Karin Tyler.

4 D: And Karin, how young are you?

5 K: Mm, I'm forty-seven.

6 D: You look good for forty-seven.

7 K: Thank you so much!

8 D: (inaudible)

9 (laughter)

10 K: Okay.

11 D: Karin, have you ever experienced gun violence in any form or manner?

12 K: Yes.

13 D: And will you please share your story with us?

14 K: Sure. Well the gun violence I experienced was with my son, he was 24 at the time. And I'll
15 never forget that day. So, I spoke with him earlier, he was excited about different things. He had
16 just met this beautiful young lady and he was so happy. And we, we just talked about general
17 things and then we said we loved each other, so I'm very happy that that was our last
18 conversation.

19 D: Mhmm.

20 K: And then, you know I was driving home from work and, you know, just going through my
21 day as usual and then my daughter called me late that night and (pause) she, at first, I actually
22 didn't answer the phone, I was like, "It is late, I'm going to sleep." And then she called back and
23 then I was like, "Oh my God. There-there has to be somethin' wrong." So, when I answered the

24 phone and she was like, “Mom?” And then I was like, “Yes?” And she said, “You haven’t
25 heard?” And I was like, “No, hun, what’s wrong?” And she was like (pause), “Andrew, he has
26 been shot and it’s bad and—” And I was like, “What do you mean it’s bad, you know, he’s
27 gonna be okay and she’s like, “Mom, it’s really bad.” And I was like, “Oh my God, where is
28 he?” So, then I just panicked and I can’t even hardly move and so we drive over there and I’m
29 just like, “Please God, please don’t.” You know, so I’m just thinking of any possible way I can
30 take care of him if he’s hurt, you know, just please don’t.

31 (pause)

32 D: Do you need a minute?

33 K: No, I’m fine.

34 D: Okay.

35 K: And so, I called my friend and I’m just like, “Please.” And then she just started prayin’. So,
36 then when, when we pull up to the block, you see the yellow tape and people all around. So, I’m
37 just, my heart just drops at that point and so then we get out the car and I run over there and then,
38 you know of course, I don’t care about the yellow tape so I t-I just try to run and I just wanna see
39 my son. And then they tell me to get behind the yellow line. And I’m like, “Where is my son?
40 Somebody has to tell me somethin’.” And then they say, “If you don’t get behind the yellow
41 tape, you could be arrested.” And I’m like, “I don’t care.” Yeah. So, then a detective came and
42 talked to me and he told me my son was killed. And then I just immediately, I was in like, total
43 shock at that point, I just remember kind of lookin’ around in slow motion like my world was
44 comin’ to an end.

45 D: Wh-wh-where were you?

46 K: It was, it was like off of [Lincoln Creek]. I remember Congress. And it's interestin' because a
47 block my son was on and I might, it might not even be correct. It's like, it's so hard to remember
48 certain details and...

49 D: 'Course.

50 K: And for some reason with that block, no one could ever, like when they would go to see him,
51 they would always have trouble findin' the house. And it was amazin' because the young lady
52 with this situation, when she called to have police come, they couldn't find the house. And it was
53 just, you know, it was, it was always somethin' about that house. And just to back up with the
54 story, my son was interacting with another young man and I still feel like we don't really know
55 the story. But the, but this young man and another young man came into my son's house and
56 they were basically robbing him.

57 D: Oh my god.

58 K: And my son, he was out with, with the young lady that he was excited about and he, they
59 were coming into the house, I think they, yeah, they had just got food and Andrew walked in first
60 and you could tell, well from the young lady's report, she, he-she said he stopped at some point
61 and then he just like, had his hands in the air. And he was trying to like, negotiate with the young
62 guy and I think the guy asked if he had money and I think my son had like twenty dollars in cash
63 on him or whatever. And then he just shot him one time, just one time and then the young girl,
64 she ran out of the house and yeah that's all, that's all it took. And then the young guys, yeah,
65 they left.

66 D: Were they captured?

67 K: They were. And yeah, so, the young guys reported that it was about rap beats. And my son's
68 not really into music like that, so. It was-it was frustratin' and we were at the trial, like every,
69 every day.

70 D: Define "rap beats".

71 K: Define?

72 D: Yeah.

73 K: Like rap music, and like the beats and the music that goes behind.

74 D: Okay.

75 K: That's, yeah, played with it. So, yeah, just a ins-instrumental version of, of a rap song or
76 somethin'. So, and again, my son wasn't really into that. So, I don't, I don't—

77 D: That don't make sense.

78 K: I feel like we don't even know the truth to this day. But, my son, well, he was just such an
79 amazing person, like he could light up any room and he was so funny. So, you know, he made a
80 point to like, like, he could make anyone smile and you know, he, he was just, he, he was truly
81 like one of a kind. And I would describe him like this even before everything happened. He was
82 just like, he was such an amazing person.

83 D: Oh wow.

84 K: And, he was such a charmer too. And he was very, very nice looking so, he, he, he caught the
85 eye of, of many young women. (laughter)

86 D: Sounds like it. (laughter)

87 K: And plus, with his—

88 D: Young and old ones.

89 K: Yeah, yes. 'Cause even my friends would be like, "When your child grows up..." like, "Stop
90 playin'." (laughter) But yeah so, he was really into athletics. He was, he was the, my oldest child
91 and you know, he really just did a lot for his younger siblings too.

92 D: Do you forgive the shooter?

93 K: You know, it, it's, it's funny because I don't know how to say this. I can answer the question
94 and say yes, to be honest.

95 D: Okay.

96 K: Because it was like so much, adds so much anger at a certain point. And, you know, it's like,
97 to me with death, you gotta make decisions with, with certain things. Like, "Do I walk with that
98 anger or do I release it?" And then even being a mother of young men, or young boys too, it-it's
99 just like, the way the world is set up, it, you know, it's like, I don't wanna say I can understand. I
100 never wanna say that. But, there's so many altercations that can escalate and, so. But for me, I
101 just had to forgive that young man, different things came out in the trial, like, we would have so
102 many of our family members there, he didn't have anybody there, you know? And with the other
103 young man that was with him, like their family supported him a lot, but with this young guy,
104 nobody. I was upset about certain things, like, you know, he had a record. He had different things
105 where it seemed like he may have, should've been incarcerated, you know? But he wasn't. So,
106 but, yeah. I mean, I guess I just, my struggle probably more so was with God, unfortunately.
107 And, and then that's the hard part because it's like, that's your strength, but then also, it's like,
108 "Why did you let that happen to my baby?" You know?

109 D: Mhmm.

110 K: So, especially after everything we, you know? Our family, we been through a lot of different
111 things. Like, I had Andrew when I was sixteen years old. And it was funny 'cause I was at a

112 Catholic School at the time and the nuns were goin' crazy. (laughter) And so, yeah, they wanted
113 me to adopt and I was like, "I can't, I'm carryin'. This is my baby." You know? And it's like, I
114 always wanted children, so I guess I just got a jumpstart on it. But, no, but, I mean, we always
115 had a special relationship. But I was a trouble—

116 D: (phone goes off) I'm so sorry.

117 K: It's okay.

118 D: They'll cut it out. (laughter) (phone continues ringing) Cut it down right now, so, please
119 proceed.

120 K: Okay. Yeah, but, yeah, we had been through some things. But you know, we, we grew
121 through them, you know. But I just felt like, man, just based on different things that I did, you
122 know, I always wished it was me versus my son and—

123 D: Of course.

124 K: —I know a lot of mothers, you know. And even, you know, I could, I could just imagine
125 different things and always wish that we could exchange that.

126 D: What would you say to someone who recently lost a child or even a loved one to gun violence?

127 K: It's hard 'cause I actually, through my job I interact with a lot of people and it's not much to
128 say at the beginning. You know? The m-the main thing that I do say is, "You got to take care of
129 you right now." 'Cause I-I know the pain and I never say, "It's gonna be okay." Or any of those
130 different things. I just tell them that whatever they do, they need to rearrange their whole life to,
131 to work on self-care. You know? 'Cause this is a blow that's just devastating. You know? And,
132 you know, I get a lot of calls around like, holidays and different things like that and I'm like,
133 "Forget tradition, forget any of that. You have to, you can rewrite this whole script for your life,

134 you can do different things and honor your son, honor yourself during all these different times
135 that trigger.”

136 D: That’s beautiful.

137 K: Yeah. You know, and it just has to be like that because I think a lot of times, we’ll do, try to
138 keep in tradition because of our family or different things like that. But it-it’s okay to take care of
139 yourself on a whole ‘nother level.

140 D: Mhmm.

141 K: Yeah.

142 D: I like that. What would you say to legislators, what would you like to see changed?

143 K: Well, definitely I think people need to realize the urgency of this and the humanity of it. I
144 think this is a state of, state of an emergency, you know? It’s just like, well, if people realize how
145 far reaching this is and how, you know, just even like, when you look at violence prevention, if
146 you don’t start looking at the pain and the trauma that this causes, it’s just a vicious cycle. And
147 so, there definitely has to be more done with gun violence and, you know, and just not on the, the
148 aspect of like, like with the police department, putting money in that way, but violence
149 prevention, with healing the community with mental health. I just think about like, the, the
150 homicides in like, the past few years and you look at all those families, all those young people,
151 you know, just how young people are being killed and our youth and I-I just think about the
152 future, like how is that gonna play out? With all this untreated trauma? And, you know, th-
153 there’s not that much help for them. And so, there, we gotta do that or we gotta do more.

154 D: Is there anything you’d like to add?

155 K: (pause) I don’t think so.

156 D: Thank you.

157 K: Thank you.

158 D: That was good!

159 K: Oh, thanks!

160 (laughter)