

1 VGV 76 Alicia Villanueva 3/29/2021

2 [...]

3 D: So, can you tell me a little bit about yourself, what is your age?

4 A: I am 27 years old, and I am Puerto-Rican and Black, and I was born in Milwaukee,
5 Wisconsin, and I kind of lived a little bit all over the place (laughs).

6 D: Oh okay (laughs). So, do you remember what happened when you experienced gun violence?
7 It can be for the first time or the most impactful time.

8 A: Yes, so I feel like throughout my life there was two major times where like I kind of
9 experienced it one when I was younger, and it was a time when I actually used to live near Vliet.

10 D: Oh.

11 A: And there was an altercation that had occurred with my brother's dad, and I just remember
12 hearing shooting outside, and me, my brother, and his sister were like hiding in a closet. That
13 was like the first experience that I ever had with it. And then just a few years ago, it was a more,
14 I guess, intimate experience where my brother was actually shot and killed due to gun violence.
15 So those are the two that are like significant.

16 D: Do you know the general neighborhood that he was in like was it the Sherman Park Area, it
17 happened the Whitefish Bay area?

18 A: It was near Oklahoma Avenue in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And it was on August 18th, 2018, I
19 just remember it was after ten p.m., and I had the first time ever that I turned the volume off on
20 my phone and I put my phone down so I could actually like go to sleep. I ended up getting like
21 20 missed calls from my mom, and then my partner, he was like, he ended up getting a call from

22 my mom so, I thought that was really strange, so I thought it must be really serious, so we
23 answered, and my mom was like, "Your brother's dead." And I was like, "What do you mean?"
24 And she's like, "His dad shot him." And I was like, I was in shock because that doesn't even
25 make sense like why would his dad shoot him, I don't understand. So, she was like, "Well, I
26 need you to find out where he is." And I was like, I don't know, I guess I was just so in shock
27 that I didn't know where to start, so I just kind of was like, "Okay, well do I go to the hospital,
28 or?" She's like, "No, Alicia, because he's dead, so just find the nearest precinct to where he is
29 and go there." So, I just remember getting dressed, I dropped my kids off, and then I went
30 straight to the precinct, and I was trying to ask questions about where my brother was and if they
31 can confirm to me that he actually was dead, and I just remember, I just kept thinking like,
32 "Maybe he's not really dead," "Maybe they were able to save him," "Maybe he's in the
33 hospital." But the officers didn't want to give me any information because I wasn't his mom, so,
34 I just remember calling my mom and I'm like, "They're not telling me, they don't want to tell me
35 anything." So, my mom ended up, I gave her the information for where I was, and she contacted
36 them, and she let them know that it was okay to just confirm with me. And then I just remember
37 then when they confirmed with me, I was just like, it didn't make sense, like everything stopped
38 for a moment because I just didn't understand how his dad could do that to him or why he would
39 have did that to him, so.

40 D: I am so sorry Alicia. What did the police say to you when they confirmed it like, how did they
41 do it?

42 A: Well, the person just came out and she was like, "Can you identify the victim?" And I was
43 like, "Yes," and I gave them his full name, and I let them know that he's my brother, and they
44 said, "Okay, well your mother said that we have permission to confirm with you that he is dead,

45 and he is currently at the morgue.” But that was all the information they could give me at that
46 time so, after that I just kind of broke down, and I was with my partner, and I was with my aunt
47 and her partner, and we just walked outside, and I remember just like, screaming because I was
48 just like, “What the hell?” You know, so that was all that they could give me though, they
49 couldn’t give me anything else, they couldn’t tell me where his dad was or how it happened.
50 They couldn’t tell me any other details like what time it happened or anything like that.

51 D: Oh Alicia. So, you and your aunt and you guys’ partners are outside the police station, and I
52 guess the realization is kicking in that you know your brother’s gone so what do you do after,
53 once you leave the station? The police station.

54 A: Ironically, that once we left the station we were driving and we got pulled over because my
55 partner, I guess one of his lights was out in the back, and we were just there like, “Really?” And
56 the cop was taking forever to get out of the car to like come by us, and I was just thinking in my
57 head I want to get as far away from this area as possible. So, then they came, and my partner
58 explained to them what just happened, so they were like, “Oh, okay then we’ll just let you go
59 with a warning or whatever, but you need to get it fixed and stuff.” So, then we just ended up
60 going back home and I just remember just crying, I was just crying for hours because I just don’t
61 get it, like why would he do it. I guess I was just trying to make sense of the why and then trying
62 to like, I don’t know, trying to just picture how it could have happened. So, and I don’t know
63 why I did that, but I guess I just wanted to make sense of it.

64 D: Did you ever talk to your dad to ask why or?

65 A: Me and my brother don’t share the same dad.

66 D: Okay.

67 A: Yeah.

68 D: Did you ever talk to him and ask him why or?

69 A: I didn't, it was, I can't remember how long after, but it was not too long after the fact he
70 ended up trying to call me and at first I didn't recognize the number so I was like this is weird,
71 and I just remember hearing the voicemail, and I remember hearing an inmate at such and such
72 jail or facility or whatever is trying to contact you and it had sounded like he had said my
73 brother's name, so I just thought that that was weird like, first of all like, why are you calling me
74 one, and two why would you mention my brother's name in the recording, why wouldn't you
75 just say your name, unless he was trying to say it was about my brother like he was calling about
76 my brother, but I don't know. I never talked to him. I've never thought about wanting to talk to
77 him because I feel like even if I were to ask him why, I feel like he wouldn't tell me the truth
78 because when he, when we were in court and he was talking about it, he didn't really seem
79 remorseful.

80 D: Wow.

81 A: He, to me he seemed like he was more apologetic about wasting the judges time with
82 everything opposed to what he actually did, and I feel like he himself even mentioned that it
83 didn't make sense, like he didn't really have a valid reason for why he did what he did. So, I
84 don't know. I just feel like there's no reason for me to want to talk to him because I just feel like
85 that's just going to hurt me more.

86 D: You're probably right. What was the age, race, and gender of the perpetrator or of the person
87 who killed Jakari?

88 A: He was a Black man, I want to say he's like, I don't know exactly how old he is, I think he's
89 like late 40s or early 50s.

90 D: Okay.

91 A: Yeah, but I don't know exactly how old he is.

92 D: How would you say this experience has affected you?

93 A: Me? I feel like I don't know who to trust anymore, I feel like I struggle a lot with opening up
94 and trusting people, and I don't know. I feel like a lot of times I'm emotionally numb, and I don't
95 know if it's because of the fact that like ever since that day I feel like I haven't really cried that
96 much anymore. I just feel like ever since that day everything just like stopped for a while for me,
97 and I tried to go to therapy, and I tried to talk it out there, but I don't know. I just don't feel like
98 how I used to feel, I guess. I feel like everything just kind of stopped.

99 D: Wow, I can understand that. I can see that. How has it, how has this experience affected your
100 family?

101 A: It's caused my mom to dive into activism a lot and now she's like, my mom was always
102 pretty overprotective of us, but now I feel like she's a thousand times more.

103 D: (laughs) I bet!

104 A: (laughs) She's like on me about everything like you wouldn't even believe it like sometimes I
105 have to remind her like, "Ma you know I'm an adult, 27 years old." (laughs) And she's like, "I
106 know, but you're still always going to be my baby and you know now that we don't have your
107 brother anymore." Like, I don't know, everything is just on a thousand now with her, and like I
108 feel like it really affected like it really, really hurt my grandmother and I think that hurts me a lot

109 because we also lost my grandfather in the same year, so it just took a toll, I feel like, on
110 everyone.

111 D: How would you say that this has affected the community?

112 A: The community, I'm not so much sure because I remember like after my brother passed away,
113 I know that he had a lot of people, we ended up realizing that my brother had a lot of people that
114 knew him that we were like not aware of, and I know like during that time there was a lot of
115 people who were like reaching out to us who was like really hurt by what happened and there's
116 times where I'll randomly check one of his social media accounts, and I see that like he still has
117 friends who like share pictures that they had with him and they'll write little messages about how
118 much they miss him and how unfair it was like what happened to him. But like, after he passed
119 away where it happened, we did like a little candle thing, and we put balloons and like his picture
120 there and they left it for like maybe like a week or so and then they ended up taking everything
121 down. But I heard from someone that it was his dad's family who removed everything, and so I
122 don't know sometimes it feels like everyone kind of moved past it like no one really talks about
123 it or thinks about it anymore, until I go to his social media, and I see that he still does have
124 people who are out there who are like thinking about him still. So that kind of, I don't know,
125 makes me feel like he's still kind of living on even though he's not here with us anymore.

126 D: That is beautiful, I'm so glad that his friends do that. Have you ever shared with them how
127 grateful you are that they do that?

128 A: No, I don't say anything because I don't want it to seem like I'm being weird, 'cause I just
129 check it every now and again to see if anybody's like wrote anything like if they send him
130 messages, I don't like open the messages. So, he has a ton of unread messages on there.

131 D: (laughs)

132 A: I don't know, I just have this weird thing in my mind like my brother is able to see what it is
133 that they're saying to him, so I don't know I never reached out or said anything. I just read them
134 when they come through and just kind of leave it like that.

135 D: Look, I get it. How do you think this situation could have been avoided?

136 A: Honestly, I think about that all the time. I feel like it could have been avoided if his dad
137 would've just reached out to me, because like I've talked to his dad before and when I was
138 younger, his dad was in my life ,and his dad knew that I was here, and if his dad was having a lot
139 of issues with him or having problems with my brother, I feel like he could have tried to contact
140 me and just told me like, "Hey, I need you to come and pick him up. I need him to be out of my
141 house," or whatever it was. I didn't even know that things were as bad as they were with him
142 and his dad. And my brother wasn't the type of person who would talk about when he has issues
143 and stuff like that. Any time I talked to him, he'd be like, "Yeah we're good, we're good." So,
144 just to think like okay well my brother thought you guys were on good terms and my brother
145 thought that everything was okay like, this is a man that didn't raise my brother. He didn't come
146 into my brother's life until my brother moved out here and that was like barely at first. So, I
147 don't know, I just thought it was really weird like you hardly know him like, he lived with you
148 for not even two years so what could have possibly been so horrible that you felt the need to do
149 what you did and why wouldn't you have tried to call me and just like, I would have gotten my
150 brother out of the house, like if you didn't want him there, I would have made sure that he left.
151 So, I don't know, I just feel like it could have been avoided if he just would have reached out to
152 me.

153 D: Was the perpetrator caught? I know the answer but that's one of the questions.

154 A: Yes, he was, and he is locked up and he is currently serving supposed to be a 15-year
155 sentence.

156 D: Oh my gosh.

157 A: (laughs) yeah. It like doesn't even seem fair, he took my brother's life at 21, and he only gets
158 15 years, so.

159 D: What could we do to eliminate gun violence or to lower gun violence?

160 A: Honestly, I think just making it, like being more strict in regards to the background checks
161 and like who's allowed to get a gun and also removing military style weapons. Like, there's no
162 reason why people should be able to purchase military style weapons like when they're living in
163 society. Like, we're not a war zone. We shouldn't be living our lives as if we're in a war zone
164 like I don't think that that's fair to the children that we're raising within these communities. So
165 that's what I think.

166 D: I agree with you. Do you have a photo that you'd like to share along with your story?

167 A: Yeah, I have two. I don't know if you can see them very well, but this is like one.

168 D: Aw, how old was he?

169 A: He was maybe like four.

170 D: Aw.

171 A: Like three or four.

172 D: Aw.

173 A: And then this one because my brother always had a beautiful smile.

174 D: Oh, he does have a beautiful smile. Yes, he does. (laughs)

175 A: I use to call him (inaudible)

176 D: You used to call him what?

177 A: I said, I used to call him my Egyptian Prince.

178 D: Oh yes, handsome young man.

179 A: Yes, very very.

180 D: He sure, well it makes sense, I mean you're a beautiful young lady.

181 A: Thanks.

182 D So you definitely have a handsome brother (laughs). You're welcome. Do you have anything
183 you would like to say to elected officials?

184 A: Yeah, I think they should definitely reconsider the charges that they place on these
185 perpetrators, and I feel that they should be equal to the crimes they commit, like a 15-year
186 sentence for taking the life of a 20-year-old young man, like that just doesn't make sense to me.
187 The sentence should equal the crime that they committed, like what he did was intentional. He
188 killed my brother on purpose and then to not be remorseful for that is like, I don't know, to me
189 giving him 15 years was like nothing because when he gets out, he's going to be like what 60
190 something years old.

191 D: Right.

192 A: He's still going to be alive.

193 D: 60 or 70.

194 A: Yeah.

195 D: Yeah. What would you-

196 A: That's what-

197 D: No go ahead, what were you going to say?

198 A: Oh, that that's what I have to say.

199 D: What would you say to the community?

200 A: I would just say like, just stop the violence. I don't feel like any altercation or any
201 disagreement that you may have with another person is as serious to the point where you need to
202 take the life of someone else. People have to learn to be better at communicating with one
203 another like there's so many things that could be resolved through simple communication. Like
204 there's no reason why things have to go from zero to 100. Like it just blows my mind how much
205 gun violence we're experiencing all the time due to minor things, like with this situation, my
206 brother's dad, said that he shot my brother because they got into an altercation about my brother
207 cleaning his room, which doesn't even make sense and you got so angry to the point where you
208 felt like you needed to kill him because his room was messy? Like that isn't like, I can't make
209 sense of it. So, it's like if you're really angry enough, walk away, learn to walk away, cool off
210 and when you are ready, come back and have a conversation if you needed to get what you need
211 off your chest. There's no reason why someone expressing how they feel about something needs
212 to result in a gun, a gun interaction in any case.

213 D: Well said.

214 A: That's what I have to say.

215 D: That was well said, Alicia, and you're so right, how does it go from cleaning a room to
216 shooting someone dead? Oh my god.

217 A: Yeah.

218 D: I am so sorry baby.

219 A: Thank you.

220 D: You're welcome. Did you have anything else that you wanted to share?

221 A: No.

222 D: I'm going to stop the recording. Thank you.

223 A: Okay.

224 A: And like so many and got like 15 years and I was like, "What in the heck is happening here?"
225 So, I was just kind of like, looking what the sentencing would be and how much they would have
226 charged him, so my mom was like, "When you write the letter make sure that you tell them do
227 40 years to life and whatever." And I was like, "Mom, based on everything I'm looking up, he's
228 not going to get more than 20 years, if that, he might get fifteen years and probably like 5 years
229 on probation if he were to get like 20." And she was like, "No, there's no way." And I was like,
230 based off of what I'm looking up, he's going to get about 15 years and that ended up being what
231 he got and it's because what I had looked up, they felt like because they were related that was
232 like father and son, that he would barely pose a threat to the community because there was a
233 relational tie to that murder. So, I'm like that should be, I would be more afraid of him being in

234 the community if you could kill your own son, who's to say that you wouldn't get upset with me
235 being a random person in the street and turn around and kill me?

236 D: Right.

237 A: Like, that should qualify you to get life. That should be, like somebody should be more afraid
238 of you being on the streets.

239 D: Right.

240 A: That just didn't make any sense to me at all.

241 D: That is crazy!

242 A: So, I was just like [inaudible]. I was really, really blown by that. I told that to my mom and
243 she was just like in disbelief she was like, "There's no way, there's no way." I was like, I'm
244 telling you, and even talking to the lawyer, the lawyer was like that's more than likely what's
245 going to happen.

246 D: That is crazy Alicia, are you saying because that's crazy!

247 A: Yeah.

248 D: Oh my God. That has to change.

249 A: It does, that has to change because that like it doesn't even make any sense. Like, well you
250 killed your own family members, so we're not threatened by you being on the streets with just
251 random people. It's like, no, that should be more concerning, like anybody who is willing to kill
252 anybody should be concerning period whether that be a relational thing or a father, son, uncle,
253 cousin, or random person. Like if you're willing to kill someone period, there should be a
254 maximum sentence that's more than 15 years.

255 D: I agree, I agree.

256 A: That's just mind boggling to me.

257 D: It's, I never knew that until you told me that, that needs to change.

258 A: Yeah, it does, it really does.

259 D: Alright, I'm going to stop the recording but that was too juicy to let that one go. I was like

260 wow! If someone hears, this they're going to- .