

1 GVP36 Trinika Walker

2 D: Please state your name.

3 T: Trinika Walker.

4 (pause)

5 D: Trinika, how old are you?

6 T: Thirty-nine years old.

7 D: And I know you've experienced gun violence; would you please share your story?

8 T: Well first I start off and say, "Hey, which one?" You live long enough, you'll experience
9 several violent acts due to gun or whatever. But what hit home for me was my son, William
10 Davis. He was shot and killed August 6th, 2018.

11 D: Hmm.

12 T: I received a phone call from my daughter. And she said "Hey, mom. Will just got shot." And I
13 was sitting on the couch, eating a bowl of chili and I remember going back to the word, the Bible
14 and you know, you got to be careful. You can't be too quick to move. So, I was thinking about
15 that, I'm like, "Okay, don't jump out of shape. Don't get bent out." You know, "Pray." So,
16 instantly, I began to pray. I began to pray. I began to pray. I began to pray. Said, "Come on y'all,
17 let's get up." You know, we didn't rush, we didn't run. We-we got up. I put my shoes on, one
18 foot at a time. Put my jacket on, one, you know, one sleeve at a time. And I was praying, I was
19 praying, I was praying. I said, "Well, come on." We got in the car and my daughter also told me,
20 she said, "It happened at [Lower East Side]" [...] is located somewhere off of, off the East Side,
21 somewhere. By the lake, I'll say. So, immediately, I don't know. I just, I just, I just decided to go
22 to Sinai Samaritan Hospital. And as I was on my way there, I got another phone call. (pause) I
23 received another phone call saying that he's at St. Mary's. So, I kept going. I kept riding. And as

24 I was riding, the streets were very dark. I can remember the streets being dark. I can remember it,
25 it almost seeming like, a, a, like twilight. You know, like a like, I don't know, it was just dark. It
26 was dark and it was (pause) to me, I don't know, I just felt evil, you know, in the air I'll say. You
27 know? I just felt something but I kept praying, I kept praying. I immediately called my pastor as
28 I was still driving'. And as I'm driving and I'm calling my pastor, there's cars flying past me.
29 When I say so many cars, and I'm like, "What is going on?! What's going on?" I'm still on the
30 phone with Pastor Morgan and he's praying. He's praying. After I had said, "Pastor, I just got a
31 phone call and they told me that Will was shot. I don't know what's ahead of me, but this is the
32 information that was just placed upon me." And he said, "Trinika." And he just began to pray.
33 He began to pray. And, I had him on speaker phone and I had my phone in my pocket. And he
34 was praying. He was praying and I was just driving, but I'm looking left and right, these cars are
35 flying past me and it's still pitch dark outside. Pulled up to St. Mary's and I went in. Actually,
36 they had it taped off. They had the whole, the h-the hospital emergency entrance top taped off. I
37 jumped out of the car with my daughters and two of my grandkids and we, we went inside. The
38 security then put us in a small room. I went inside, I said, "Excuse me, they said my son is here."
39 He said, "Who's your son, ma'am?" I say, "William Davis, they said he was shot!" And he
40 immediately pushed me in a room and said, "You got to wait here." "Wait here? Nah, nah, you
41 going to have to tell me something." Pastor's still on the phone praying. He's still on, I can hear
42 him, and he can hear me, we, he's still praying and I'm talking and I'm trying to figure out
43 what's going on. They put us in this room and I couldn't stand it. I couldn't, I couldn't take it.
44 "Get me out of here," is what I said. And I, I come from up out of there and, and I was waiting
45 and I was walking to-and-fro. And as I was walking I began to see people just come, people who

46 I knew and people I didn't know. I still didn't understand what was going on. The pastor was still
47 praying.

48 D: Oh my gosh.

49 T: I begin to see my mom. I begin to see my dad. I begin to see the rest of my children, friends,
50 close family members. It's like, "What are you here for?" That's, what's my thoughts and that's
51 what I said to them, "What are you here for? Why are y'all here?" The doctor then came and
52 grabbed me. He said, (pause) "I'm sorry, your son Julius is dead." (pause) I jumped up and
53 walked out the room. Why? Because I almost wanted to praise God because he said, "Julius."
54 And if he said, "Julius" that meant that it wasn't my son.

55 D: Right.

56 T: So, I wanted to jump up and say, "Hallelujah!" But at that time, I got choked up. And a nurse
57 come, said, "No, no!" She was fussing at the doctor. She said, "Her son is William." You know?
58 She began to tell him, like, my, who, you know, who my son was and he beg-he apologized.
59 And, and when we came in, back into the room and they said, "Well, yes, your son William
60 Davis, is dead." (pause) "How do you know it's Will? 'Cause you just told me Julius." So, now
61 I'm tug-a-warring there. "I need the facts." And they asked, did we want to go back there? I said,
62 "Well, do he still have blood on him? Is he cleaned up?" They said, "No." I mean, no, he wasn't
63 cleaned up, he did still have blood on him. "Nah. I don't want to go back there." I looked at dad,
64 I said, "Would you, you go back there and do this?" He said, "Yeah," he'll do it. So, he went
65 back there and then he, he viewed him. I didn't want to see my son like that. My son was a good,
66 good, good, good person. Good, strong role model as well. Anyways, there was nothing else to
67 do. I walked out the hospital, when I walked out, if I could think of a number, I would say 500,
68 people outside. And it choked me up even more. Because it's like, how do everybody know?

69 What's, you know, I'm still trying to figure out what is going on. I immediately said, "Hey y'all.
70 They took my boy, he gone." I walked to my car. Everybody was chasing me, I walked to my
71 car, got in my car and I sped off. Where was I going? I don't know. I was still in shock. I didn't
72 even know if it was true at that point. I mean, I hear you, I heard what the doctor's said. But, did
73 I want to believe it? No. Was it true to me? No. No. Did I want to let go just yet? No, no. As I
74 sped off from the hospital, I can hear people saying, calling my name, "Trinika, no! No! No!
75 No!" And I sped off. I went to my grandmother's house, [Park West]. I went in there and I said, I
76 call her Mama, I said, "Mama, they got Will." I said, "Will gone." She said, "Well baby, (pause)
77 ain't nothing else we can do. God got him." I didn't want to hear that at the time. I stormed out. I
78 ain't know what I wanted to hear at the time. I just walked to the corner, I just needed some air. I
79 walked to the corner, I sat in the corner by myself, walking in circles. Nothing anyone could
80 have said would've done anything at that point. Nothing at that point. I looked up, I see cars. I
81 hear cars. I hear cars screeching around the corners and they coming from all different ways.
82 And it was my family. They left the hospital and they come to my grandmother's house.
83 Everybody just jumped out and every, we, we stayed there from one o'clock in the morning
84 probably 'til like seven o'clock in the morning, on the corner. His friends, everybody showed up.
85 Everybody showed up. Now, it's time to plan the funeral. (pause) I got to sit in the seat across
86 from the funeral director and management and what not, to plan a home going celebration.
87 (pause) Wasn't the celebration that I, it wasn't my type of celebration at that point. You know,
88 I'm like, I had to sit in that chair. Never would've even imagined me sitting in that chair. I never
89 thought that I would sit in that chair, 'specially not with him. He was special. We planned the
90 funeral. I did not have one red penny. (pause) I didn't have a dime. Yeah, I work a good job.
91 Have you ever had to rob Peter to pay Paul? That's where I was at. So, life is short. None of

92 these things, I was a young parent. I'm only thirty-nine, young parent. Started off young, a
93 teenage mom with no direction, but guess what, having my children and growing with them, you
94 know, I learned. I learned a lot just by raising them, you know? I, I just learned a lot being with
95 them, going through our ups and downs. We were together always. Always. Always. So,
96 planning this funeral. Now I got to think about how I'm going to get the money. I began to pray.
97 I began to pray. And I heard a voice say, "I am your father. And I am rich. And if I am rich, you
98 are too." The voice said, "You can have whatever you want. Whatever you want." "What? Are
99 you serious? Okay, let me test this out. I want a six-thousand-dollar casket, I want a four-
100 hundred-dollar suit, I want you know, five-hundred-dollar flower arrangements." You know, I
101 just want to test the waters. (pause) And it happened. It happened. Now, I'm not speaking on his
102 dad and his wife on what they had. I'm telling you what Trinika didn't have, I didn't have a
103 dime. Friday, we did a car wash, all wheels, well, all my sons' friends came over. We did a car
104 wash, we raised twelve-hundred-dollars. Saturday, I was asleep. The kids was knocking on the
105 door. "We ready!" They got buckets, they got soap, they got towels. I said, "What y'all going to
106 do?" "Let's do it again." I raised twelve-hundred-dollars that day. Sunday, I'm going to church.
107 I'm getting dressed, cars pulling up outside. "What's going on? Let me see something, let's look
108 on Facebook. Aw nah, the youth done hosted another car wash." Guess what I said, "Y'all can
109 have this, I'm going to church." Came home, they had twelve-hundred-dollars for me.

110 D: Oh, wow!

111 T: Three days in a row, that was my confirmation that God was with me. He was with me. That
112 was just a blessing right there. Oh my God. That third day was the day, and it was on a Sunday.
113 Oooh, mercy! He got up, it's all I can hear. (pause) That was, that's all I needed right then and
114 there. Right then and there, I wiped away the tears. I, I picked up some strength. I picked up

115 some strength by the grace of God. I picked up some strength, he blessed me with strength and I
116 was able to carry. I said, "Let's go." It was time to go view his body, they had cleaned him up,
117 embalmed him. "Let's go." Went back to the funeral home to see him and he was looking so
118 beautiful. In death, he was looking beautiful. He looked his, the same, he looked like he was just
119 sleep. That was another confirmation. God gave me more strength right there. They let me see
120 him. I spent my own time with him. I hugged him. I kissed him. I talked to him. I said, "Let's
121 go." It's time to, it's, it's time. "Let's do this." And we had a funeral for him. We had a funeral at
122 Krause Funeral Home, over a thousand people showed up.

123 D: Wow, that was love.

124 T: I had over eight-hundred people sign their name in his book. There were people there who I
125 didn't know. There were people there who I knew, but I didn't see. That many people. We had
126 his repass at a park. And it was like the biggest family reunion ever. I never saw that many youth
127 come together and do good. We always doing bad when we get together now. You know, the
128 youth, they want to smoke their stuff, drink their stuff, (inaudible) they pistols, or whatever it is
129 that they have. This wasn't that. We were able to laugh. We were able to cry. We were able to
130 hug on one another. You know what? There were girls and boys there who I thought couldn't be
131 in the same room with each other. You know, because I know their issues. They were there. All
132 because of my son. All because of my son, William Earl Davis Jr. Who's supposed to graduate
133 next month, twelfth grade, whose birthday was just the next month after he died. He turned
134 eighteen the next month, didn't even live to see his eighteenth birthday. (pause)

135 D: Did they catch the person who killed him?

136 T: The person that killed him (pause) was killed on the scene.

137 D: Wow.

138 T: And it was the young man, he went to, he went to jail but he was released, self-defense.

139 D: So, the young man that killed your son was killed that same day.

140 T: Right, the same time.

141 D: Did you find out why he shot your son?

142 T: I found out that my son and several other friends were there at this, at this [Lower East Side].

143 And my son is a rapper, he was rapping or whatever they were, they were doing. And this guy, I

144 guess he sized him up, like, "You lil' nigga," you know, "Who y'all lil' nigga's think y'all is?"

145 And you know, what not. (pause) He up, he pulled out a gun. He pointed at another young man

146 and talked about what he would do. My son, stepped forward and put his hands up and said,

147 "Hey, hold on." He ain't got to go that far, you know, "We ain't got to go that far. You ain't got

148 to pull out no gun, it ain't that serious." The dude shot the first guy in the foot, turned around and

149 shot my son, my son was shot in the knee and in his chin. The one that went in his chin is the

150 one, that's the bullet that killed him. Behind my son, there's another guy. He unloaded his pistol.

151 D: On the shooter?

152 T: On the shooter. (pause) And there you have it. (pause) Two wrongs don't make a right. Two

153 wrongs don't make a right. (pause) I'm just numb to that part right there. I'm so numb to that

154 part, not knowing how to feel on that part. So, I rather leave it alone.

155 D: Do you forgive him? The shooter.

156 T: I have to. I have to. Let me tell you something else, reason why I have to forgive him. I'm, I'm

157 a Christian woman. I have to forgive him. If I want my Father to forgive me, you know, and we

158 mess up. I ain't perfect. I need Him to forgive me for some stuff right now, you know. But you

159 have to lead by example. As much as you may not want to, and this is death, you know? "You

160 take mine, I'm taking yours!" You know, that's, that's what, that's the attitude we have. You

161 know? An eye for an eye, and, and this and that, or whatever. But do I forgive him? I forgive
162 him. You know what, this was a part of the plan. It wasn't my plan, but this was a part of the
163 plan. That man showed up at that, at that park with two guns on him. He had a monitor bracelet
164 on his ankle. He was supposed to have been at court, that morning, the federal court building, ten
165 o'clock that morning. And he wasn't. So, I believe this, believe it was a plan. I'm not going to
166 say his plan or my son's plan, but this was a plan for something. Something, something,
167 something. Something great behind this. "What do you mean? What are you saying?" I'm saying
168 that this youth, the youth has come together, a lot of 'em. I've gained their attention. Not me, but,
169 through my son. You know? I hear the, I hear them talking. I listen to them and they talk about
170 how Will was a positive image to them, for them, 4.0 Brookfield East student, you know?
171 (pause) Choir boy, he was in the choir. (laughter) He had a lead song. (laughter) Family oriented.
172 (pause)

173 D: Is that right? What would you say to a mom or a dad who just lost someone to gun violence?
174 How did you overcome it?

175 T: Well, first and foremost, like I said, since, since I was a little girl, I've always knew to turn to
176 God. He is my everything. He is all that I need. Even when my son passed, you know. Some of
177 your closest ones, oh they're there with you for a minute, they there with you for a minute. But
178 then, people begin to disappear. But I'll tell you one person that'll never disappear. God. The
179 spirit, the father, He will never disappear. He will be with you. If you just reach out to Him, He
180 will supply all your needs. I didn't have money for the funeral. But I came up with it, we buried
181 him. We buried him! (pause) I have a little peace. You hear me? I have a little peace. (pause)
182 I've went to the doctor. And they, they wanted to say, well, let me say, they said, "Depression,
183 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, you need medication." And this and that. Now, I'm speaking for

184 me and me only. I don't need it. God is my everything. He is my pill. He is my sunshine. He is
185 my pillow. He's my tissue when I wipe away my tears. He is everything to me. You know? How
186 can you put God before you put your kids? Most people won't do that, they say "How? Where is
187 he? What have he done for you?" But let me tell you what He did. (laughter) I had cancer; I'm
188 still here. I was molested; I'm still here. Mercy. They took my, my son, but before that, two
189 weeks before that, my brother died due to a car accident. Well, a car hit him in the road. But I'm
190 still here, still standing, and I still got my praise. I love the Lord. He's the only person who
191 understand me. My mama may not understand me. My children may not understand me. But God
192 understands me. And I just trust Him and I just put my all into Him, you know? (pause)

193 D: What would you say to legislators or law makers in reference to how you think they can
194 reduce gun violence?

195 T: Alright, I think that they started this mess with the, with the Carry and Conceal. I don't think
196 we needed that. You know, we putti ngour trust and our faith and, and our all into material
197 things, guns and tools and things to that nature. But if you listen to someone's testimony, you
198 would know that you would not need those things. I don't need a gun. (pause) I don't even need
199 pepper spray, not even for a dog. I don't need that. He is my everything. He is my all and all,
200 even when I ain't right He's still there for me, even when I mess up He's still there, even when
201 I'm wrong He's still there. No one's perfect, you know? I would say that now is the time, we
202 need to bring prayer back into the schools. We need to get rid of these guns, by any means, by all
203 means. I don't know how we're going to stop it. I really don't know. All I know is, I'm turning
204 to the Lord, you know, I trust God, you know? And in my circle, I trust Him. In my group, I trust
205 Him. So, I kind of, sort of, really don't have to worry about my group because God got us. God
206 got us. Even if they mess up, he's still got us. You know? And this is what I tell them, he's still

207 got us. I just say, let's focus on these youth, on the youth. Let's focus on the youth. Not only the
208 youth, let's focus on these parents. Let's get these parents some help. Sometimes parents feel like
209 they don't got nothing else, you know? Sometimes we want to do certain things, but we can't.
210 Because of certain laws or certain things that we can't do. And guess what, we locked up, they in
211 the system. You know? I really don't know what we can do. I just know that I'm going to start
212 with the youth.

213 D: Okay.

214 T: I'm going to start there.

215 D: And you started a program, tell me about your program.

216 T: I started a program called Stop the Violence 53206. And it started with just a, a meeting in the
217 garage. Where I announced over Facebook that I wanted to start a group and I wanted to have, I
218 have, I said, "I want to start a meeting." And I said, "I would like for the girls," look at me
219 calling the girls, I said, "I'm looking for all the girls. Come meet me here and we going to have a
220 meeting." I had about sixteen boys showed up first. (laughter) I said, "Come on, Lord. Ha! Ha!
221 Come on, sixteen boys?" I said, "I called for the girls!" Here come the boys that's sagging, the
222 ones with the pistols, yeah, the ones with the lean and the weed. I said, "Hey, this group ain't
223 that. But if you're willing to put it down, I promise you, you'll be alright. I promise you I'll be
224 there for you. I promise you, I got you." You know, "And I'll do all that I can," you know? And
225 all that I can is pray. You know? And, that right there was a confirmation, let's get the ball
226 rolling. So, I had a youth event. And it was titled, "I Am Not Defined by My Zip Code". I had a
227 few speakers there. Krause Funeral Home came, Mark Krause, he came and spoke to the youth
228 in regards to when people die and the body, you know, what they do with the body. You know? I
229 wanted to rattle, shake the youth up. We had Milwaukee Police Department third district, they

230 came and they, they talked. A few other speakers, we had a lot of speakers, encouraging, lot of
231 encouraging words. A lot of youth stood up to talk as well, from my group. Then we also had
232 another event, “Where Do I Go from Here?” It was like a counseling session. We had a, a
233 minister there, we had a, a lotta community, a lotta people from the community, they came,
234 about forty people. The news showed up and you know, they covered the story. We had another
235 non-profit organization there called Motivating All Youth. A friend of mine, Akeisha Burkes,
236 she’s from Milwaukee but she started a non-profit in Texas. And she came from Texas to be here
237 and speak at my event. We did a rally on 35th and Fond du Lac where we were just out with our
238 signs, saying, “Hey, put the guns down!” I had about thirty youth members there. And they, it
239 was them that was, “Hey, stop the violence!” You know, and they, they were out there dancing
240 and what not. They made it fun. We did a free chili event where I, I, I called the community into
241 my church and we’re going to have prayer meeting, and we’re going to have free chili, a lotta
242 people showed up. A lot of the youth received prayer as well as some warm, good chili. We had
243 a clothes drive where we just were donating clothes, we were receiving donations and we were
244 giving ‘em back out we went under the bridge under Canal, where the, there’s a lot of homeless
245 people up under there. I seen a lot of tents under there when I’m coming from work. So, we had
246 taken some clothes there, some food there, hygiene products. We also did a toy drive. You know
247 what? A guy named Mario Spencer, he got ahold of me and he said, “Hey (pause) I got some
248 toys for you.” And I’m like, “Huh? What do you mean some toys for me?” He said, “I want to
249 just bring you some toys.” This is, what is he talking about, bringing me some toys. “Okay.” I
250 met him, this man brought me six big boxes of toys.
251 D: Wow.

252 T: And I'm like, "What do I do with it? What do I do with the toys?" Guess what, "Alright, let's
253 load it up." The Stop the Violence team, we loaded it up and we drove around the city of
254 Milwaukee. Wherever I saw children at, gas station, church, we seen kids outside walking down
255 the street, wherever, I just handed 'em all out. Six boxes he give me, and I handed 'em all out. I
256 recently spoke at the VA, the medical clinic. And I did a speech there as well, in regards to my
257 son and the organization, 53206 Stop the Violence group. (pause) And that's, that, that's it.

258 We're going to—

259 D: That's a lot! (laughter)

260 T: —we're going to continue, we're going to continue to promote peace and bring awareness.
261 There's so many teens dying and that's not what's supposed to be happening. You know? We're
262 supposed to be happy, bringing in babies, bringing babies into life, not crying and burying 'em.
263 Not the babies, not the babies, come on now. Grandma and grandpa, ninety-years-old, yes, but
264 they done lived a long life. Not the babies. But, we, we live in a world, in sometimes where I'll
265 say, we living in our last days. Everything is wicked around us. I don't know if the, the laws or if
266 anybody can change. I know, I just know God. That's who I call, that's who I count on. Period.
267 (laughter)

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

269 T: I just like to add to the youth, I like to say to the youth, to the youth wherever you are, (pause)
270 our time here now is precious. We have a beginning date and we have an end. Do we know when
271 the end is coming? No. So, what do we do in between that time? We live to live. We don't live to
272 die. You don't need to carry a gun, we shouldn't even have to live in fear, you know? So much
273 fighting going on. There's so much negativity going on. As soon as we lose a loved one, we fall
274 out. We boo-hooing. We crying, we snotting, and then a few months later, after they're gone, we

275 back doing the same mess, like as if we don't know any better. I challenge the youth. I challenge
276 'em, to listen to your parents. Yeah, you may think mom and dad don't know what they talking
277 about but we were teenagers before. We did our stuff too. This ain't new. You know, what's
278 going on now. It's more rapid and more dangerous, but we were teens before, we were kids
279 before. We wanted to run off away from mama and daddy. You know? But in our days, it wasn't
280 running off to fight and kill and gang bang. We was just running off to play. Our teens now, they
281 want to sit in our face when grown folks talking. My grandma didn't allow that, my mama didn't
282 allow that. Guess what?! We didn't even want it. Who want to sit up and listen to this, the old
283 lady and they all day conversation?! We was trying get outside. Double dutch, hopscotch, you
284 know, "Miss Mary mat, mat," we was doing all that. We weren't toting pistols and, and blunts
285 and, and lean and, and Percocets. Percocets and lean going to have you dried out somewhere on
286 your death bed, for real, for real, killing you slowly. I just think it's, it's time to wake up. It's
287 time to wake up. Mothers, it's time to wake up, get your children. Daddies, fathers, it's time to
288 wake up, get your children. Grandmothers, grandfathers, groom your children, groom your
289 grandchildren. We all need each other. The only way this is going to stop and the only way this
290 is going to work is if we work together. (pause) I'm a four-year-old teacher at a daycare and I tell
291 them every day, "Teamwork makes the dream work." And I really, really, really live in that. I
292 really, really, really live in that. My daughters don't want to do something, I say, "I'll help you."
293 Just so they can know that you know, it'll come together if you have someb-, if you have
294 somebody, it can come together by yourself. In God, that's, that's a team. Him and I, He and I, I
295 and Him, that's a team. And he's been my number one go-to person from the time I've known
296 him, from the time I was able to say, "Yes, Lord." (pause) He's been my go-to. Lotta people
297 don't understand that.

298 D: I do.

299 T: A lot of people don't understand that, you know? "What is she talking about?" You know,

300 "She ain't," you know, "all sanctified and filled with the" (pause) He'll reach you wherever you

301 are, wherever you are. He'll turn you around and place you right back on solid ground. I know

302 that for a fact. I'm here talking. (laughter) God is good to me. He's been good to me. This I

303 know. And that's all I'm going to talk about, the goodness of the Lord.

304 D: That's it?

305 T: Yes.

306 D: Thank you.

307 T: You're welcome.

308 D: That was beautiful.

309 T: You think?