

1 VGV# 81 Andron Lane

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

3 A: I'm 40.

4 D: What race are you?

5 A: I'm African American.

6 D: What is your gender?

7 A: Male

8 D: What neighborhood or area of Milwaukee do you live?

9 A: At the moment, I live in I want to say Cudahy.

10 D: How long have you lived there?

11 A: Going on three years.

12 D: Do you remember where your story happened?

13 A: Yes, I do. My story I guess would have to be in relation to off to [Midtown area].

14 D: And what happened?

15 A: Short narrative, my story of gun violence resulted from me being shot in the back as a youth.

16 And in a long story I guess, I started off in the streets as a mischief, we had as a youth going on

17 18, I want to say 17 going on 18, I played my roles in the streets as far as getting into a lot of

18 trouble. My, I want to say my close encounter with gun violence was when I was shot in the back

19 and robbed. My thought processes from that was, once you robbed me and shot me in the back, I

20 feel like it was only important for me to inflict the same harm and pain that was done to me on

21 that night to others. I didn't care. It was a revenge thought process.

22 D: What was the age and gender, approximately, what was the approximate age and the gender

23 of the person who shot you and robbed you?

24 A: It was a group of us. We were in the back alley on [Amani neighborhood] between [Amani
25 neighborhood]. I remember I think the age group had to be anywhere between 18, 19 and
26 probably be in their mid-twenties. It was a group of them, it was a series of three of them and at
27 the time we were shooting dice with nine of us in the alley and they kind of did a circle
28 formation and surrounded us and made us give up all of our valuables.

29 D: How has this experience affected you?

30 A: I mean, then, in comparison to then and now, I have two totally different viewpoints. At the
31 time, when it happened to me, I really didn't think of the relationship or the ripple effect that that
32 violence plays into where I am standing at now. Because then when it happened to me, I wasn't
33 thinking in a long term or in a fashion that the response this or my response to this or my reaction
34 to this can really affect how I spend the rest of my life, rest of my years, or rest of my life. Now I
35 believe that when it comes to gun violence or just having a gun around you or in a vicinity has so
36 many different terrible bad returns in comparison to positive, if that comment makes any sense.

37 D: It does. Was the person who robbed and shot you, was that person or persons caught?

38 A: No, not at all. I couldn't even tell you who the people were if they were standing to me in my
39 face right now because they had masks on. I mean, it was dark. I never got an opportunity to see
40 the person completely in their face. So, no. Even if they were caught, who knows if they were
41 caught from my crime, the crime of mine because I couldn't give a positive ID.

42 D: What was that day like after you were shot? I mean, did you lay there a long time or were you
43 immediately rushed to the hospital? What can you recall that day after you were shot?

44 A: I remember the day like yesterday. When the series happened and the channel of events, they
45 made us count from backwards, from 100 backwards. So, we as a group, as a collective group,
46 laid in the middle of the ally on the ground. After being robbed, they walked away, say, "Y'all
47 count from 100 backwards." I remember one of the statements that they said, "This is a stick-up

48 to make the ambulance pick up.” It has been planted in my head for, I don’t know, all my life.
49 When they made us count from 100 backwards, I remember laying on the ground and they were
50 like, I remember saying, “99, 98, 97” when the individual that was with us, that was in the midst
51 of getting robbed, jumped up, so he still had a gun on him that they never really pat down or
52 really searched him for. So, he yelled out some words and got to shooting. As he was shooting at
53 the guys who robbed us, we all jumped up and started running and he’s shooting with his back
54 turned, like never really placing aim. The guys opened up fire, so in the midst of this gun battle, I
55 am just running. And as I was running, I tried to jump a fence. When I climbed the fence, I felt
56 something in my back. I didn’t think anything of it, it was just like it felt like a weird feeling. It
57 felt like you just got hit with a rock, somebody hit you in the back with a rock. I didn’t get up the
58 fence, so as they are still shooting, I noticed I fell down, I rolled over by a garbage can and ran
59 through a gangway. At the time, I stayed on [Amani area]. This incident happened off of Center,
60 off [Amani area], so I remember running from that area towards [Midtown area]. I had to cross
61 Fond Du Lac, I remember crossing North Avenue and getting into the area of where I grew up,
62 where I was growing up at. I remember walking past a group of individuals. They were like,
63 “Man, what’s up?” I’m like, “Nothing.” I said, “Man, I think I got shot.” They were like, “Dog,
64 you bleeding. Like your whole back is bleeding.” I go to my mother’s house. When I go to my
65 mother’s house, I pass out on her front porch. That’s all I can remember of the night until I work
66 up, I was in the hospital and the police searched my mother’s house and found the gun in her
67 house. First ever case of a possession of firearm case. So that’s my intro to, introduction to gun
68 violence.

69 D: My. You said it felt like somebody hit you in the back with a rock?

70 A: Yeah.

71 D: Wow. You know, I have to admit, I've never imagined that it would feel like that. I thought it
72 would be burning and all of that, but none of that. (laughs). Wow.

73 A: Well at that moment, because when it happened at that moment, my adrenaline was pumping.
74 And I even remember being in the hospital and the nurse told me that the bullet was like three
75 inches away from my spine and I could have been paralyzed. The bullet went in and went out. I
76 could have been paralyzed for the rest of my life. The, I felt like my adrenaline at that moment in
77 time really took charge. Because I didn't feel anything until I got to my mother's house and
78 passed out.

79 D: How did this experience affect you?

80 A: Hello?

81 D: Yes, can you hear me?

82 A: Yeah, I can hear you. What did you say?

83 D: How would you say that experience personally affected you?

84 A: Of course it did.

85 D: How would you say it affected your family?

86 A: I mean, it affected my family traumatically. To watch as a parent, I believe now, looking as a
87 parent perspective, how would I feel at that moment to watch my son or daughter come into the
88 house or be on the front porch and passed out from blood or anything. I don't know how the
89 scene looked to my mother. But for me, to really think about it in a sense like, who wants to
90 watch a son or daughter, even a child at that matter, lay on the ground bleeding, that was in '98,
91 '99 as that incident happened, in comparison to what is going on in society now, like, that was a
92 huge shock. It's not something that became, we as a community got used to seeing, as a
93 comparison to Chicago or any other cities at the time. It's not, that's one of them. At that time,
94 that was a life-altering, changing event for anybody.

95 D: How would you say that affected your community?

96 A: I mean, it has a lot of effects. Because the individuals who called the police happened to be
97 people around my age. I can remember some of their names, but they were individuals within my
98 age group who see me bleeding and, "Let's call the police." And as far as my community, like,
99 it's something that we became I believe over time, systematic levels just accepted. It became the
100 norm. It shouldn't be.

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

102 A: So many different factors. I didn't, the situation if it didn't happen to me, I believe it would
103 have happened to somebody else given the time and moment. Because of, we were in, at that
104 time, we had a series of different groups and gangs that was, everybody was saying was running
105 the city. So, within that time, how did it affect me and the community and everybody? It was the
106 start of, not with me, but the start of what's happening now in that whole area in Milwaukee
107 period, that it started to change. The violence in Milwaukee in '98 and '99 changed dramatically.

108 D: So, you don't think that the situation could have been avoided?

109 A: No, not really. I don't think it could have been, it probably could have been avoided with
110 somebody else, but not with me at that time. For the fact that you have a group of individuals
111 laying in an alley, shooting dice, you see a, as a car of individuals who play the role of the
112 robbers. Any given month, what happened that day could have been another day. I mean, we
113 were there in the alley shooting dice, playing with drug money and other money we had no
114 business doing. The whole scenario, the whole situation was wrong.

115 D: So, maybe you could have avoided it if you weren't there?

116 A: Yeah. If I wasn't there, but I'm saying that in the sense of if I wasn't there, who knows that it
117 wouldn't still happen with me or somebody else? I feel like a lot of things that has transpired

118 within life, within the journey of everybody, some things had to happen in order for us to bring
119 knowledge and notice of what is going on.

120 D: For yourself or for others? When you say knowledge or notice?

121 A: Well, for me and others.

122 D: Okay.

123 A: The effect of that is, me getting in that situation, for example, excuse me, me being in that
124 situation and being shot, being near, as we consider the wrong place at the wrong time, me as a
125 youth, being in surroundings as a teenager, I don't blame a lot of people, but for one, control of
126 gun violence at that time was, what were we doing? That was something that we mentioned, we
127 talked about. But we really didn't make it a focus point in our livelihood. Our parents, a lot of us
128 who were out there, we were 16, 17, and 18. So, our parents in that process, not blaming our
129 parents, but it's a lot of factors that play into that, not only did I play a factor in it, but everybody
130 in that surroundings because we kind of put ourselves in that situation to open the invitation for
131 individuals to feel that, "Hey, this is an opportunity for me to make a quick come-up", if that
132 makes sense.

133 D: What can we do to eliminate or lower gun violence?

134 A: What did you say?

135 D: What can we do to eliminate or lower gun violence?

136 A: One of the things I feel like we need to do in eliminating, I don't feel like we can eliminate
137 gun violence, but to bring awareness is kind of putting individuals in the situation where it
138 affects them and not necessarily affect them, but it brings awareness to what's going on.
139 Example, when I talk to you or if I talk to a young man or young girl, I try to give them an
140 example where that they are able to see the effect of it and perspective that is more relatable.
141 You have a lot of guys, a lot of kids like to play video games, but they pay to carry guns. They

142 have young youth, young brothers and sisters around them. I try to get them an example like, you
143 be at home playing video games, you might put your gun up under your bed because you're like
144 me, 16, 17, you're not supposed to have a gun in the house, so you are going to hide it under the
145 bed because it's an easy way to come up and get out, right? That's what we think. You got
146 younger brothers and sisters; they might go up under the bed and play with it. You're so
147 engrossed in a video game that you really not paying attention to anything. Your younger brother
148 or sister come out with this gun too late because it's the smallest part of the gun they are going to
149 grab is around the trigger hand. You know? So, I try to give them a perspective of what would
150 happen if you see that and the next thing you know, you're trying to get to a younger brother or
151 sister and they've already shot themselves. How does that affect you? How do you prevent it?
152 What are you going to say, I'm going to hide it and put it in a different place. Why not, what is it
153 that, I honestly feel that there is not that much so-called, as we say "drama" or "beef" in the
154 streets that we have to carry a gun.

155 D: What would you say to the elected officials?

156 A: What would I say to elected officials?

157 D: On how to lower gun violence.

158 A: Wow. I would say to elected officials on how to lower gun violence, I mean, what would you
159 do if it was your family? We have to, we have to always, and I, we kind of have to look at things
160 in a perspective of we all are similar. We all deal with things differently. But a lot of elected
161 officials, a lot of individuals in office, have not had the ability to go through the process of the
162 living standards as an African American young man, 18, 17, and 16. So with that being said, we
163 have to allow the elected officials to really get a glimpse of what their effect, they're doing and
164 what's going on in our community, because if this was your son, your daughter, your nephew, a

165 cousin, how would you want them to respond to the gun violence? How do you feel that the gun
166 violence is affecting them? And what do, can you feel this can do this to change?

167 D: What do you say to our community about gun violence? What would you like to say to our
168 community about gun violence?

169 A: A lot of people in our community are quick to say that all, "We need to change our
170 community, we need to do this, we need more urbanization, we need more things in our
171 community to change what's going on." First of all, you have to realize you are the community.
172 What are you doing first to change you? We have to lead by example. I can never go out here
173 and tell anybody in the community, youth, elder, anybody to change anything or do anything
174 significant in the community if I'm not doing it in my own actions. We have to lead by example.
175 Stop talking and start showing. If I'm out here cleaning the neighborhood, nine times out of 10,
176 somebody, and it isn't going to be a lot, but it might be somebody I see, okay, "I see Andron's
177 out here, picking up trash. Why not I pick up trash?" I see Andron's out here, talking to the
178 youth, or feeding, you know what I mean? We have to realize we are the community. Each one
179 of us is the community. A lot of us grew up in Milwaukee. A lot of us grew up in certain areas
180 that we choose not to talk about. But, in order for us to change, we have to change within
181 ourselves. We have to make a step, one day at a time, like, "I am Milwaukee. What am I going to
182 do to save Milwaukee?"

183 D: Well, I like that, "I am Milwaukee." That's nice (laughs). Do you have a picture you would
184 like to share with your audio and video?

185 A: (pause) Do you want me to hold one up?

186 D: Sure, if you want to. But I'm going to also ask you to send me a copy of it too.

187 A: Okay. I mean, this has been my, can you see this?

188 D: Wow. That's nice.

189 A: So, I am in a process of myself, I'm trying, me as a Black man, 40 years old, first-time father,
190 I am learning myself first and utmost. You ask, what can we do in the community? Me
191 personally, what I'm trying to do for the community is start with me. I am trying to find out all of
192 the components that I need to refresh myself and my healing process. We ask men, women,
193 individuals, we need to learn how to heal personally first in order for us to go out and try to heal
194 anything up. I'm starting with me and my growth, my process to heal mentally, to heal would
195 deepen pain that's been generated over time from different scenarios. My other quality of
196 lifestyle, me, Andron Quintel Lane Senior is another quality of lifestyle. My, I guess my
197 statement to the community is, if you want the community to change, change you. Find a better
198 you. If you need to heal, start re-healing. Then you can see how the community is healing
199 because you see the humility within you.

200 D: That's great. Is there anything else you would like to add before I end the interview?

201 A: Not at all. Let's start today. Make it the best days today. And keep faith. Keep strength within
202 your own ability and then the ability of everything gets to change around you, I guess.

203 D: Wow. Thank you. Andron, you know there is a reason you are still here? And I'm going to
204 delete my photo right now. Andron, you realize there's a reason you are still here.

205 A: True, so. I mean, I have been through a lot of things throughout my life. And in prayer, in
206 sitting back with my girl, we sit back and she tells me a lot of times that, "In my greatness, I will
207 find greatness within my greatness." So, she tells me that. Continue to pray, continue to be great
208 within your own greatness. Don't allow everything to consume you because one thing I have a
209 tendency to do is be in my own head. And sometimes being in your own head can be worse than
210 not being in your own head, if that makes sense. Having too many thoughts can be more
211 dangerous than having thoughts at all. So, realize that. Take patience, be humble in your process

212 and realize that your greatness is never going to be everybody else's greatness. That your
213 greatness is going to be your greatness. So, be great within your own life.
214 D: Thank you, Andron.