

1 Lance Ambrose 5/10/2021

2 D: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? What is your age?

3 L: I am 38.

4 D: What race are you?

5 L: African American

6 D: And your gender?

7 L: Male.

8 D: What neighborhood in Milwaukee do you live in?

9 L: I live now in the 53224 neighborhoods, let's just say near Vincent High School.

10 D: Is that Northwest, Northeast, South?

11 L: Northwest.

12 D: Okay, great. So, do you remember your story, can you tell us what happened?

13 L: Pertaining to?

14 D: Gun violence.

15 L: Gun violence? There are several stories for me that come to mind.

16 D: Wow.

17 L: But first before I begin, I have never been out in the streets of Milwaukee affected by gun  
18 violence in a physical manner.

19 D: Well, have you had shots in your neighborhood or shots in the community or?

20 L: I have, I have.

21 D: Or lost a friend to gun violence, or?

22 L: I have, I have.

23 D: Okay.

24 L: And that's when you said that several stories came to mind.

25 D: Okay.

26 L: And I remember one vividly just a couple years ago. I wouldn't even say a couple years ago  
27 because time is flying so fast so. About five years ago there was a young man that I know of, and  
28 I won't reveal his name due to sensitive crimes issues with them not even resolving case fully.

29 D: Okay. Right.

30 L: But I went to school with the young man and he, from my knowledge of this young man, I  
31 mean being at the age that I was when we were going there, I took a liking to him and then of  
32 course as we mature, and school was over with we kind of felt distant from each other, but I  
33 remember in school very vividly that this particular young man had a way or technique about  
34 himself and it wasn't the reason why I wanted to be friends because I was raised totally different  
35 from what I was observing from his dealings with individuals and he grew up, I think it was on  
36 the south side of Chicago and his story was that basically he pretty much had to fight in order to  
37 survive, and I mean literally physically had to fight. There were times that this individual had to  
38 fight going home, going to school, and going home from school and along those fights, he  
39 became really good at it. Not even looked at his going to boxing school, because he looked at it  
40 as a way for surviving as to someone else that's probably like, man, he could be a good boxer. So

41 he moved to Milwaukee and the particular high school that we went to, and I won't say what  
42 high school that is on the south side of Milwaukee, and we were friends with another individual.  
43 So, fast forward 20 years from there and as I started the story, I often say that when we were  
44 growing up, we were kind of close going to high school as friends and as time grew on, we  
45 became distant. And this particular individual started doing the work that I am doing now today  
46 like the nonprofit work the youth ministry, youth mentoring, his particular area was in sports  
47 which he excelled in, once again along with fighting because I remember him never losing a  
48 battle with his fists in school and there were many instances where there were individuals who  
49 would of course encounter him and see his size, not being one as intimidating but chancing it and  
50 you know losing that fight, so like I said I never saw him lose a fight and the reason I became  
51 friends with him was just I began to see something that I don't think other people were seeing,  
52 I'm not sure what other people were seeing, but I saw some good in him and that began for him  
53 to open up to me about the things that he went through. And I asked him one day I was like man,  
54 "Why are you so aggressive?" And he's like, "Man you know it's truly that." He said that, "I'm a  
55 loving guy man but it's that I truly had to fight my way to survive." He's like basically coming  
56 from an infant to a teenager, middle school, and where he stayed at so much so that his mother  
57 had to move him out of the state of Chicago to of course Milwaukee. And so fast forward, like I  
58 said 20 years from then and there was an incident at a particular side of town in Milwaukee and  
59 before—

60 D: Was it the Northside, Southside, Eastside, or Westside?

61 L: It's going to be the Northwest side of Milwaukee, almost towards Wauwatosa, almost West.  
62 And so, he was caught to an altercation and before he got there his name had already preceded  
63 him, I don't know if other people were aware and if they didn't there were other people around

64 here around the offender who of course told him of this guy's status, which was never losing a  
65 fight. Pretty street talk, you know he's good with his hands. And so, like I said before he even  
66 got there, I believe that the fight was lost and when he got there of course he I don't know so  
67 much as the circumstances all surrounding the situation but when he got there, the altercation  
68 was the fist fight and he won that fight but he lost his life. The offender after losing the fight  
69 pulled out a handgun and shot him twice. He didn't die immediately at the scene, of course then  
70 the offender fled I don't know if they caught up with him within that week but during the funeral  
71 arrangements he was still out there on the loose and the family was getting different calls and  
72 this and that, so they had a lot of people coming from Chicago. But today I can think about it. It  
73 was—it affected me in a way because it fuels me to do the thing that I do today. One of the  
74 lessons that I plan on teaching hopefully this summer with some of the youth is a class called  
75 swallow pride to stay alive and the lesson in there kind of surrounds about and I use the title he  
76 won the fight but he lost his life and if you look at what's going on in the city of Milwaukee  
77 today, over 90 percent of the homicides and crime and murder they are evolving from arguments  
78 and words. People not being about to find any conflict resolution and so one can ultimately lose  
79 his life over a matter of words and so words aren't so simple. We kind of need to regain how and  
80 broaden our perspective on how we look at things and how we're viewing things and let's get to  
81 a realistic fight, you know?

82 D: So, one question about the young man—

83 L: Yes ma'am.

84 D: What nationality was he?

85 L: He was an African American young man.

86 D: And—

87 L: He was—

88 D: And about what age was he when he was murdered?

89 L: He was the same age as I am, same age, his birthday was, I think his birthday was about two  
90 months before mine is.

91 D: Oh, so how old was he?

92 L: I don't know how old he was when he passed away.

93 D: Okay.

94 L: It may have been about 33.

95 D: Okay, alright.

96 L: And I'm 38, so he would be 38.

97 D: Wow, how would you say his death affected the community?

98 L: Well, it damaged the community in my opinion because children and youth people see, hear,  
99 taste, smell everything they're surrounded by and that includes not just the table where they sit  
100 down and eat but what they hear at night. what they see at day, what they hear, it's almost  
101 inescapable and to be not affected about it to not be, to have some feeling about it whether it be a  
102 sensitive way to look at things different or to be desensitized in a way you know I'm not sure and  
103 it's so broad to say what people feel, but I can tell you it has affected the community because the  
104 evidence proves otherwise that it has affected.

105 D: Did you—how did it affect his family?

106 L: It was a tragedy. It was a tragedy, and it was from my, excuse me, my understanding that he  
107 had a pretty large family like I do. I think they're about four young men and two daughters, so  
108 these young men and young ladies have not their physical father with them. You know, I don't  
109 know who stepped up to or as far as a father, stepfather or mentor, but their father is no longer  
110 with them, and he was kind of stolen by gun violence once again that's the evidence that the  
111 community is affected because there was no positive conflict resolution. Could they have fought  
112 and walked away? Yes. We've seen that. But we see now more prevalent now more than ever  
113 that there is no more fighting. It always is gunplay or it's always involving bloodshed and that's  
114 the problem there, that's that's it.

115 D: How did it affect you, Lance?

116 L: Very much so. I attended his funeral. I loved the young man and not on and let me be very, let  
117 me clarify, and I mean that loving him with the love of Christ like a brotherly love and it affected  
118 me. I remember attending the funeral and to share with you something personal, I'd written him  
119 a letter the night before.

120 D: Wow.

121 L: And I got a chance to slide that letter into the inside of his jacket pocket while he lay in the  
122 coffin but from that event, I've come up with so many positive things from that negative event,  
123 that I've come up with so many positive other things that can make an effect on the youth.  
124 Because when we're dealing with youth, we can use our experience that they have not  
125 experienced to help them re-think and do things differently than what's being done. So that's my  
126 goal as a man, as a father, as a husband, as a mentor, as a director, as a soldier in the army of the  
127 lord, that's our duty.

128 D: Lance—

129 L: Yes ma'am.

130 D: How do you think this situation could have been avoided?

131 L: I believe the situation could avoided if he had not answered according to how he lived. And  
132 he was coming out of the lifestyle. He had overcome it. He made it from the hood, and he was  
133 actually, and I don't want to say too much, he was in the studio. He was in the limelight of  
134 actually having an actual film being like a documentary on some of the things he was living by  
135 what he ultimately died by.

136 D: Wow.

137 L: So, yeah.

138 D: I think you said that the perpetrator was caught right?

139 L: Yes, I believe that to be the case right now. I haven't heard too much, and I when I checked  
140 into it, I don't get too much information.

141 D: What do you think we can do to eliminate or lower gun violence?

142 L: (laughs) Could you ask me that again? I'm sorry.

143 D: What do you think we can do to eliminate or lower gun violence?

144 L: Wow. You know that's a difficult question and I'm going to be honest with you and I stand  
145 today on this because I don't want to be remembered or documented or quoted to be a religious  
146 person because I'm not at all, if a person is of African American descent and who believes in  
147 God, believes in a relationship with God in order for me to answer that, I must put that out first.

148 And so, to make things better, and to be honest, there's no way that I honestly believe that we  
149 can stop, and I say it like this, this thing is like an elephant, gun violence has begun as an  
150 elephant, and I mean the size, the enormous situation before us. It began as an elephant and it's  
151 an elephant now, so I want to put that in your mind. And so there's no way to truly, completely  
152 dissolve the elephant because the elephant originally was original in evil, in sin, and the only  
153 way to overcome evil is with good and to ultimately commit and to the day that we have a world  
154 or a utopia world without violence would be something that is not real. But we can get others to  
155 rethink. We can't change people. We can get them to change their minds about things and that's  
156 where change will come, solutions, village, raising their children. First speaks about training a  
157 child in the way he should go and when he's old he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22. Those  
158 things are solutions but do I ultimately believe that there is one solution that will one stop it all?  
159 No. Because we're talking about an elephant now. But in order for those solutions to come  
160 about, we think about an elephant and how big it is, it's too much for me to eat, I could do it  
161 piece by piece. You get a fork and I get a spoon and we'll take it down but it's too big of a beast  
162 to be conquered by human hands it has to be something that has to be supernaturally encountered  
163 and overcome, which I believe that it has and ultimately the enemy who is invisible is, has lost  
164 the battle but is fighting just to be fighting and we're losing lives in between it, okay? So that's  
165 my long answer.

166 D: Do you have anything you'd like to say to elected officials?

167 L: Wow.

168 D: In reference to gun violence?



169 L: I can tell you this, hmm, thank you, Lord. Guns don't kill people. Tools, I think about a  
170 hammer, I think about a table that I erect right now and I set that hammer right in the middle of it  
171 and it's like a gun, and that hammer is useless just like the gun would be if no one ever touches it  
172 but when it gets in the hand of someone who has cruel intentions or wicked imagination, then it  
173 becomes a deadly weapon. Then it becomes something that needs to be attacked. But ultimately,  
174 it's not so much is guns being what they are, because ultimately, they're tools, and they're  
175 created to protect but they're also created to destroy. But I believe what I would say to them is:  
176 let's look at the source, the resources from these guns. Where they're produced, why they're  
177 being produced and then how they get into the hands of the individuals that are committing these  
178 crimes, but I believe it all starts and originates at the beginning. It starts at home. Families are  
179 broken, and people are in need of healing. How do we attack that? I mean do we go against it  
180 with things that we've tried before or is it time to try something new? These are just questions  
181 that I want to put out. So, this would be my ultimate answer for politicians, would be with  
182 another question and I would use that like God because God who knows all questions and all the  
183 answers likes to use questions and a question he asked, in the beginning, asked Cain says,  
184 "Where's thy brother?" and of course, Cain answers him and says, "Am I my brother's keeper?"  
185 And today that is my duty to be my brother's keeper, so that's all I have there.

186 D: What would you say to your community? What would you like?

187 L: Ma'am?

188 D: What would you say, if anything, to our community?

189 L: What I would say to the community is that we ultimately are affected. I believe we all have  
190 symptoms of trauma and it's post-traumatic and to ultimately rectify with things that we put in

191 our bodies, they are not solutions. There is another way that we must come about being unified,  
192 not being divided because of colors and areas and blocks that we were never on because it's so  
193 much greater than where we are at too. It's not so much as where we're at, it's where we come  
194 from but where we're going but I say to the community is let's hold our heads up high. Know  
195 that we need healing, and it's not so much as in the church where we'll find it. Not meaning the  
196 building, meaning that the church is the people, the body of Christ, and that's where we'll find  
197 healing at. Sometimes it won't be behind the walls of the church but being with the people,  
198 congregations and assembling together. Where truth is spoken and are talking absolute truth and  
199 that's where healing comes about and that's where change will come about. Until then, we'll  
200 have chaos. We'll have destruction. We'll have more mothers crying, more fathers crying, more  
201 enemies, and people not truly knowing he is invisible of course camouflages himself as a snake  
202 but what ultimately happens in the community affects each and every person. We need to come  
203 together as a family, as a village and that doesn't necessarily mean block. Doesn't mean blocks,  
204 neighborhoods and area codes and zip codes. It means coming together on the simple basis of  
205 what it means when you panic. That wrong is wrong and right is right. That's what we'll meet  
206 right at. And that would be my address to my community. There's so much more that I would  
207 like to say, and I don't want to take up much time and I'm so grateful, Ms. Gillespie, for  
208 allowing me to be on Mothers Against Gun Violence, and I want to thank UWM for allowing me  
209 this time as well.

210 D: As your brother's keeper, you started a nonprofit. What is the name of it and what is the  
211 purpose of it?

212 L: Started a nonprofit in 2018 and the name of it is Saving Our Sons Mentoring Movement.  
213 Saving Our Sons Mentoring Movement is exactly what it sounds like. It's a movement, an

214 organization of individuals from ordinary places who went through extraordinary things and  
215 have lived to tell about it and the scars, have the stories and altogether that we are a village made  
216 up of individuals made up of different colors, like the rainbow, and we come together knowing  
217 who the true enemy is. That we're soldiers in the army of the Lord, and we have a duty and a  
218 moral obligation to teach the youth using our very experience and our stories of past hurt, shame  
219 and fears altogether. That's saving our sons. When you look at the youth mentoring, youth in the  
220 ages of 10 to 17, youth who may be in a community-based residential through the Milwaukee  
221 area those who may have a widow parent-child, those who have been affected by gun violence,  
222 we show special attention to those youth and match them with a mentor based on the needs of the  
223 individual.

224 D: Wow.

225 L: Yes ma'am, but they were birthed, and this is truth, this is God that He can take something  
226 good out of something bad because SOS was birthed exactly out of something that was negative,  
227 and that it does it turn people around for the good.

228 D: Amen.

229 L: Yes ma'am

230 D: Well, Lance, I'm going to stop the recording.

231 L: Okay.

232 PART TWO

233 D: And—

234 L: (laughs)

235 D: Introduce it.

236 L: All right, so this is the name of this and I kind of do it like a, it's almost like a spoken word  
237 piece. I call myself a writer-poet you know things of that nature so the name of it is called and  
238 it's a question, it's called, "Is it a generational curse or what happened to him done to you too?"  
239 So it's a question, and it puts you in the mind of that. I just want to kind of and for those readers  
240 out there, you don't have to be a bible scholar. Just know from which source truth comes from, I  
241 didn't say resource. Alright, so Genesis 9 verse 5 and 6 James, chapter nine. Alright, so here is  
242 the question again, "Before you pull the trigger, you need to know the truth and the truth is not  
243 something made up. It needs no defense. The lie you were told can never be defended. Now the  
244 truth is that once you do there is no turning back. There's no replay. There's no do-over. No. It's  
245 game over. Let me explain please because you kind of may be wondering what I'm speaking  
246 about. No matter thought in any case regrets will stand not a chance, not one chance, one shot  
247 you only have, your first is the last. Your beginning is the end. If you take, you also rob others  
248 who loves them out of a person, a chance for even a future without them in the natural and  
249 spiritual but not also without you in the physical, which includes your spirit too. Now let me  
250 explain. Has no one ever told you the truth? That once you play God, you play God to God.  
251 You've got some serious explaining to do. You do. Has no one ever told you the truth, capital T-  
252 R-U-T-H, that once you take his life you also take your life too. The truth is you are attached,  
253 both killer victim and victim killer. So, before you pull the trigger you need to know the truth  
254 that many thought the solution was what you thought was a solution too. That in what you were  
255 about to do is universal, it's generational. There were many before you but none like you. The  
256 same for the person you shoot, there can only be one him or her and only one only are you too.  
257 You are original, a design you didn't create. You see, but no one has told you the truth. You

258 should never destroy what you did not create. Afraid of what you might say? What you might  
259 do? When you kill him, you also kill you. Die by the gun you live son, daughter, boy, girl,  
260 mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, they are someone like you are someone to someone  
261 too. If you reconsider before you pull the trigger, you need to know the truth. That the very same  
262 thing you are causing too will affect someone who was attached thereby affecting you too. To  
263 someone else who loves you. It's all connected son. It's all connected daughter. All of us in some  
264 way trace all the way back to two individuals in the beginning. When you kill your brother,  
265 brother's keeper you are. You kill, you too blood on your hands, cries from the ground of the  
266 blood spilled to the one who truly avenges. Before you pull the trigger you need to know the  
267 truth that if you murder a person, a brother, a mother, a human, you repeat the story and the story  
268 from the beginning of time, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, was never a way of life, rather a  
269 warning of what it would be, in fact, what exactly would happen what is exactly what would  
270 happen to you. If you pull the trigger, you really need to know the truth that what you do to him,  
271 someone will do to you too. A chain reaction of events you disperse creating in your own family  
272 a generational curse." So, that is what I have, and I begin, or I should say, I end the way I begin  
273 to ask you is it a generational curse what happened to him or what you've done to him, is it done  
274 unto you too? Alright.

275 D: That was great!

276 L: Thank you.