

1 GVP43, Putt Bey

2 D: Please state your name.

3 P: I am Putt Bey.

4 D: And how old are you?

5 P: I am 27 years young.

6 D: And what nationality are you?

7 P: I am a Moor American.

8 D: Okay and you are male or female?

9 P: Male.

10 D: What neighborhood or area of town do you live in?

11 P: I live in the Sherman Park, Washington Park area right now, but I've, I grew up in the Clarke  
12 Street, you know, the Center, Locust, Hadley area.

13 D: And how long have you lived there?

14 P: It's been goin' on, in the same area now, it's been around twelve years.

15 D: Okay. And share your story, your experience with gun violence, please.

16 P: Okay, well, the first time I, you know, I was actually conscious of just, gun violence period, I  
17 had to be like around four or five years old. And I remember it vividly. My aunt, a lot of my  
18 cousins, we are the same age so, we always used to hang out when we were young. And we were  
19 at my aunt house, she stayed [in Sherman Park]. And we were just upstairs playin'. It was a  
20 duplex. My cousin stayed downstairs and my auntie, she stayed upstairs. So, we were just playin'  
21 around in the livin' room and it, next thing you know, it's just like a drive by. And then, my  
22 auntie, she's just like, "Y'all, get on the ground! Get on the ground!" And then, that was just, it  
23 was, it was traumatizin' in a sense, but it was a rush. Like, it was just like, "Wow." Like, this

24 like, bein' that young, I really didn't know like, my life was in danger, that well, like, that  
25 instant. But found out afterwards, with my aunt screamin', tellin' us, "No, when they, when you  
26 hear shots, hit the floor." So, yeah.

27 D: Wow. Did that happ-, was that the first and only time that you experienced gun violence?

28 P: Oh no, oh no. You know, growin' up in Milwaukee, especially in the 90s, it was a lot of, it  
29 was a lot of gun, gun violence. Like, I know a lot, the statistics, the statistics now may show  
30 otherwise, but, from physical experience, I don't think that's true. And with being a, you know, I  
31 have my major criminal justice as well, law enforcement and investigation. And the statistics  
32 don't, doesn't even show that. It, it shows that the early 90s to the early 2000s, it was more gun  
33 violence then, then now.

34 D: Wow.

35 P: Yeah.

36 D: So, share other experience that you've personally experienced with gun violence.

37 P: From friends and family gettin' killed (pause) it was during the Katrina time, when Katrina  
38 first hit. A friend of our family, we were [in Metcalfe Park], and he, we would just, my dad and a  
39 couple of our other family members were just out there talkin' to the young, the young man at  
40 the time. And nobody would know, like, this was gonna happen to him, but he had went to the  
41 gas station on, what's that? [Sherman Park]?

42 D: Mhmm.

43 P: Right off Center. Next thing you know, he was shot dead. He was shot dead. It was just, this  
44 had to be like five to ten minutes after. Like, he was just at our family's house and we had, they  
45 had got a call and said, "Yeah, just been killed." So, yeah.

46 D: Did they find the person who did it?

47 P: That I do not know.

48 D: Okay.

49 P: I do not know.

50 D: That's mindblowin'.

51 P: Yeah. (pause) It's definitely mindblowin'.

52 D: That's mindblowin'. Other than that, you know, incident was there one that may have  
53 personally, how did that affect you after talking to him? Were you old enough to understand,  
54 when that happened?

55 P: Oh, yeah, like, you know, after the first incident, me experiencin' gun violence, I knew then  
56 like, it, it, that's just what went on in our community. It was kinda like, kinda made me numb.

57 D: Wow.

58 P: Yeah, now that I look back at it and I could be able to decipher you know, my memories and  
59 my thoughts. We were, I grew up kind of numb to gun violence, even gun shots sometimes. I  
60 knew to hit the ground, though. You know, just from my aunt, just lettin' us know that, but it was  
61 just like, in a way, it was a way of life.

62 D: Mhmm.

63 P: Because you know, we would hear sirens every five minutes. So, we knew what that was, if it  
64 wasn't guns, it was either a car crash or you know, some other type of violence that was takin'  
65 place. But it was just, it was so frequent and just like, growin' up in that type of life style just  
66 became numb. And that's just, I'm, I'm pretty sure a lot of our youth out here in Milwaukee feel  
67 the same way.

68 D: Wow.

69 P: And that it's, it's sad, but it's just, it's what's goin' on in our community and good thing is we,  
70 we have, organizations like you guys are here to raise awareness on those things.

71 D: Thank you. (pause) The young man who was shot, that was talking to you and your family  
72 earlier, do you know around how old he was?

73 P: At the time I believe he was around like, twenty-four, twenty-five. And, and it's funny that I  
74 say this now, it's just like, (pause), that is truly a blessing to make it to that age. Like, even now.  
75 Like, I'm, I feel ecstatic that I'm still livin' because then I didn't know I would still be, I, I would  
76 make it to see twenty-five. Well, hell, twenty sometimes. Because we would just, we just grew  
77 up in that type of environment, it was just dangerous. And you didn't know if you were gonna  
78 get hit by a stray bullet or car, police, things of that nature. So, it was just, it was just a lot of  
79 drama and violence in our neighborhoods, so.

80 D: Wow. How would you say this experience, I know you said that you were numb, but do you  
81 think you, were you ever fearful in your community of gun violence?

82 P: OH, all the time. All the time. But the fear kind of turned into a coping mechan-mechanism  
83 where it would be more so preparedness. So, I kind of used the fear, my fears to shape me bein'  
84 prepared for the, certain things. So, if cert-, if some things would happen it made, it just made me  
85 more observant and aware of my surroundings.

86 D: Okay.

87 P: So, I guess that what it is, the, the fear just made me be prepared for things.

88 D: Okay. Do you think that the situation, the shooting of the house or the young man being shot  
89 at the gas station, do you think that these could've been avoided?

90 P: Oh, definitely. But I mean, as far as, (pause) the intimacy of the situation, wh-whether they  
91 had things goin' on between each other or whether those, whoever was executin' a drive by,

92 whoever they were gonna look for, I don't know what type of dilemma they were in with certain  
93 people, but definitely. All things can be avoided, just takes, we just need to start thinking more as  
94 a community, rather than being what, what should I say? Rather than be impulsive.

95 D: Hmm.

96 P: I think a lot of times we, we act impulsively instead of stoppin', observin', listenin', and just  
97 thinkin', then engagin' in certain things. And now that I know better and I know more, I know I  
98 always had that inclination growin' up, just that us as a people, we shouldn't, why are we doin'  
99 this to each other?

100 D: Right.

101 P: You know? Even, even though it's still strange to do it to others, but we been through a lot  
102 already as a people, so, why are we, we, we're doin' the oppositions work for them. So, it's kind  
103 of like, it's like a slap in the face now that I'm older, but I do understand that people need to  
104 protect themselves and their family. But I know a lot of those instances, that's not the case. It's  
105 not a protection case, it's moreso people are just impulsive. And also, I think that, that, that a lot  
106 of gun violence can be prohibited if we as a people be, are more educated about weapons and  
107 arms in defense, rather than just usin' it for offense. So, if we, if we taught our children how to  
108 properly unload a rifle or hand gun and those things, and we, we start hunting and things of that  
109 nature, maybe it'll take away that aspect from our community. And also, like, I remember like,  
110 growin' up in the 90s, used to be a lot of fist fights.

111 D: Right.

112 P: It wasn't, it was, it was, it was rare that you would see somebody get shot, but it was  
113 happening. But that would have to get taken to a whole different level, when the fists weren't  
114 involved anymore. So, I think if we get back to that, if we work on more so like, martial arts

115 would be more so, introduced to our communities for kids to displace their anger with each  
116 other. Because it's easy for somebody to pick up a gun and just shoot somebody, but to be  
117 willing to really display your anger through either fighting or sports or that nature, it would be  
118 better for our youth.

119 D: I agree. What do you think we could do to eliminate and lower gun violence? I think you shed  
120 some light on it, but what would you say to elected officials?

121 P: What would I say to elected officials as far as eliminatin' gun violence? Or lowerin' gun  
122 violence? Or gun, most violent crimes? I would say it needs to be more com-community policin'.  
123 Meanin' the police needs, they need to get involved in communities rather than be intimidation  
124 factor. Because I understand that's a part of their practice, but you don't know who's a criminal.  
125 (laughter) So, you can't really be intimidatin' the people who are just law-abiding citizens.

126 D: Right.

127 P: So, what I would say to the elected officials is make community police better. They need to be  
128 actively in the community, there need to be two police officers on each block. They need to get  
129 to know the block, they need to know the kids, they need to be actively involved in what's goin'  
130 on in the communities as far as like, events like these, you know? Where, where, where's the  
131 elected officials? We're, we're the community members.

132 D: Right.

133 P: And also, the elected officials need to be more involved because a lot of times, they just sit  
134 behind the desk and they need to uphold their oath to the constitution and make sure they protect  
135 the people and let the people know about their rights and protections. And also, they need to  
136 serve the community, rather than servin' themselves and their own selfish interests. Because  
137 that's, that's what's happenin'. Obviously, it's just that, they're just servin' their own selfish

138 inter-interests. They're servin' the business rather than the community and the people. The  
139 business doesn't work if the people don't. I understand crime is a billion-dollar industry, that's  
140 how the U.S. eats. But, we don't need to make crime happen or to, for the police to stay  
141 employed.

142 D: Mhmm.

143 P: You know what I mean, because that's what it comes down to is, just that, it's a billion-dollar,  
144 it's a billion-dollar, trillion-dollar industry. If they, if there's no crime, then we don't need police,  
145 we don't need elected officials. What're they here for? So, that needs to be called to attention as  
146 well. But they just need, there just needs to be more community engagement. They need to teach  
147 the people what they're, they need to, the people need to be well-educated about law, period.

148 And then once you get at, a good enough education of what your rights are, you know, your birth  
149 rights and everything, there would be no violence. If you understood that, you know, between  
150 love and peace, that's, that's what it's gonna bring. If you know that you have a well education  
151 of law, you'll be good. There will be no violence.

152 D: Amen. Is there anything you'd like to add?

153 P: (pause) Just once again, to the elected officials, the police: uphold your oath to the  
154 Constitution, protect the people and not your own selfish interests within the company and the  
155 business 'cause if the, if the business isn't ran by the people, there's no business.

156 D: Thank you for sharing your story!

157 P: No problem.