

1 GVP19 Vera Evans

2 D: Hello, can you state your name?

3 V: Vera Jean Evans.

4 D: And Vera, have you in some form or fashion experienced gun violence.

5 V: Yes, I have.

6 D: And can you share your experience?

7 V: Yes. I was, had a, got a call. Well, not a call, I had a knock on the door on October 11th, 2007,
8 stating that my son, Antonio Jackson, was shot. I immediately got up, you know, spinning
9 around the house, calling on God. And ran around to the scene where he was at, when I seen the
10 officer spreading a cover over him.

11 D: Where was he?

12 V: He was [...in Park West neighborhood...] I want to say. Laying on the ground, deceased. I
13 was trying to get to him, but the officer would not let me under the tape. They said they couldn't
14 let me get over there because of evidence. So, I was told by a young lady that was consoling me,
15 that I could come up on her porch and I could see everything with the death of my son, I could
16 see it. But when I got up there I fainted. So, I didn't know anything. And the next thing I know, I
17 was taken across the street with all the friends and family members that was there. While they
18 was investigating the death of my child. Then the detective walked up to me for identity, show
19 me a picture of my son's face on the camera. And asked me, was that my son? And I told him
20 yes. I broke down really, really, bad because when I did get there to see him, I seen that his chest
21 was saturated with blood. They say, "Well, he was shot twice with a AK-47." He was shot once
22 in the left side of his neck and he was shot once in the right side of his chest, but the bullet that
23 killed him, per the medical examiners, was the bullet that hit him in the neck. They thought that

24 he got shot in the back of the head because there was so much blood, but come to find out and
25 thank God, they did not shoot him in the head. That was the most devastating time of my life as a
26 mother. More so to lose a son, but to way, but the way that I lost my son was even more
27 devastating. To think that somebody would be so cruel as to getting the guns that you use in a
28 war like that, to kill a person. "What could he possibly did so bad for y'all to kill him like that?"
29 That is my question today. "Why did y'all kill my son?" And I was also told who did it. But with
30 no evidence or no one coming forward, they can't say that that person done it. But I'm 100%
31 sure that I know he did.

32 D: So, he's not-so you're saying that person is still walking around free?

33 V: He's still walking around free, far as I know. And I do not have any closure from that. But the
34 way that I'm getting through is because I know God and I serve a mighty God. And he also said
35 victim is his, says the Lord. So, with that being said, that's how I pretty much get through my
36 day. Yes, I have a lot of questions. Yes, I have a lot of, of depression. But I'm not angry. Nor do
37 I hate the person that killed my child. And the reason I don't hate him, because the God that I
38 serve and because the person that I am. Which, I am a child of God. And I do have faith in God.
39 Big faith that I will see my son again and I will get justice for my son. So, yes. I am very, very,
40 very, very hurt, deep down in my soul. I cry to this day. But God got my back. Oh, I don't know
41 what I would say to the person if I seen 'em, that killed my son. But I know I can just say, why?
42 "Why? What, what did he do to you, that you just took his life like that? He was just a baby. He
43 was only sixteen. You killed him eleven days before his seventeenth birthday." But you know
44 another thing I say, Antonio told me that he had death upon him. I broke down crying. He also
45 told my pastor that he had death upon him. And I say, "Antonio, how do you know that?" He
46 said, "Mama, I can feel it." My son came in this house, the same day on a Thursday, I never

47 forget it, as long as I live. The day that he was taken from us he said, he put the Bibles on
48 different scriptures in the house, which the scriptures was read at the funeral that he left them on.
49 But he put my name on his and said, "Mama, I'm getting your name on me before I die." And he
50 was murdered the same day. That is so, so devastating. And peoples ask me to this day, "Oh my
51 God, how do you live with that? I never knew a mother who can walk around and don't even
52 seem like nothing has happened to her in her life." But yes, it has. That is very devastating and I
53 don't wish it on no mother to this day. I don't wish it on anyone to lose a child 'cause that hurts
54 so bad. You know? It hurt as though someone is cutting you open with a knife without any
55 anesthesia. You know, I don't know what to say right now, I'm lost for words about my child.
56 You know? I live my life everyday knowing I'm going to see Antonio again, I have seen him
57 many a times in my dream, but he comes as a, a little kid and he never say a mumbling word in
58 my dream. But I'm always seeing him, I'm always seeing visions of, I don't know if it's him
59 now or my nephew or my brother, but I see a tall image. Antonio was sixteen, standing six feet
60 two—

61 D: Wow.

62 V: —when he left, when he passed away. I don't like to say he's dead. I really don't like to even
63 say he's, he got killed. I say he passed away because Antonio was, my baby is with God now and
64 that's the best place he can be. That's the best place and, with that being said, that's the way I get
65 through, knowing that my child is with God. So that's how I get through my life, you know.

66 D: What would you say to someone who recently lost their child to gun violence?

67 V: I would say, mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, nieces, nephews, aunties, grandmamas,
68 keep your head up, stay in prayer, and trust and believe in Jesus. Because he's the only one going
69 to get you through it, the only one. Serve the Lord as much as you can, have faith in Christ. And

70 continue to do what you doing to be with your loved ones. Don't wish no death on that person.
71 Don't even hate 'em. I can only say don't hate, because I don't hate 'em. I don't hate the person
72 that, or person's that killed my child. I can only pray for them. You know, I can only pray for
73 them and leave it in God's hand. Because you don't want to go to war with God, so, by me
74 leaving that with God, that's the only thing I can tell you to do, is pray. Have faith. Trust and
75 believe in God. He's the only one going to get you through it, the only one. So that's how I live
76 my life every day.

77 D: What do you think we could do to end gun violence in our community?

78 V: Oh, I wish I knew the answer to that. If they would pick up the Bible, get more into God, and
79 read the word, maybe they won't kill like they do. You know? You won't [...] it's not fun killing
80 people. And I don't know what they get out of that, I really don't know what a person get out of
81 killing people. I can just shake my head, I just, I just shake my head to mothers losing their loved
82 ones because me and my sisters have lost our sons. My sister has lost two of her kids and she's
83 not as strong as I am right now, I pray for her. I pray that she do get strong and be more, more
84 participating and, and, you know, talk to people. Me talking to people's friends, family, you
85 know, they, that's another thing that got me through, you know. And I talked about my son, I'm
86 not going to let it rest. As long as I live and have breath in my body, they're going to know about
87 my child. They're going to know what I went through in my life. I'm not going to never forget
88 about it, I can't. You know, I go through life with tears, with depression, you know, anxiety. But
89 like I said, God, God is the only one and I just feel like I will see my son again, one day. That's
90 all I know. I would like to know why, what was the reason for them to take his life? Why would
91 you want to take his life? And was it that serious? To take a human being's life like that, and he
92 was only a baby. He was only a child. (pause) You know, I hurt so much. I hurt so much. I cry at

93 a drop of a dime, but yet it's still, I try to be strong because I know that's what Antonio would've
94 wanted. And all he ever said to his brothers was, "Whatever y'all do, take care of Mama." And
95 so far, they been taking care of me. My oldest son, even though he sickly, he still there for his
96 mom. So, you know, my boys hurt every day, my sons hurt every day, they talk about it a lot.
97 But, we would not let it rest. Antonio will always be alive in our hearts.

98 D: That's beautiful.

99 V: Yes, thank you.

100 D: You're welcome. Is there anything you like to add or?

101 V: No, just mothers and fathers, y'all please pray. Don't try to seek revenge, please don't.

102 Because behind that is nothing but death, behind that as well. Just trust in God, tell me, trust in

103 God, I'm telling you, it, it works, it works, it really works. And that's how I get through life with

104 my child being gone is trusting in God. With my nephews being gone, trusting in God. Trust

105 God, I'm telling you, he'll get you through, he'll even show you. He'll show you things you

106 want to, you want to see. If it's something you want to know, you want to see, or, or your loved

107 one, just give it over to God. And he will show you. He will. He will. He will show you.

108 D: Thank you.

109 V: You're very welcome. (pause) Thank you.