

- 1 GVP37 Olu Sijuwade
- 2 D: Please state your name.
- 3 O: Olu [middle name] Sijuwade.
- 4 D: That's beautiful.
- 5 O: Thank you.
- 6 D: And how old are you?
- 7 O: Fifty-nine.
- 8 D: Okay.
- 9 O: Until July, then I'll be sixty.
- 10 D: Oh, wow! So, you'll be sixty this year?
- 11 O: Yeah.
- 12 D: And Olu, I know you've experienced gun violence, would you please share your story?
- 13 O: Okay, I've had gun violence occur to members of my family and also in my neighborhood.
- 14 And in my work as a youth advocate, counselor. So, now I'm (inaudible) been impactful to me.
- 15 So, I'll talk about my family because I remember the first time somebody in my family was
- 16 murdered, it was my cousin. I was in college as an undergraduate in the 1980s. And I heard the
- 17 news that one of my cousins, a male cousin, had been shot.
- 18 D: Here in Milwaukee?
- 19 O: In Milwaukee, yeah. Well, and I think I was in Indiana then and I was told by, I believe my
- 20 mother told me that you know, there was some bad news and that he had been shot and later on I
- 21 found out he had been shot by his wife. And there has been some, there had been a history of
- 22 abuse and it was his own weapon. So, I believe it happened in the home. And—
- 23 D: Around, general area, where would you say?

24 O: (pause) I think it occurred around the area of Burleigh and 11th street, but I think it was  
25 somewhere [in Arlington Heights].

26 D: Okay.

27 O: I think that's where they were, around that area somewhere.

28 D: Okay.

29 O: I think that's where they were staying. And, and I never got all the details and I know that  
30 there had been some abuse and I know that she was [subjected to]. I think it was, it was a  
31 justifiable homicide, so it sounded like it was self-defense.

32 D: Oh, wow.

33 O: But again, it was one of those things where I'm sure that he had the gun [for the family],  
34 (pause) we didn't have people that were against ownership in my family. But we didn't  
35 necessarily have people that were, you know, zealous about it, like "We have to arm ourselves  
36 with guns."

37 D: Okay.

38 O: And growing up, I know that one of my uncles, well, all of my uncles and my father, they,  
39 they faced a lot of discrimination and racism. I know that one of my uncles back in the time that  
40 Father Groppi was leading marches, one of my uncles was on the, quote-unquote "wrong side of  
41 the viaduct." Like, he was on the southside of one, of either the 16<sup>th</sup> or the 27<sup>th</sup> street viaduct and  
42 got beat up just because he was a black man, just happened to be walking around the southside.  
43 And I think he was coming from work, or maybe doing something, you know, legal around there.  
44 And he just got jumped and beat up for that. So, I think there was some, some thought that, you  
45 know, having guns would be practical as far as self-defense. But my family wasn't really into  
46 like, carrying guns around for that. And I, I do remember they were a part of the migration, all

47 my aunts and uncles, fathers, father and, and my mother from Mississippi. That there was like  
48 three migrations of black people and that was, I think, the third and final one, possibly. The one  
49 between the after, or during World War II to 1965, 1970. And they all lived in the area they call  
50 Bronzeville. Mostly down on Pleasant, between Brown and like, 4<sup>th</sup> street going west to about  
51 27<sup>th</sup> and at the time, I just thought this because we were just family, we were just living close.  
52 And then later one I found out, no, that's the only place that black people could stay. But if they  
53 went somewhere else, they faced the threat of violence just because they were in the wrong  
54 neighborhood. But they never thought that you know, being armed with guns was a way to, to  
55 deal with that. But they weren't against it for their own protection, you know, in case somebody  
56 broke into the house, I know my parents own a gun, but it was always hidden somewhere. But  
57 that gun is gone since after they divorce, disappeared somewhere. I don't even know what  
58 happened to it, but it was never brought out. (inaudible) None of my parents ever walked around  
59 and carried one. But my cousin did have one I think, for protection- for mainly home security.  
60 And I never got all the details, I just know when I found out he was killed, it was a shock to me  
61 because he would've been in his twenties. And his wife was actually somebody that grew up in  
62 the neighborhood. Not by him but by our house when we used to live in the Sherman Park  
63 neighborhood. So, we had introduced them. And then you know, I still wasn't thinking of social  
64 dynamics between her and him. I was just thinking that, you know, I lost my, my cousin. And,  
65 you know, the gun just made it final. Like, you keep thinking about you know, is there any way  
66 you can come back from that? But, you know, gun violence usually makes things really final.  
67 Like, there's no chance that even if people could've responded in time, medically, that they  
68 could've done anything. Yeah.

69 D: Since you were out of town, how did you come home or did you stay in school?

70 O: I stayed in school. I don't even remember when they had the funeral. I do know that being the  
71 first time that one of my one of my peers or my family was murdered or killed. That I remember  
72 taking a day at school to contemplate on that. I just remember sitting on a hill that I found, and I  
73 just thought about that, you know, just thought about how we grew up. We were little kids, we  
74 played. And then, this happened. And I thought, you know, "Why?" You know I would not have  
75 expected that. And you know, part of me wonders like, so, "What if they would've dealt with it  
76 some other way? If the gun wouldn't've been in the house?" So, but.

77 D: You said it was self-defense, so, if the gun wasn't in the house, would she have been alive?

78 O: And that's the thing. There was a lot of details I didn't have about what was going on so, I  
79 don't know. At, at that time, domestic violence was not [addressed], this is in the 80s. [Domestic  
80 violence] was not even [...] [serious.] Me being a police officer later on [...] [I saw] domestic  
81 violence policies started being enacted by the Milwaukee Police Department. Domestic violence  
82 wasn't even considered violence, it was just considered incidents that occurred between husband  
83 and wife. And that a lot of people, even police officers have discretion on how they want to deal  
84 with it. Like, "Should we just have the, the guy go walk around the block?" "Walk it off." "Calm  
85 down." "Go stay and spend the night somewhere else." Like, it wasn't even mandatory to have  
86 an arrest of the incident at that time. And that's when the mandatory arrest policies came from  
87 TV because they thought that [...] one of the reasons why the cycle continues is that the, usually  
88 male, perpetrator's not facing consequences.

89 D: Wow.

90 O: So, at that time in the 80s, you know I probably couldn't even define what domestic violence  
91 was. I just knew that they were fighting. I mean, we had probably seen or heard of it growing up,

92 but you didn't know that's what it was. Like, I can't say that I saw that in my household. But I  
93 mean, you heard it in other people households.

94 D: Right.

95 O: And then, not really understanding the cycle of it, you know. Like, you know, I didn't  
96 question her. I didn't doubt her. I didn't think "Well, she caused it,"[...] I didn't question that  
97 [...] there was something wrong with him because that was a story I [...] didn't even know about  
98 until months later. You know [...] that could've been [...] that was a factor. So, (pause) yeah. So  
99 [...] it was interesting because I've been involved in domestic violence facilitation for about 16,  
100 17 years.

101 D: Wow.

102 O: Between the Sojourner Peace Center as a facilitator there with men's groups and then doing  
103 their teen anti-harassment, dating violence prevention program this past year. And I'm still with  
104 The Alma Center. So, I've been involved in, I learned a lot more about what [...] makes it up and  
105 although I did question when I was a police officer why people would question why we're  
106 arresting the guy. It's like, "Well, he was violent." What's the question? You know?

107 D: Right.

108 O: Yeah. So, it makes sense to me, but we have a society that I think feels there are certain  
109 people that are 'second class citizens', that includes women. And because of that, I think a lot of  
110 people believe that the natural order of things is that [...] if a guy is pushed to his limits, you  
111 should expect that they might act in a way that is probably not desirable, but they'll get over it  
112 and their family should get over it. (pause)

113 D: If you survive it.

114 O: If you survive it, yeah. [...] I wish the resources and knowledge about it was more prevalent  
115 then as it is now. I think it'll help, I think it it'd have helped not only people in my family, but a  
116 lot of people affected. And, and it still needs to be more prevalent now. Like, a lot of people still  
117 think, you know, "Why are they staying in the situation?" And one of the factors, risk factors for  
118 fatalities against women in relationships is if their partner, usually the male partner, has had  
119 misdemeanor felonies [...] excuse me, misdemeanor crimes. A lot of times, people look for  
120 felonies as that's why a person can't have a gun, but a lot of guys that have committed fatal acts  
121 of violence with guns against their partner had misdemeanors, small batteries [...] I [would] say  
122 small acts of batteries or lesser charges of assault, maybe cruelty to animals, maybe even things  
123 like speeding violations. Misdemeanors that people don't necessarily associate with gun  
124 violence, but a lot of research has shown that a lot of these misdemeanors lead to [...] have been  
125 associated with times when guys do use firearms and violence against their partner. Like, those  
126 misdemeanors were the risk factors that were there or the signs that were there. But not  
127 necessarily a felony, so a lot of times people look for a felony, but it could be the smaller things.  
128 And so, that's one of the things that's been made in the law in some states [...] including the  
129 violence against women act in the Federal Law [...]

130 D: Do you forgive her that she killed your cousin?

131 O: (pause) Yeah. (pause) I guess I never hold it against her and like, I can't speak for other  
132 members of my family, like his brothers or sisters and parents, but I think that the feeling I get at  
133 family reunions [everyone wishes that] the whole situation would've been different. But I don't  
134 think they demonize or blame a particular person.

135 D: Okay.

136 O: You know, like, they wish things would've been different for both him and her as far as what  
137 was going on in their relationship or how they were dealing with it. And what was going on as  
138 far as the abuse.

139 D: Okay.

140 O: But I think they see it as like, something that's unfortunate. I think maybe some people, and I  
141 can't speak for them, some people might be thinking, "If it were me..." I don't know what, if  
142 they could've done, you know, anything different. And like again, we didn't have the resources  
143 and knowledge about domestic violence then that support women in that situation. So, that they  
144 would even be aware, like, "Hey, this, this something that you can do."

145 D: Since it was self-defense, did she do any time?

146 O: I don't believe so.

147 D: Okay.

148 O: (pause) Yeah, I never heard that (pause) her getting any substantial, if any, time. She's not in  
149 Milwaukee anymore.

150 D: Okay.

151 O: But just in my head, the timeline from when she moved, and that she still had communication  
152 with family. That I don't think that that occurred. [...] I think people were distraught but  
153 understanding.

154 D: Okay.

155 O: Yeah.

156 D: Did they have any children?

157 O: (pause) I don't think so.

158 D: Okay. What would you say we could do to reduce gun violence?

159 O: Gun violence is connected to a lot of things that happen in society and I wish it were just  
160 connected to one big thing or even two or three big things that we could just go after and just  
161 deal with that. But it's many, many things. A lot of gun violence is perpetrated by and against  
162 males. So, there's something I think with the socialization [...] men are raised to believe in guns  
163 as just part of their character, part of their be[havior], having respect and esteem. Most  
164 videogames that are first person shooter games or shooter games usually feature male  
165 protagonists and you rarely see advertisement for the military where the soldiers aren't carrying  
166 [...] their weapons loaded. Or I don't know if they're loaded, but their weapons' ready and  
167 armed. And [...] cowboy movies that we're watching. And I'm not blaming it on TV, but that  
168 [...] socialization. That if you want to see what's a "respectful" image of a male you can go back  
169 to the cowboy movies, you can go back to the first-person shooter games. A lot of people used to  
170 want to blame rap music. But it's like, all that stuff in rap music, it's based on stuff in American  
171 culture that was around decades before that. So, there's the availability of guns, I think we have  
172 330 million Americans in the United States and we have (pause) I think maybe, well, I mean it's  
173 hard to really get a count, but in circulation I've read, it's somewhere around [...] half a billion  
174 guns in the United States. So, it's enough guns for every person, including children and people  
175 that aren't authorized to even be able to have a gun, to have a gun. So, people can have as many  
176 guns as they could afford, legally. That's (pause) the way that [too] many people deal with  
177 situations, usually in a homicide around the country, in each state, especially in Milwaukee. The  
178 three main parts of a homicide scene is usually a firearm, alcohol, and the presence of an  
179 argument. Those are the three main components of a homicide scene.

180 D: Wow.

181 O: They're the three most common components of a homicide scene. And so, there's this belief  
182 that people can't lose their argument, they have to be right. And they have to prove their point.  
183 And for some people that means like, "Okay, if I can't prove it with my words," or [...] "if I'm  
184 making a point, then I'm going to get a gun and then that'll settle it." You know, like, "Argue  
185 with this," and put a gun in somebody's face. Or "I'll be back," you know. Then [...] some  
186 people believe that people don't use guns safely or don't know how to safely store guns. But  
187 accidental gun fatalities are pretty low. I mean, most of the gun fatalities in the United States in  
188 the 38,000+ that we had a few years ago, and we normally have around that number, 30,000+,  
189 are usually suicides followed by homicides. And so, a lot of people buy a gun and then use it  
190 against themselves. And a lot of times we say that's a mental health problem, I'm not saying that  
191 it's not. But a lot of times people demonize people with mental illness and mental health [...] as  
192 the reason that we have gun violence. And to me, that's almost like saying, "Well the reason that  
193 men or black males are suffering from gun violence is because of their color." It's like no, that  
194 happened to them, but not because of their color. And so, gun violence happens to a lot of people  
195 that might be going through depression, but it's not because of their mental health. You know?  
196 So, there's a there's like a condition that is occurring with an act, but that doesn't mean that that  
197 condition causes the act. You know? Because a lot of people commit gun violence that have  
198 technically no mental health issues. I'm not saying like maybe they were not diagnosed and they  
199 should've been, but they just believed that, "Oh, I was mad. And so, I went and got a gun." I  
200 mean, that's not what everybody else does when they get mad. [...] It's almost like this belief  
201 system. And then a lot of people that are really depressed, they might think of a firearm, but that  
202 doesn't mean that it's connected. I mean, it might be some other, they might think of other  
203 things, too. Like, that's just one of the things that cross their mind. But I don't want people to

204 think that mental illness is a [...] correlation associated with firearm violence. [...] I think it is  
205 people's belief system about firearms. That this is what's going to save the day.

206 D: Okay, yeah. But when you mentioned that there's not a correlation when you commit suicide,  
207 so, are we just saying that's, was a temporary state of mind?

208 O: A lot of people, a lot of counselors said that a lot of times suicide can be treated and I don't  
209 want to say cured, but a lot of times, when the situation that makes some people commit suicide,  
210 that want to commit suicide or plan suicide is dealt with, that they're usually done with it. Like,  
211 they won't have another suicide episode the rest of their life. Like, it might be you know, they,  
212 they thought that something was going to come out or they thought they couldn't live anymore  
213 because of a loss of a family member and then, maybe after a few weeks or a month or after a  
214 certain amount of time, they're over it. And it's like, "Okay, I'm glad I didn't do what I was  
215 thinking about back then." And then they never have another suicide thought. So, it's not like  
216 they constantly have suicidal thoughts, or there's a prompt and they have suicidal thoughts. For  
217 most people there's some issue that a lot of times, if it's dealt with then that's the end of their  
218 experience with suicidal thoughts. Now, there are [a times when] people [...] have repeated  
219 thoughts of suicide. And in either case, treatment is probably a good idea. But it's not untreatable  
220 [...] people [...] get a suicidal thought and they're at risk for having it every day or every week  
221 or the next time there's something that happens.

222 D: Okay. Is there anything that you'd like to add?

223 O: In my neighborhood, that well, when I used to have a house, I remember moving into my  
224 neighborhood and I've heard gunshots before. [...] I moved there in the mid-90s. I remember  
225 one-night [...] people said it was either a fight between drug lords or between gang members, but  
226 it was [terrifying].

227 D: What area were you in?

228 O: [Harambee], I'm sorry. Yeah. So, I lived on [First Street]. I bought a house in [Harambee] I  
229 lived there for twenty years. And I remember the first couple of weeks that I was there, first  
230 couple of months there would be [chaos]. I remember the first four months, there was a car set on  
231 fire, like every month. And then, there was the house or a building burning down, like every few  
232 months. And I, there's like vac[ant lots]. There's like three lots over there that when I first  
233 moved [in] [...] used to be buildings there, and now they're just vacant lots. And I remember  
234 after the first couple of years. So, I remember I first moved in, I'd been a police officer just a few  
235 years before that and I was assigned my last year to the crime prevention department [...]. And I  
236 remember [...] [thinking], "I'm going to start the block watch over here, too." And a lot of  
237 people [...] [were terrified but motivated] because there were so many gun shots, so much  
238 vandalism, [...] with car fires and houses being set on fire [...]. I know one of them was there  
239 was a murder committed inside, or a double murder and the fire was set to hide the evidence. So,  
240 there was some seriously bad stuff going on.

241 D: Wow!

242 O: And people were afraid to be witnesses. And I said, "Hey, if anything happens, you see  
243 something, just call the police. And you can ask to use my name, say, 'Olu was the caller.'" You  
244 know? Because [...] they say, they need a caller name. Most of the time they can be anonymous  
245 but in times where they thought they need a [named] caller, it's like, "Oh, I'm the block watch  
246 captain." I probably heard [the shots. If I didn't, if I wasn't there I was probably aware.] And I  
247 remember [...] we were successful in having about fourteen to fifteen identified drug houses shut  
248 down. And I remember the night that there were thirty shots exchanged between two houses and  
249 a car. And I just remember kids being traumatized the next day. People in the neighborhood

250 being traumatized the next day. And people wondering “Why did I move in this neighborhood?”  
251 [...] And some people have been there like, thirty years, you know? And that was kind of more  
252 of a recent thing. Like, growing up, it wasn’t like that. People had been there, like thirty or forty  
253 years. But I remember that mobilized me even more to keep working with people in the  
254 neighborhood and, you know. We just, just, I started talking to the property owners that owned  
255 some of those houses that didn’t really know what was going on, asked them to screen better,  
256 that helped a lot. I remember one young man, well I remember one night, hearing gun shots  
257 outside my house. I remember I heard four gun shots. I heard (pause) well, first I heard a car. I  
258 heard brakes screeching and then I heard the four gun shots. And I’m running down the stairs to  
259 get outside so I could still see if I can catch the license plate because I could see the car. And the  
260 car gets away. I can’t see the license plate anymore. Then I hear moaning. And I look and there’s  
261 a guy lying in the alley. And it’s like, “Oh, there’s somebody here!” So, right away, I’m on my  
262 cell phone. I’m calling 911. And I talked to the guy. And it’s raining and I’m trying to keep him  
263 from going to sleep and he keeps—

264 D: He was shot?

265 O: He was shot. He, he was shot in the leg and I don’t know how many times. And he was  
266 yelling at me because he just wanted to go to sleep. And I said, well, you do that, you’re going to  
267 go into shock. And if you go into shock, then you might die right here. And the 911, the, the  
268 police and fire, they responded pretty quickly. But I remember saying like, “Yeah, there was all  
269 these shots, I’m sure you got a lot of calls.” They said, “Well, actually, we just got one.” And [I  
270 thought] what if I wouldn’t’ve been home that day [...]? And, and amazingly I saw the guy like  
271 six or seven years later. And he was in a car, he was driving and he pulled over and he’s like,  
272 “Hey, you remember me?” [I didn’t recognize him.] And I looked in the car and I saw this cane

273 and he said, “Yeah, I was the guy that was in the alley. And you called and probably saved my  
274 life.” And now he has to walk with a cane. But [...] he remembered.

275 D: So, [Harambee], the community became so numb to gun violence, they didn’t even call?

276 O: I don’t know, some people think that (pause) yeah. Some people think that it’s so common  
277 that you know, “What good it going to do to call?” Maybe some of the, like there’s really like  
278 four or five people that I can count on to call when they hear gunshots. So, maybe they just  
279 weren’t around. Usually, like now I still get their newsletters. If they hear gunshots, they’ll call.  
280 Or they’ll alert people in the newsletter and say that they called the police. I always call if I hear  
281 a car. ‘Cause I’m thinking I could maybe get a [...] description of a vehicle or a license plate and  
282 then give the police something to follow up on. Because a lot of times if you just hear gun shots,  
283 there’s kind of pretty hard to track.

284 D: Oh, wow.

285 O: But the sound of gun shots in the neighborhood is pretty [...] devastating in a way because  
286 you feel like you’re in a war zone. And that you don’t know when you can go out of the house.  
287 They could be in your backyard. If you have children you’re wondering by the time you hear the  
288 shot, it’s too late. You don’t want them to be on the ground not getting back up because they  
289 were shot. And you read about that all the time. But it’s [...] gotten better. I mean from when it  
290 was every night, I mean [...] twenty years ago [...] basically every day you would hear multiple  
291 gun shots [...] Maybe, you could go sometimes maybe a couple of weeks without hearing a gun  
292 shot. Which was a lot better, you know. And then maybe you’d hear two or three gunshots. So,  
293 you know, and that’s one of those things where just the sounds of gunshots was traumatizing the  
294 neighborhood, without actually even seeing the gun but you know. Having people shot, I mean  
295 there was another person in my alley that was actually shot somewhere else and left in the alley

296 in that neighborhood. She was a waitress at the Rock Bottom, and it was actually in the news  
297 about fifteen years ago.

298 D: They shot her somewhere else and brought her, dumped her in the alley?

299 O: In the alley on [Harambee], yeah. Assuming that that was a neighborhood where people  
300 wouldn't actually notice things like that. So, because of [...] the amount of gunshots at the time.  
301 [...] And now, I'm not I'm not there anymore, but they were a lot more emboldened [...] act[ed]  
302 on it. But [...] one of the other things that I appreciate about people in the neighborhood too, is  
303 that they like to reach out to the young people and especially the young males. Because (pause) I  
304 mean, young males are [...] their family so they're not seeing that there's these kids coming over  
305 or these young men coming over and they're just [inherently] bad. [...] These are some young  
306 men that maybe are misguided. Because in my neighborhood, I know there was two or three  
307 guys that in twenty years that I was, that I was there from, they were like six, seven, eight, nine  
308 years old, that ended up in prison or in jail. But there were also three guys that finished their  
309 college degrees and I do a lot in leadership camps and one of them I hired [as an assistant] for a  
310 few years to help me out with my youth leadership camps. And it's like, you don't really hear  
311 [...] [about these]. And these are just the three that [...] got college degrees [...]? [...] One is  
312 back in Milwaukee working. [...] They're from the same house and one of them [...] got locked  
313 up and [the other] finished his degree. So, same house, same parents, same neighborhood, same  
314 exposure, you know, and one [brother thought], "I don't need to be doing wrong, with that kind  
315 of activity." And the other one needed some more direction. [...] So, in my neighborhood a lot  
316 people are always trying to reach out and have programs that reach out to young people.

317 D: That's great.

318 O: There's a church there called All People[']s Gathering] that has a garden called the Darius  
319 Simmons Garden. He was shot, he was only in grade school, like between eight and ten years old  
320 or maybe twelve years old, by a neighbor who said someone had broke into his house. And then  
321 he saw this young black man named Darius, just outside playing. And he thought, "I bet that's  
322 the guy that broke into my house." Just, no correlation at all, then shot him and killed him.

323 D: Oh my god!

324 O: And, you know, the guy's serving time for that. But, [...] that's what I mean, gun violence is  
325 so multi-faceted. [...] This is [...] an issue. I don't know if that would be just social, anti-social  
326 behaviors that he saw a young, black male and thought this person represented a threat. [...]  
327 Does this person have some other conditions like maybe [...]?

328 D: That makes you want to cry.

329 O: Yeah, yeah because he's just playing.

330 D: Oh my god, his mother and father. (pause) Ugh.

331 O: But I think it, it's, it's preventable. I mean, people turn to gun violence as a way to solve  
332 problems. People turn to gun violence because they think it's gives them respect. People turn to  
333 gun violence because they think it's normal. There's [...] probably people like that in  
334 Milwaukee, too. But in the South, of United States, that have been arming themselves to try to  
335 stop people from coming across the border. Like, they just took it up on themselves to use guns  
336 to do that. And there's, the one guy got charged and he's a felon. Like, he's not supposed to have  
337 a gun in the first place, you know. But again people say "Well, if I'm armed, I can solve some  
338 problems." And so [...] it's a big thing to try to solve. Because there's so many reasons why  
339 people think they need to have a gun, for this reason. I'm not even talking about the second  
340 amendment. Where people say, "The United States Constitution says it's okay." I'm just talking

341 where people think, “Well because of this issue, a gun will help and make that better.” And I  
342 think as long as people have that belief, they’ll find ways to justify gun violence.

343 D: Wow. Did you have anything else you want to add?

344 O: I believe in the young people, that they are making an impact that we have never seen before.  
345 So, young people in Parkland, I mean, to tell the truth they really started in the 90s. You know,  
346 the young people in Chicago, parts in Milwaukee and a lot of cities have spoken out against gun  
347 violence. But last year, it was different. Some people say because it happened to suburban  
348 (pause) white teenagers. But they weren’t all white. There was [...] pretty much a mixed  
349 coalition. That just all of a sudden made some people pay attention because people would look  
350 [at it differently]. Especially politicians might look bad if they’re saying [...], “Don’t jump to the  
351 conclusions that gun access is the reason why we have the gun violence,” and they’re saying,  
352 “Actually, it is a reason.” v

353 D: Right.

354 O: Just like the sixteen-year-old Swedish girl who decided to [...] strike from school on Fridays  
355 in August. It all became in, it’s like the international influence on climate change. [...] Grown-  
356 ups [...], scientists with degrees have been saying this for decades. And now, this sixteen-year-  
357 old is getting people to pay serious attention. And so, I think young people are revitalizing, [and]  
358 energizing [...]. They’re at risk for gun violence too. But their voices are not heard because  
359 they’re young, but I mean, that’s one of the big reasons of why people are motivated to stop the  
360 gun violence. So, yeah that, I want to say that we need to keep supporting them and working  
361 with them, letting them lead us, and as well as them. You know, they’re learning from us. [...] I  
362 mean you’re a Mother Against Gun Violence founder and [...] there’s a lot that everybody can  
363 learn from you. But I mean, just increasing that, that coalition of people so that people can see

364 that there is something being done against gun violence. A lot of times people just don't realize  
365 it. I mean, since that group, the, the young people started protesting and taking it to the streets,  
366 55 new gun bills were passed across the United States [...].

367 D: That's amazing.

368 O: —in less than a year.

369 D: That's amazing.

370 O: Yeah, so, I mean, stuff can get done, stuff can get changed. So, it, it's not a hopeless cause.

371 D: Thank you!

372 O: Thank you.

373 D: That was awesome.