

- 1 GVP 32 Jasmine Moore
- 2 D: Please state your name.
- 3 J: My name is Jasmine Moore.
- 4 D: And Jasmine, how old are you?
- 5 J: Thirty-seven years old.
- 6 D: You look great for 37.
- 7 J: Thank you!
- 8 D: You're welcome. I know that you have experienced gun violence in your life. Actually, could
- 9 you please share your experiences or experience?
- 10 J: Yes. So, my first recollection of an experience with gun violence was in [19]89, when I was
- 11 seven years old. My dad was shot [...].
- 12 D: Okay.
- 13 J: I remember where we lived.
- 14 D: And, which was where?
- 15 J: [Lincoln Creek].
- 16 D: Okay.
- 17 J: In the city of Milwaukee. I actually, the address was [Lincoln Creek].
- 18 D: Oh wow!
- 19 J: My mom had—
- 20 D: You remember that from seven?
- 21 J: Yes.
- 22 D: (laughter)

- 23 J: My mom had pink, floral furniture, and she had a brass swan tables with the glass top.
- 24 (laughter) And I believe it was a Saturday and I remember, it was me, my mom, and my little
- 25 sister who had to be either five or maybe four, going on five. And I remember the, the chair to
- 26 the furniture set was huge and I remember us kind, all kind of just sitting in the chair and my
- 27 mom had made popcorn, and I think we were about to watch a movie or something. But she got a
- 28 call. And of course, she didn't say right then and there what happened. But she dropped us off to
- 29 my aunt's house. And I guess later on or maybe days later, I don, I found out that it was because
- 30 he was shot up. And the memory after leaving my aunt's house was seeing my dad in the
- 31 bedroom, bandaged up. (pause) In '93, my cousin was shot and killed. I was ten, going on eleven
- 32 because this happened in February of, of '93. And I remember being picked up by my moms'
- 33 friend, Gina, from school. Me, my, one of my older sisters, and my little sister were,
- 34 D: Where'd you go to school?
- 35 J: That was at Harambee Community School.
- 36 D: Okay.
- 37 J: Back in the day. (laughter)
- 38 D: Okay.
- 39 J: And—
- 40 D: Where was that, where was that located?
- 41 J: That was on the East Side, I don't think it was Burleigh, but it was, it was on the East Side.
- 42 D: Okay.
- 43 J: Off, off, of [Harambee], somewhere over there.
- 44 D: Okay.

45 J: My mom's friend came to pick us up and we went to my aunt's house, the, my cousin's  
46 mother. And everybody's sobbing and crying. And then we were told that my cousin was killed.  
47 In high school, my freshman year I was on the way to the library. I had on my mom's green,  
48 leather coat (laughter) and me and a friend were robbed at gun point. And he took my leather  
49 coat, well my moms' leather coat, and her costume jewelry.

50 D: Where were you?

51 J: We were on our way to Atkinson Street Library.

52 D: Okay.

53 J: We stayed on [Franklin Heights].

54 D: So, you were walking from—

55 J: So, we were—

56 D: — [Franklin Heights] to Atkinson Library?

57 J: Yes. And we were robbed at gun point. There was a time I was out in the early 2000s, I don't  
58 remember the year, at the club. And I was a little, I wasn't so close to the door, but I remember a  
59 red car pulling up, somebody stepped out and just started shooting. And we were so close that I  
60 felt the gun powder on my thighs.

61 D: Where were you at?

62 J: This was at a club downtown, Milwaukee. I don't remember the name of the club, but it was at  
63 a club downtown Milwaukee.

64 D: 'Kay.

65 J: I remember once, late at night, after I dropped a cousin off, I was headed home—

66 D: Where did you drop her off?

67 J: I dropped her off at home. I was riding down [the] street, so, this happened oh, on [Park West].  
68 On the side of that restaurant that's right there. It's not, it wasn't Fryerz then.

69 D: Okay.

70 J: It was something else then. And I saw a guy get shot and collapse (pause) on the side of his  
71 truck. I was so scared. I went home, at this time, we stayed [in Sherman Park]. I went home and I  
72 told my mama and she took me back because I had to tell the police what I saw. It was the right  
73 thing to do, was to witness about what I saw. I, I had a friend, 2006 or 2007, him and his twin  
74 brother were shot. His brother didn't make it.

75 D: Oh my God.

76 J: He did. I remember one time, heading down [Sherman Park], I'm just riding down the street  
77 and there was a foot pursuit with the police and another guy. And the police stopped in front of  
78 my car, had to slam on my breaks, and just started shooting the guy. I don't know what happened  
79 to him because after I was cleared, I just kept going. I didn't even stick around to see what  
80 happened and I, I was on the phone with my mom and she, and you know, I screamed and she  
81 was like, "What's going on?" And I dropped the phone and then I ta-I talked to her after I  
82 stopped being scared and in shock. And I, I don't, I just left. I didn't even stick around to see  
83 what happened, I just left.

84 D: When you went back to the scene where the man was killed beside his truck, did the police  
85 take your report?

86 J: They, they took a report. My mom, I remember my mom standing next to me, while I was  
87 talking to the police and I don't think he was killed.

88 D: Okay.

89 J: I think he was just shot. Because I actually remember, and this is another thing that made me  
90 feel uncomfortable, (pause) I remember his brother reaching out to me and thanking me.

91 D: Oh.

92 J: But how did you get my number? (pause) That made me feel uncomfortable. Because if—

93 D: Oh, he wasn't there?

94 J: No.

95 D: When you were giving the report?

96 J: No, no. Nope. So that made me feel uncomfortable about that. The other, if you go back to the  
97 time when I was standing outside of the club, I was harassed by the police [...] I told everything  
98 that I knew. But they wanted me to tell more. And there was so much pressure, they came to my  
99 house, banging on my door, like I was a suspect. So, that was a turn off to me, too.

100 D: They were just going to make you give—

101 J: They were going to make me—

102 D: —information you didn't have.

103 J: —tell something else when I didn't know anything else.

104 D: Wow.

105 J: The most recent experience I had with gun violence was September 2018, September 18<sup>th</sup>, to  
106 be exact. This was the day of my aunt's funeral [...]. My sister ran to my house and ring the  
107 doorbell to tell me that my sons' father was killed. And I, when I picked up my phone and saw a  
108 bunch of missed calls [...] and a bunch of Facebook messenger calls, I knew something was  
109 wrong. And [...] when I open the door, there was a, another person with her. I thought was with  
110 her. But it was somebody from across the street. So, somebody knew the girl across the street  
111 and couldn't get in contact with me, so called her and was telling her to come over here too. So, I

112 had two people running to my house to let me know that he had been killed. (pause) I packed the  
113 kids up, dropped them off, and a part of me was in denial until I got there.

114 D: And you live over on the area of?

115 J: Of [Grasslyn Manor].

116 D: Okay, and you ended up driving to?

117 J: We drove over to [Hampton Heights].

118 D: Okay.

119 J: Yellow tape, bunch of family and friends out there. And I think that's when it got real for me,  
120 that he was really gone.

121 D: I'm so sorry. Do you need to take a break? Okay. Let me know when you do. Was he still  
122 there, was he, his body there?

123 J: He was still there. His body was still there. And (pause) I just, the only thing I could think,  
124 "How am I going to tell my son?"

125 D: Where was he, your son?

126 J: I had dropped him off to my sisters' house.

127 D: Okay. And that's around?

128 J: That's two blocks away from me. (laughter) Yeah.

129 D: [...] two blocks from [Grasslyn Manor].

130 J: Yes. (pause) He was, his body was still there. And while I was there, all I could think about  
131 was, "How am I supposed to tell my son?" Jo had just spent the entire weekend with his dad. I  
132 dropped him off Friday after school and picked him up Sunday after church. And Tuesday, his  
133 dad was gone.

134 D: Oh my gosh.

135 J: I stayed at the scene until they took him away, until everybody left. And when I got home I  
136 told my baby that his dad was gone.

137 D: Oh my gosh. Did he understand?

138 J: I think he kind of felt like me, like, "What do you mean?" Because I told him, he, he said,  
139 "What you mean he gone?" I said, "He's dead." I said, "Joe, somebody shot your dad." And he,  
140 he let down like one tear, but he didn't cry. He wanted a moment alone. Like, he went into the  
141 room and just wanted a moment alone. But I didn't know any other way to tell him, but just to  
142 tell him.

143 D: How old is your son?

144 J: He's eight.

145 D: I think he understands.

146 J: He's eight.

147 D: Did he ask more questions later or?

148 J: He asked how, he asked where, when. He was upset with me a little bit because I didn't take  
149 him to the scene with me. (pause) He asked how come he, you know, how come I didn't take  
150 him? I, I just didn't feel like I should have, you know? I think a part of me, like I said, I didn't  
151 believe it until I got there. And so, I didn't want to rush there. And I guess I just was expecting  
152 something different, like, she doesn't know she's talking about.

153 D: Right.

154 J: Even though she just ran over here.

155 D: Right.

156 J: You know, to let me know. So, he asked questions later on.

157 D: Wow. And besides, I mean, you wouldn't want that to be his last memory of his dad.

158 J: No.

159 D: And you, I can't even imagine you would even be able to retain him if he knew that was him  
160 over there.

161 J: Well, we did, we, we didn't see him.

162 D: Okay.

163 J: I, I didn't, I didn't see him at the scene because they had the entire block blocked off.

164 D: Alright, okay.

165 J: I just saw when they, they took, they must've taken him out of the back of the house. Because  
166 they took him away from out of the alley.

167 D: So, it happened in the alley?

168 J: No, it happened inside of his home. But I'm assuming that they took him out of the back door  
169 because they—

170 D: Okay.

171 J: —they came through the alley—

172 D: Did you ever—

173 J: —to leave.

174 D: —find out what happened? Or hear of, of, what they were told what happened?

175 J: Not any details.

176 D: Okay.

177 J: Just that he was murdered inside of his home.

178 D: Oh my gosh. Was his girlfriend there?

179 J: Yes. She was there.

180 D: And she hasn't told what happened?

181 J: To my understanding, I don't have all of the details, to my understanding, there's an ongoing  
182 investigation.

183 D: Okay.

184 J: Yeah.

185 D: Gotcha.

186 J: There's an ongoing investigation.

187 D: Okay. And they would keep those details close to the—

188 J: Yeah, so, you know, I've, I've heard stories, but there's an ongoing investigation and from the,  
189 from what I understand, it was a home invasion.

190 D: Oh my gosh. (pause) Did they catch the person who did the home invasion?

191 J: No.

192 (pause)

193 D: And I guess since you don't have the details, you don't know if they were able to identify the  
194 person or not. Have you talked to the person that was there, since, or has she shared anything  
195 with you?

196 J: I've spoken with her. [...] I don't have any updates.

197 D: Right.

198 J: About anything.

199 [...]

200 D: [...] If you, if they were to capture the person who killed your sons' father, do you forgive  
201 them?

202 J: I have to. First of all, that's what I believe. I believe in forgiveness. It doesn't mean that I  
203 agree with their behavior or, or their choice, the choice that they made. (pause) I don't want to  
204 hold on to any forgiveness that's something negative to hold onto. So, yes, I do. But there are  
205 consequences to actions. So, me forgiving somebody doesn't mean that I don't want them to pay  
206 the consequences for their actions. And, honestly, there's no way around paying consequences,  
207 whether you're caught or not. And that's just because of, the Lord, the Word that I believe in, is  
208 that you reap what you sow. And it, it doesn't always look like what we expect it to look like.  
209 Like, for me, it looks like justice, where you're captured and you're spending time in prison. It  
210 might not, the consequences might not be that doesn't always look like what we think it should  
211 look like. Can we take a break?

212 D: Sure.

213 PART TWO (24:03)

214 D: And how has the experience of your experiences through your life with gun violence changed  
215 you?

216 J: Well, I can't identify the effects that those early experiences, I can't identify the effects that  
217 they had on me, but I'm sure that they have. With me watching what my son has been dealing  
218 with, I can't imagine me not having, or, or any of my other siblings, not having some type of  
219 struggles in school. Or sleepless nights. Or acts of rebellion. Or defiance or some type of change  
220 in behavior, or attitudes. They just were not identified. It's not to say that they were not there.  
221 So, I didn't receive adequate counsel to figure out, "Okay, well what is the issue? Does she have  
222 any issues? What's the problem?" But with me raising my son after his dad was killed, there had  
223 to have been some type of issues. To see your dad laid up with bandages over his head and all  
224 across his chest, or to see your cousin laying in the casket, or to be so close to gunfire that it hits

225 your thighs. So, there had to be some effects, they just were not identified. And so, that's why  
226 I'm being sure to identify the changes in Johan's behavior, I talk to him too, you know, to see  
227 where his mind is at and what he's thinking about. And we're both in counseling.

228 D: That's great!

229 J: Right now, we're both in counseling.

230 D: Do you think, what would you say to someone who thought, let me go back to that other  
231 question, do you think that the counseling has made a difference?

232 J: I think that the counseling has made a difference. Our experiences actually, have moved me to  
233 create an organization called Johan Hopes. And the mission is to empower parents to boldly  
234 advocate for their children because we've had some unsavory experiences with his previous  
235 school, me with work, and me with the healthcare system. So, when Johan's dad was, was first  
236 killed, I let the school know. And they said, the principal said, "This is the place for him. This is  
237 where he needs to be during this time. We got his back." A week after his dad's funeral, his  
238 dad's funeral was on a Friday. The following Friday, I received a call from the principal letting  
239 me know, "We don't know what else to do. Have you considered putting him in another school?"  
240 "No, I have not because you said this was the place for him!" And so, a week after his dad's  
241 funeral. So, the unfortunate part was there were some behavioral changes that are, that were  
242 expected. These are unfortunate, but expected, behavior changes. And that, a, a week, and you  
243 know, they came to the service, they showed up. Him, the teacher and the principal showed up,  
244 they stopped at the service. I, at the end of the call, we had agreed that moving him isn't the best  
245 thing for him right now because I remind you that he also had lost a cousin a week later in a  
246 house fire. And so, it wasn't just his dad. He had all, a week later, he had another traumatic  
247 experience that I, I held off on telling him because I didn't know he would take it. But we ended

248 up, I ended up telling him the day of, the day of the service for my little cousin. And so, at, at  
249 one point, I started to feel like they were tolerating my son and not necessarily there to help him.  
250 Something somebody said at the WAVE event was, “They’re focused on correcting behavior and  
251 not the problem.” So, we knew exactly where these behaviors were coming from, but they were  
252 focused on the, they were focused on correcting the behaviors and not the problem. What I’ve  
253 also found is that they were not equipped, there’s not psychologist there, there’s no counselor  
254 there, there’s no social worker there at the school. So, the school is, this school was ill-equipped  
255 to deal with what my son was dealing with. I had ended up calling the Department of Public  
256 Instruction and speaking with the counselor or psychologist there, just asking like, “Hey, so, this  
257 is what we’re dealing with, what are your thoughts?” One time in particular, I, I started to see  
258 that my son’s grade, grades were dropping. And I would call or text or email the teachers asking,  
259 “Hey, can you send, I see he’s missing this, can you send it home?” And they would say, “It’s  
260 Johan’s responsibility for this. And it’s his responsibility to remember his ho-his schoolwork.  
261 And remember and remember.” That irked me, so bad. When I spoke with the Department of  
262 Public Instruction, we agreed that he’s eight, not twenty-eight. (laughter) And that it doesn’t hurt  
263 to say, “Hey, Jo I see you’re missing your homework. Here, put it in your folder.” During this  
264 time, it got to the point for me where I went to the principal, I said, “Look, I’ve never made  
265 excuses for my sons’ behavior, but I am today.” (laughter) “He, he is grieving, he’s mourning,  
266 he’s traumatized. Have my back on this one and give me his homework when I ask for it.”  
267 Needless to say, February 20<sup>th</sup>, we left the school after meeting in the morning. And we did not  
268 return.

269 D: Oh, wow.

270 J: We left that day and I'll just let you know, my son had made a statement about missing his dad  
271 and wanting to be with him. And he said, "I want to kill myself and be with my dad."

272 D: Oh, no.

273 J: There was a risk assessment done within a couple of hours. And it's not that he wanted to  
274 harm himself. He knows that the only way to get to his dad is through death. So, it's not that he  
275 wanted to do anything physical, he just knows his dad can't come back and to get to him, "I have  
276 to go." And so, we had the risk assessment done. We have a really great, a really great counselor.  
277 She was able to get him in a couple hours early. And she did the risk assessment and he was fine,  
278 he's, they pressured, they, they wanted him to tell how he felt. And he said how he felt. And  
279 once he made that statement, they said, "Oh, yeah, we can't let you in the classroom. We think  
280 you should go home for the day." And after I, I grabbed my baby girl, who's in K-5, we, I took  
281 her and I took him and we left before school started. They didn't call to check on this little boy  
282 who made this statement. My, my daughter's teacher never called to say, "Hey I see Janelle's  
283 been out of school for three days, what's up? Where is she?" Nobody called. I made them, I-I  
284 had somebody pick up the homework for me, kept them up with their homework. They didn't  
285 reach out to me until I emailed, because I didn't want to get in trouble for truancy, until I emailed  
286 and said, "I'm going to be dropping off finished homework and picking up new homework."  
287 And when I, when I dropped off everything after I got them enrolled into a new school and  
288 picked up their belongings, Janelle's teacher, my daughter's teacher, didn't ask how Janelle  
289 been, said, "Oh, we're going to miss her face." The principal asked, "What school are they at?"  
290 And, "We'll keep you in our prayers." Not, "How's Jo? How's it going? Is he better?" You  
291 know, none of that. And I, that disappoints me, that disappoint—

292 D: That hurts.

293 J: That, it hurts. It really did because at the beginning of this, you were down for us. But when it  
294 got too tough, you had to just put your hands up and say, "I can't, we can't do this." And it's not  
295 to take away from their education or their experience, but this was Johan's, his teacher's second  
296 year teaching. This was the principals first year as a principal. He's been in, he's been in  
297 education, but his first year as a principal. So, what I said to him, I said, "This is an opportunity  
298 for us to learn about ourselves." I said, "Because I'm looking for ways to grow through this, and  
299 I'm hoping that you do the same." And they decided to not, (laughter) not take that same  
300 approach. As far as work goes, I'm currently on short-term disability because I've been dealing  
301 with some depression, stress, and anxiety with everything and even the process of going onto  
302 short term disability and handling the paperwork is stressful. That's stressful. I stayed at work, I  
303 didn't, I didn't take off work immediately because I, I, actually, I was only three weeks into the  
304 job when this happened. So, I stayed at work for months. I was seeing my counselor, tryna be  
305 strong. (laughter) Didn't want to start a job only to have to go on leave, so I kept going and I  
306 kept going, and I kept going. There were so many days where I was constantly walking away  
307 from my desk because I had to go away and cry or go away because I had to take a phone call  
308 from the school. But it, it, it, it gets overwhelming because I had to get away from the idea of,  
309 "You're too strong to have to take a leave from work."

310 D: You're too what?

311 J: Strong. I had to get away from that idea and really take care of myself. But then even the  
312 process of, of doing it is stressful because you have, you're talk, I'm talking to these doctors who  
313 just want to medicate me. I left one doctor, what he said to me before was, I called him one  
314 night, it was at night (laughter), I said, "I don't know what to do. I'm sad, like, I don't know  
315 what to do. What do I do?" And he is pushing the medication off on me again. And I'm like, "I

316 don't want to do that." He said, "Well, you have two choices. You can take the medication or be  
317 hospitalized." I said, "At the mental health complex?" (laughter) And he said, "Yeah." And then  
318 he said to me, "If you get to the point where you have a plan on wanting to hurt yourself, call me  
319 back." "No, I'm not ever calling you ever again." And so, I've, I found a new doctor that I had  
320 been wanting to see because I used to see her, I, you know, she used to be my doctor and she  
321 went to a new clinic. And I went to see her, she brought up medication once, "No." I thought she  
322 understood that I just wasn't okay with it. I call back again, and I made an appointment and I was  
323 just in her office crying because the weight of responsibility, the weight of responsibilities was  
324 just hard while I was trying, while I was trying, to grieve. I hadn't even had the opportunity. And  
325 so, I saw her, she offered medication again, I said, "No." I lost a friend to suicide. She was on  
326 medication and I don't understand how the medication is supposed to help, might harm me, so I,  
327 I don't feel comfortable with it and I called her back later on in the day, I said, "I can't. I have to  
328 go. I can't do, I, please, like, can you take me off of work? I have to focus." And she said, "I  
329 will, but you have to see a psychiatrist. I'll give you off until this date, but if you need more time,  
330 you have to see a psychiatrist." A psychiatrist's role is primarily to medicate you and to monitor  
331 you while you're on the medication.

332 D: Oh, wow.

333 J: The psychiatrist didn't agree that I needed medication, though. He did not. He said, "You need  
334 to grieve. And you need to mourn. And the people you lost deserve it." So that's the experience  
335 with healthcare. Going back to work, I work in Corporate America, where there's policies and  
336 there's procedures for everything. And I remember asking for a shorter lunch period, just so that  
337 at one day out of the week, I can leave. I wasn't asking for my hours to be cut. I wanted to take a  
338 thirty-minute lunch, instead of a one-hour lunch. And it took my supervisor a week to get back to

339 me because he had to speak to executive management to make sure that was okay. And the  
340 reason I asked for that was so that I could get my son to therapy.

341 D: Hmm, and did you explain that?

342 J: I explained it. And then on top of that, he asked, "Try not to do it on Fridays, because you  
343 know how that can look." I don't care how it looks. I'm, I have to ask to do this, to take care of  
344 my family? You know? And that was only up until the New Year started, after the New Year, I, I  
345 was having to start use, to use PTO. No one in upper management, no one addressed me about it.  
346 No one said, "Are you okay?" I remember him saying, "I have to talk to executive management  
347 about this, so in my mind, they know about it. But nobody's saying anything to me about it. One  
348 of the managers lost their dad and then there's an email going around like, "Such and such lost  
349 their dad. There's four cards floating around." And I had just got done with inclusivity training  
350 and wasn't feeling included because she lost her dad and there's four cards floating around. At  
351 this point, I had lost an aunt, my son's father, and a little cousin. And nobody has anything to  
352 say to me. So, even going to work was uncomfortable, because I'm like, "They don't care. They  
353 don't care."

354 D: Let's hope that you, maybe you were so new, they didn't catch it.

355 J: We can say that. (laughter) My direct, my direct manager knew exactly what was going on  
356 because I was very open and transparent with him. And when I would ask him for the thirty-  
357 minute lunches or the additional time off, I spoke with HR. At management's discretion, they  
358 can give you extra time off because of course, there's no bereavement for your son's father or  
359 your little cousin. There's no bereavement for that, there's no bereavement for it. So, I was using  
360 PTO and I, like I mentioned earlier, I was new to this role. So, I didn't have a bunch of PTO, but  
361 I did have some days that I could use to deal with the funerals and the planning of the services

362 and everything. But at their discretion, they could have given me extra time. And I asked and the  
363 answer was, “No.” (pause) The answer was no. And it might have something to do with the  
364 length of time I was there, maybe if I was there for twenty years out of my life, I would’ve,  
365 maybe they would’ve given me extra time. But, I wasn’t. But I, it didn’t take away from what I  
366 was dealing with. You know? So, that made me actually feel uncomfortable, getting up, going to  
367 work every day.

368 D: What would you say to someone who lost someone to gun violence? (pause) Just recently.

369 J: I wouldn’t even know what to say because there was so many things they said to me that I  
370 didn’t want to hear. “You got to be strong for the babies.” How? You know, how? “It’s going to  
371 be okay.” Is it? Like, so, I personally would want to embrace them. As a matter of fact, last  
372 Monday, there was a murder-suicide in my neighborhood. And because this is my neighborhood,  
373 when I saw yellow tape, I stopped and said, “What’s going on?” And I didn’t have the words to  
374 say. I remember hugging this lady and praying with her because I learned that you have to be  
375 sensitive and you have to be mindful of what you say to people when they’ve just lost somebody.  
376 And I don’t think that people say the wrong things intentionally, I think they have really good  
377 intentions when they’re, when they’re making stupid statements. (laughter) I do! It’s just, they  
378 don’t know. Because they’re not feeling what you’re feeling right then and there.

379 D: Right.

380 J: And so, I don’t even know what I would say. I, I, all I can offer is my embrace and prayer  
381 because I know that it is my faith that has kept me together. Somebody at WAVE asked me, w-  
382 we had a round table afterwards. “How, how did you not lose a piece of yourself going through  
383 all of this?” I said, “I can’t.” I said, “It has been by the grace of God, that that’s what’s kept me  
384 together. I, it wasn’t up to me, to lose a piece of myself or not. It was Him and before I

385 recognized it was the grace of God, I'm just thankful that He saw fit to keep me together, even  
386 when I didn't know that I might've even been falling apart." And so, it's my strength that's been  
387 keeping me together. And even when I, you know, I've had days where all I wanted to do was  
388 just, cry. Or not get out of the bed. Or give up. And, I'm, I have a right to cry and a right to lay in  
389 the bed, but I can't let myself fall completely apart. And so, if it was up to my flesh, those would  
390 be the things I be doing, would be doing. Giving up and letting go. But I can't, because of who I  
391 believe in.

392 D: Amen.

393 J: Amen.

394 D: So, what would you say to legislators on how we could reduce gun violence? Or what would  
395 you like to say to them? It may not be gun violence, it could be?

396 J: You know, I think that there needs to be stiffer laws on accessing even a CCW license. And  
397 I'll tell you my story. I had a peeping tom, over the summer in 2018. I had already taken a CCW  
398 class because where I lived before, somebody broke into my home. I wasn't there, thank God,  
399 me and the children were not there, but somebody broke into my home. So, I took the class in  
400 January of 2016 and never went to apply for the license, never got a gun. But then, when this guy  
401 was peeping in my house, I got my CCW license. And I went online, and I filled out the  
402 application and within a few days, I had the license in the mail. Now, I was glad that I had it  
403 because now I could carry this pistol. (laughter) Or defend, you know, or, you know, it's legal  
404 for me to carry this and defend myself if this guy decided he wanted to try to come in my home.

405 D: But do you know anything about a gun?

406 J: No. I, I know, I know about guns. But I, what I'm saying is it, I got it really fas-I got my  
407 license really fast.

- 408 D: What I'm saying is, do you even know how to use a gun?
- 409 J: I know how to use a gun.
- 410 D: Oh, okay.
- 411 J: Yeah.
- 412 D: So, you've had—
- 413 J: I know how to use a—
- 414 D: — is that's part of their question, that you've had training?
- 415 J: Yeah, you have, I had to upload my licen, my certificate.
- 416 D: For training?
- 417 J: For training. I had to upload my certificate.
- 418 D: Okay.
- 419 J: But there was a really quick turnaround.
- 420 D: Wow.
- 421 J: There was a really quick turnaround, I was like, "Oh. I wasn't expecting this, this fast." And
- 422 my question was, what kind of background check did they do?
- 423 D: I heard that they can do them pretty fast.
- 424 J: Okay. I don't know that part, but I was surprised at how fast I got the license in the mail. I
- 425 don't know what checks, what checks they did on the other side, I just was really surprised at
- 426 how fast I got it. What I want to see changed is access to resources in the school system. So, I
- 427 transferred my, my, my son to an, a public school and there's a psychologist and a social worker
- 428 and a counselor, they're there like once a day.
- 429 D: Hmm.
- 430 J: So, if they're all there on like, Wednesday, what are you going to do, Monday, Tuesday?

431 D: Oh, once a week!

432 J: Thursday and Friday? One, I'm sorry, once a week. Yes. And so, I would say we need to take  
433 a look at the life after death. Because we have to go on with our lives after the death of  
434 somebody that we love. And, and the way that society is set up, it doesn't grant you that. Work is  
435 supposed to be superior, you know that's one of the first things you think about, work. "What's  
436 going to happen if I don't go to work today? Have I been out of work too long? Are they going  
437 to fire me?" Like I said the other, last week, I was expected just to go back to work like nothing  
438 happened. My son had to go back to school like he just didn't lose his daddy, (pause) you know?  
439 And, and to go back without resources in the school. The teachers are not psychologists. You  
440 can't do a risk assessment. And so, I would like to see resources available, more, more available  
441 to the children, especially in the school system. If we think about it, that's where they spend the  
442 majority of their day. You know, I drop my kids off before 8 o'clock in the morning and then  
443 pick them up later on in the afternoon. And then by the time they get home, it's homework time,  
444 you got to get ready for the next day, you have to (laughter) get in the tub, eat, and then go back  
445 to sleep. And start all over again. And so that's where they spend the majority of their day, is, is  
446 at the school. And so, during, during, at the old school, my son is at this school all day, without  
447 anybody there licensed or certified to help him. And I'll go back to the experience at the school, I  
448 tried to get that, that they did have a agency that would come in to do counseling once a week. I  
449 never could get it set up because I wasn't getting calls back from the counselor.

450 D: (laughs)

451 J: Yeah. So, it's, it's been a struggle after the loss of his dad. With the school system, with the  
452 healthcare system, my experience with the healthcare system, and even my experiences with  
453 work. It's been a, it's been a struggle.

454 D: (pause) Do you have anything you'd like to add?

455 J: (pause) I don't.

456 D: Thank you.

457 J: I don't. Thank you! (laughter)

458 D: This was good.

459 J: Thank you.