

1 VGV #84 4/13/2022 Claudiare Motley

2 D: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

3 C: Sure, sure. And first of all, let me thank you, Debra, for having me. I really appreciate this
4 opportunity. Obviously, I'm born and raised in Milwaukee. I have, went to UWM, graduated
5 from UWM, went to Milwaukee Tech throughout my time here. I ended up going and moving
6 down to Charlotte to explore getting my law degree, and at the time while I was actually about to
7 graduate with my law degree is when this incident happened. I have all my family here and
8 things like that so we're often back here and when I came back for the incident, I was here for
9 my 25th-year reunion. So, I have a lot of ties to this city. Also, you know what I do right now is
10 where me and my wife have a law firm. We deal with social issue justices, it is an international
11 law firm that was actually founded in Afghanistan, and we did a lot of international work until
12 the pandemic happened. At that point in time, we kind of shifted our focus and we've done a lot
13 of social justice work here in the Wisconsin and Milwaukee County area. And also, we've been
14 doing a lot of work with immigration, helping those that are having problems in their countries
15 and to get over here. So, we're still doing a lot of good work here in the city and also in the
16 country, so we're really happy about that.

17 D: Sounds fantastic, note to self, add your wife as an interviewee. Wow.

18 C: (laughs)

19 D: Claudiare, what is your age?

20 C: I'm fifty years old.

21 D: And your race?

22 C: African American

23 D: And your gender?

24 C: Male. 100% male.

25 D: What area of Milwaukee did you live in? I know you don't anymore because you moved to
26 Charlotte.

27 C: When I was here, I grew up [in the Sherman Park area]. Lived in all different areas and before
28 we left, we were living on the East Side right off of Oakland.

29 D: How long did you live there?

30 C: On the East Side, we actually owned a home over there for four years, and then like I said
31 before, bounced around the North Side of Milwaukee my whole life.

32 D: Do you remember where your story happened?

33 C: It actually happened over on I think it's like [Capitol Heights area].

34 D: And for mapping purposes is that like the Sherman Park area?

35 C: Not quite. I don't know what area, but it is right by the old, and now I'm going to age myself
36 by saying this, by the old capital court, I think they called it Midtown for a little while, where—

37 D: Yep.

38 C: Yeah, so we were in that area.

39 D: Now tell me your story of gun violence.

40 C: Well, my actual incident happened and it's a thing that's been happening all too often, it was
41 an attempted carjacking actually. I was dropping, like I said, I was here for a 25th year
42 anniversary of our class reunion I should say, and was with one of my good friends [...], and I
43 was dropping him off at the house, we had went to a little warm-up get-together before the actual
44 reunion and we were at one of our friend's bar down on [Riverwest neighborhood], and so I was
45 dropping him off right after everything were done and while he was going inside the house, I was
46 trying to just looking at my phone you know, I had gotten a lot of numbers and reconnected with
47 a lot of people, so I was just texting them saying its good to see them and things like that. And I
48 was waiting for him to go inside and so I kind of got caught up in that, he had already went
49 inside the house, and when I looked up, I kind of was double-parked so I kind of moved forward
50 so I could get close to the sidewalk and just finish the messages I was sending and the replies and
51 things like that. At that point in time, I was about to take off and so I put the car in drive and
52 looked in the rearview mirror and I saw two cars coming down the street. I didn't think too much
53 of it. I was going to wait for them to pass, and so I got a little message while they were passing,
54 so I kind of looked down at my phone, and when I looked up I saw that one of the cars had
55 parked on an angle, looked like it was going to turn up on Capitol, going west on Capitol, it
56 looked like it was going to turn but it was kind of angled off in front of my car, and then the next
57 one was stopped and right up on my side. Didn't really think nothing about it, but when I looked
58 at the people that were sitting in the car on my side, they were all looking at me, and that's when
59 I kind of knew something was going on. There was a gap between the car, and I had my car
60 already in drive because I was about to take off and so at that point in time, I was starting to
61 move my car and that's when one of the guys got out of the car, had a gun, tapped on the
62 window. But I was already moving to leave, so I was like well, I just didn't think nothing about

63 it. I just punched the gas. At that point in time when I punched it, he shot into the car and that's
64 when he actually shot me, and I didn't really know I was shot. I had a lot of adrenaline flowing, I
65 knew something had happened, and I actually ran into the car in front of me. I pushed that car
66 out the way and drove myself out of the situation and I was kind of nervous and everything like
67 that, but at that point in time I kind of was, I knew something was wrong and when I looked into
68 the mirror to see if they were actually were following me, I realized that my jaw did not come up
69 with my face and that's when I looked down and saw the blood coming down and I realized I
70 was shot through the jaw. At that point in time, I started getting a little woozy obviously losing a
71 lot of blood and things like that and I had to really think about where I was going. I needed to get
72 to a hospital, and I eventually drove to Saint Mary's and I walked in to get help, but it was a
73 harrowing situation. I was just actually, you know, kind of in shock at the time. But so yeah that
74 was you know, my experience with it and it was just senseless in my mind.

75 D: Yes of course. Wow. So, when we get shot, it's not instant pain huh?

76 C: It's, you know especially in a situation like that when it's a lot of things happening at once, so
77 my adrenaline had already kicked in when I actually realized there was about to be something
78 was going down what they were going to do to me. So, my adrenaline had already kicked in so at
79 the time, yeah you know that adrenaline numbs a lot of different things that you don't think
80 about so, and once you do realize that you are injured, you're still trying to fight you know your
81 body goes into a fight or flight situation, and I was fighting and flighting doing both flight and
82 fight at the same exact time, so yeah I was kind of the pain wasn't really a problem at that time.

83 D: Can you tell me about the people involved? You said it was a young man, so what was his
84 nationality.

85 C: The young man that shot me was a 15-year-old African American male his name was Nathan
86 King. He was there but he was in the car with three other people and in the car in front of me was
87 another six people, so it was a complete group of nine people that were going around the town
88 jacking cars, carjacking, taking turns driving them and just getting a bunch of cars from people.
89 The fifteen-year-old, Nathan, he eventually got shot the next night, and I know we're going to
90 probably talk about what happened with that, but you know the reason why we found out is he
91 actually admitted to shooting into the car, but he said he didn't know that he had actually shot
92 anyone because I drove away. So, you know it doesn't seem like there was a lot of thought
93 process that went into the actual shooting or didn't care who he was shooting at.

94 D: How has this experience affected you?

95 C: I'm sorry?

96 D: How has this experience affected you?

97 C: You know the thing about it is that when it comes down to how the experience affected me,
98 it's on a lot of different levels. Many different levels, because when you talk about the emotional
99 side of it when you actually get shot, it actually is a traumatic situation, and as you fight to
100 survive and heal and things like that, you mask over a lot of the trauma that has been put on you
101 and the thing about it is that, unfortunately, we live in a society and a community that continues
102 to get bombarded with crimes and different instances of violent crimes, you know, I've had
103 friends, I've had family members, nephews, people have been shot since I've been shot and all
104 that continues to build upon each other, especially since it's never really addressed. And so, you
105 do have to deal with a lot of the problems that you might incur when it comes down to a
106 shooting. Also, you have to talk about the financial side, you know. I've had a lot of financial

107 bills when it comes down to it. I've had almost ten different surgeries on my jaw and those bills
108 really add up and you have insurance companies that are after a while, they're going to drop you,
109 they're going to find a reason to drop you. I got dropped by three different insurance companies
110 because they said I had a preexisting condition at the time. So, it is very difficult when it comes
111 down to the financial side. And then you got to talk about everybody else that's involved you
112 know, getting shot is not really just about an individual being shot, it affects the whole family.
113 I'm married, I have three children all, my son the first thing he heard about the incident was your
114 father was shot in the face. You don't think at that point in time, especially a child is not
115 thinking, "Hey listen that man survived, my daddy, survived." He's thinking what I see in a
116 video game, you know? And so, it is very traumatic for everybody that's involved in that and
117 dealing with what might happen, what might have happened and things like that. So, I mean it
118 doesn't. it's a lot of layers that go into dealing with being a victim of a shooting.

119 D: You answered my second question, how did it affect your family. How would you say it
120 affected our community?

121 C: Well, you know, the thing about it is, is that like I said before, I think we truly deal with the
122 situation in which we just continue to go forward. We don't actually deal with the pain and the
123 effect of what it means. Oftentimes, luckily for me, I'm a person that got shot and I'm still able
124 to talk to you all and handle work and find a way to deal with my own issues how I can. But
125 there's oftentimes that people get shot and they have to rely on their family due to the injuries
126 they might sustain during those shootings and that changes the whole dynamic of a family and of
127 that person's independence and the burden that it brings on that whole family. You know the
128 financial cost of it definitely hurts our community, when you have millions and millions of
129 dollars that are being put into sustaining people that are not able to pay for a lot of these

130 surgeries and things that go on and just the psychological part of it, of living in a city in which
131 you continue to hear stories and now all the sudden one of the things I realized during this time
132 was that all my sisters, I have four sisters, and all of them carry guns, you know? Because the
133 trauma that they receive not just because of their own trauma but the trauma of the people they
134 know and the thing that they're always scared of, they're always looking over their shoulder and
135 they're always feeling unsafe when they're in certain neighborhoods and just even within the
136 city. And that's a sad thing to do to a community when they're always on guard for something
137 bad to happen so you know it does have a definite effect on the community.

138 D: Do you think this situation could have been avoided?

139 C: You know a lot of people, and one of the things I'm doing is we're doing a lot of impact work
140 with this and that's one of the biggest questions, we talk about solutions. How do you avoid this?
141 And one of the things which you find out is yes you know you definitely have to deal with the
142 emergency that's right in front of you. You really want to deal with gun violence and gun control
143 and talking to your politicians to get gun laws so we can get these guns out of the hands of
144 people who aren't supposed to have them, a 16-year-old should not have a gun, period, and how
145 do we get that out. You know we had to do, we had to really truly start to coming down on
146 people who are putting weapons in the hands of people that don't, that should not have it and
147 that's the first thing that you have to deal with. But the second thing you have to start thinking
148 about is what makes a 16-year-old pick up a gun and at that point in time we're talking about the
149 intervention side. We're taking about making sure that we start dealing with the issues that
150 causes people to think to have the hopelessness to feel that you know they can just go through
151 life taking what other people might have, intimidating others, and even shooting others because
152 they don't have what a feeling of something to achieve in their own lives and they don't have

153 that, so we have to state thinking really about reaching out to the children, reaching out to people
154 and finding out what their problems are. One of the things we have found out within studies of
155 our impact is that people are the people in the city, and let me just say this one thing, out of the
156 ten most violent cities, I'm sorry, ten of the most violent cities in this country are the most
157 segregated cities and that's what we find out from Milwaukee, that it's one of the most
158 segregated cities, and we do have these situations of high violent crimes. And what we have to
159 do is start to understand that equality is going to be one of the things when we talk about
160 opportunities, when we talk about the things that they need to make sure that they understand
161 that when you pick up a gun, you're going to lose something, you're going to lose the tranquility
162 of having a good life and that's what I think that we have to start really focusing on and giving
163 these people something, giving people something that they can actually strive for and not want to
164 lose by silly acts of violence.

165 D: You answered a few of my questions very eloquently I may add.

166 C: Thank you.

167 D: You're welcome. Which was "how can we lower gun violence or eliminate it?" And you did
168 mention that the perpetrator was caught, how much time did he serve and go —mentioning with
169 cause, so I guess my question would be, did he serve time for his offense of shooting you?

170 C: He did, and you know one of the things he was, like I said he was fifteen at the time, so he
171 was a juvenile. So at the time he was looking at being charged as a juvenile but at that point in
172 time he was going to get five years and just to go onto his story just a little bit so that you
173 understand what happened, the very next night he tried to shoot another young lady in a
174 carjacking but unfortunately that young lady had a, [...], she had a gun, and [she] shot Nathan,

175 and Nathan was partially paralyzed at the time so, and the ironic part was is that he was in
176 Children's Hospital, so it was the very next night. So we were actually at the hospital at the same
177 exact time, the person that shot me, and me, the victim, were in the hospital at the same time,
178 suffering from gun shots, gunshot wounds, which is you know is very ironic, but when it comes
179 down to him, he actually was only going to do five years and they were all going to be at home
180 because the juvenile system did not have the facilities that was going to be able to take care of
181 his injuries but his situation, he decided that he wanted to go AWOL a couple times and not meet
182 a lot of court dates and court requirements and things like that so, and he did this until he was of
183 age to actually be moved up to adult court, so he ended up doing, he ended up pleading guilty
184 obviously, and ended up doing eight and a half years, no I'm sorry, 12 in a half years inside and
185 eight and a half, seven and a half years of supervised. So, he did a total, he's going to do a total
186 of 20 years.

187 D: For him to see the opportunity he had, he was given.

188 C: Yeah.

189 D: Yeah, wow.

190 D: What would you say to our elected officials?

191 C: Well, going and let me tie this into going into what I said to him. Because at the time of
192 sentencing, I was able to speak, and I actually asked for him to get five years. I decided at that
193 point in time, what are we talking about when we come down to punishment, you know, what are
194 we trying to do in our situation? This is a 16-year-old man that was facing 20 years and of
195 course, 12 and a half years, he's still going to be pretty young coming out but what are those
196 years of prison, are they actually going to be productive to where he's going to be able to

197 apologize for his wrongdoing and turn around and become a successful contributing person in
198 our society? So, when it comes down to thinking about that as a victim of a crime and also
199 thinking about the redemption of this child, I think that we all have to start thinking about that
200 situation, not just about the punishment and the anger because obviously, I went through all
201 those things. I wanted him buried under the prison at one point in time, but as you start
202 understanding the whole situation, understanding how would it affects everyone, and how that
203 you don't want to define who you are at your worst moment. And once you start realizing that
204 you understand that you want those who are putting laws together, those who are structuring our
205 city, those who are doing things, you want them to think of things the same way. You want them
206 to start understanding that these laws, the actual laws to punish people are for punishment but
207 also are for learning, and also, we have to understand that we need to talk to these people, these
208 kids beforehand, we need to get these kids involved in things long before they are thinking that
209 they don't have a chance to do anything. Give them a vision, because that's what this country is
210 very good at doing, is taking away a vision, taking away a vision of hope, of being successful,
211 taking away a vision of giving a person hope, and we have to start instilling that again, and that
212 only means that they know that somebody is out there to care for them. And if you're going to be
213 an elected official, be that person. Be that person to show that you're there for all the citizens and
214 not just a single, certain amount.

215 D: What would you say to the community?

216 C: You know, one of the things we have found out and when we talk about in our impact studies
217 is that the community wants help more than the people that are not affected by all the crime, this
218 community looks for help you know and it looks for help within the public officials, it looks for
219 help within policing, it looks for help in public policy, and health, but the main thing they look

220 for is individual responsibility. So, the thing about it is, is that one of the things that I would
221 definitely urge the community, is start to taking responsibility and it starts from the very
222 foundations of everything, respect, and for yourself and respect for others. You have to start to
223 take pride in who you are and that will start to trickle down in the littlest things. I mean even if
224 it's just picking up garbage off the street and making sure the place you live in you are proud of.
225 Often times one of the things that I told you there's things that are setup to take away their pride
226 and when you look you look at homeownership in Milwaukee, 78% of white citizens own their
227 homes, where only 28% are Black people. So, at that point in time, we think of people just
228 renting and things like that, they don't have the same respect for things that they own. So, we
229 have to start thinking about how do we get homeownership, how do we start to talk about
230 ourselves as a community and not just a bunch of people that are just living day to day you
231 know? And so hopefully we can start looking at the bigger picture and getting help to do that.

232 D: Question, when you went to emergency as a gunshot victim, were you met with any stigma
233 coming in suffering from a gunshot?

234 C: Absolutely, and this is one of the things that we're working on when it comes down to the sad
235 part of the health care. I would never want to really come at a group of people that are saving
236 lives and doing their due diligence to make sure they obtain their Hippocratic Oath and I applaud
237 them for taking up their profession, but the thing about it is hospitals are not just made of doctors
238 they are made up of administration and things like that, and one of the things that happened to
239 me when I actually came in as a victim is that after I had an operation and was coming out of my,
240 actually two operations at the time, I was shackled to the bed because they didn't know if I was
241 the victim or perpetrator. So, they leaned on the understanding that I was probably the
242 perpetrator and they shackled me to my bed. I was not allowed to actually make a call, I had to

243 ask for a phone from a person that was visiting another patient in the ICU to use the phone to
244 alert my family that I was shot, where I was at, because I was gone the whole day, and no one
245 knew what happened to me. Unfortunately, this happens over and over at the hospital. I have had
246 a nephew that was not allowed to see their family members and the problem is with that whole
247 situation is not just about the attitudes that the hospital toward that victim, but also there are
248 things that the hospital, the doctors might need to know when it comes down to health care to
249 make sure the person is not allergic to things, when they're incapacitated, if they have any prior
250 issues and things like that that are not being able to be expressed to these doctors because of
251 policy that is being, I think, unfairly put on based on tropes and stigmas that is causing, that can
252 cause irreparable harm and not only that, the rights, the actual constitutional rights of these
253 people. Hospitals are not jails, they have no right to put people under custody and no right to
254 deny people to see their families or to see anyone that needs to see them when they are sick, so
255 it's a shame that we have to deal with that, but it's something that definitely has to be looked at
256 in our community because once again, this is about breaking down and affecting who we are in
257 this community and how we feel where we stand.

258 D: Alright, you decided to do a documentary, "When Claude Got Shot." Why did you decide to
259 do that?

260 C: Well, let me give you a little background and I'm not sure if I keep stepping on your
261 questions, I'm very sorry about that but I get a little rambunctious while I'm talking about this
262 because it's very, it means a lot to me and that's one of the reasons why I did the documentary.
263 The director, Brad Lichtenstein, we're good friends long before any of this and in fact, my son
264 and Brad's son met in daycare and so every time, we were friends before we left, we've been
265 friends for almost 20 years, every time I come back, we stay, we'll stay at his house or my son

266 stays with his son and at that point in time that's who actually had ,when I was shot, who
267 actually had my son and had to tell him I got shot. So after getting out, the thing like I said
268 before you go through those steps of anger and frustration and things like that and I got on the
269 news, I got on the local news, and I wanted people to see and I'm swole up, my jaw's swole up
270 I'm just coming out of surgery, but I wanted people to see how senseless this was and how lucky
271 I was to be alive and I wanted to tell people that we need to look at this as a community and
272 that's what I always felt all the way through. I thought that this is a story that could be told in-
273 depth and it's not just a 30-second clip on the news and two days later everyone forgets about it
274 and just becomes part of the lore of a certain group of people that know you in the city. I wanted
275 people to really understand that as a person that's very tied to Milwaukee, and loves Milwaukee,
276 has family that they love in Milwaukee, and are dealing with this every single day, that it's not
277 just a "Oh my goodness" to be filed away in their cabinet of horrors that goes on here. It's
278 actually something that's living and breathing and constantly stays with us every day and I
279 wanted to document that and show everyone that we can do better, and we have to do better if we
280 want to, want this society, this community to strive.

281 D: I'm so, really proud of you for doing that because I think it is important for people to see what
282 you went through and how compassionate you were with your perpetrator. I mean I saw such
283 compassion and I appreciate that because I think people tend to stigmatize the people, I really
284 thought that you broke that.

285 C: Thank you, thank you. You know and it's very important to think that and it was very easy for
286 me, now I'm going to tell you why. There's a lot of different reasons why and because I could
287 see myself in that young man, because the thing about it is that oftentimes who we are is also
288 made up by who we're around and I've been saying this since I was, that I was always blessed

289 with great friends, and I have had the same friends to this day that I've had for years, and they
290 were always good people, but not everybody is blessed with that and the thing about it is there
291 were other people I could have chosen to hang around there were other choices I could have
292 made that could have led me down the wrong path, and I just was happy that I didn't actually
293 have that make those choices because it's like gambling, you just don't know when you're a
294 child, you don't know what you don't know. So, I can see myself in that kid but also the thing
295 about it is that I have loved ones that have made bad choices I had a brother that has spent years
296 in prison for unintentional homicide and I understand that when you look on the other side, I
297 understand the pain of the victims, but also, I can understand the pain of the perpetrators you
298 know? I lost my brother for a while and I know he's a good guy, he's not that same person now
299 so it's very easy for me to actually say, "Hey listen, you have to pay the price for what you did
300 but you can come out of the other side and be a better person," and we all need to start thinking
301 about what does that mean? How do we see those things in people and allow those things to
302 blossom when we as a community most of the time have also failed that child before he has
303 actually made those choices? So we need to also understand that when we point at somebody
304 four fingers are being pointed back at us.

305 D: May I have a picture; can you send me a picture of you please?

306 C: Yes. Absolutely, absolutely.

307 D: I have no more questions unless you have something you'd like to add.

308 C: No, I just want to add that when it comes down to your work, I just wanted to, and I actually
309 bring a light to these things, but I'd like to applaud you all for the work that you all do. One of
310 the things I have learned through this process because this is not a field that I was actually

311 involved in but I've learned through the process that there are so many good people out here that
312 are trying to make a difference and make a change and the assault of keeping these people
313 separate and keeping these people competing against each other for funds and things like that,
314 you know, it's also slowing down the good work that they have in mind, what they can do, you
315 know? But I applaud everyone, and I definitely want to, I'm definitely happy that it can add my
316 story and try to bring light to the work that others are doing and that's who are the heroes are in
317 this situation, so thank you for having me and thank you for letting my story get out.

318 D: Thank you, wow. I'm going to stop the recording.

319 C: Okay.