

**TAVP Visions After Violence Interview
Interview with Anthony Evans**

Interviewer: Sam Kirsch

Narrator: Anthony Evans

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Location of Interview: Austin, Texas - Joined via Zoom

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Summary: Anthony Evans talks about his experience being shot by a police officer at a protest.

SAM KIRSCH: All right, my name is Sam Kirsch. Today is May 24th, 2023. It's 1:17 p.m. I'm here with Anthony Evans. Anthony, welcome.

ANTHONY EVANS: What's up, Sam?

KIRSCH: Maybe you want to, maybe we want to start with just touching on who you are, your background, maybe, you know, talk about your experience growing up here in Austin.

EVANS: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, like so you said my name's Anthony Evans. I grew up here in Austin, Texas. I've been here 28 years, born and raised. I'm always looking to meet new people around Austin, just a good time. I'm very family-oriented – family of four, and I have another sister that's part of like the other side of my family, but all in all, we're all pretty close. That's basically what kind of, not motivated me to be down there, but I have a very diverse family, so just equality and equity for everybody's kind of like my mindset of, you know, we're all equal. We're all here to just coexist and it doesn't – race and gender, none of that should separate people. So I always grew up, like, around a diverse uh, community, just growing up like having a gay mother, my brother was – opened up that he was gay when he was, you know, 26. So just having all those type of things in my elements of just comfortability and seeing how they still treated other people, saw how they treated me. So it's always growing up with an open mind and just open heart.

So, for me it was kind of always one of those things of, if there was ever a point in time where I could join some type of movement, where there would be a protest or I could walk out or something like that I felt like I would always want to be part of it rather than, Oh let me go riot and loot some stuff. So it was always just always one of those moments where my brother and I – which is my twin – we ended up seeing the George Floyd incident together, and we're just like, Yo, like that's crazy, like you know, I can't believe stuff like that is still going on. So just kind of having that reality at this age was almost like, Okay. Well if we know that kind of brutality is still going on, we still definitely against it. So once the George Floyd incident happened, my brother

and I were like, you know, let's be more aware, let's try to just get more information on, like, how to reach out to certain communities in Austin, that are like, I guess, protesting in a sense.

So when it came to the day of May 31st, that's when Arthur, which is my twin brother, and I, we both went downtown Austin – 7th Street? The police precinct, I guess, if that's what you want to call it. The police building. We ended up going out there around 4 p.m., and we had a camcorder, we had, you know, our protesting gear on. Like I had a No Justice, No Peace shirt on, and he had, you know, the same shirt on and everything. So we're just really out there to kind of just remind people, getting things – getting your message across the right way rather than just trying to be, going the violent route. So for me and him it was more so just like educating a lot of these police officers on just some of the people who have been killed in Austin, and I'm sure they knew a lot of the names already. But for him and I, it was more so one of those close-to-home type of situations just because when we were about in elementary school, there was a guy in our neighborhood that everybody knew. He ended up being shot by a police officer while he was in handcuffs laying on his stomach. And her response was like, I don't know, like I don't know why I shot him, you know. So at – from hearing that at an elementary age, it's like almost on the back of our mind like, Well, like, they can just kill people and just kind of get away with it. And it was very confusing just to like see, like all the people kind of reactions to it were different, and it definitely shook the neighborhood a lot. So that's always been like on our, on our conscience and on our mind just knowing the reality of it could have been someone else. It could have been, you know, mother, father, brother, sister, so just kind of understanding the magnitude at a young age of like, Yo, this police force definitely has some type of – not even superpower – would just some type of get away with a lot of stuff, you know, and it's just a lot of privilege that goes into that type of wearing that badge and stuff. So we kind of saw that at an early age.

So when we were down there on May 31, 2020, we were, you know, just out there talking to cops letting them know that, you know, y'all aren't out here to basically go to war with civilians. Y'all should be here to protect people. And even if they do get out of y'all's depiction out of character, then y'all should handle it professionally and not with aggression. And, you know, that was just a lot of our go-tos was just like, you know, y'all are here to protect people, and how are y'all going to protect people when y'all are out – and the people are afraid of y'all. And a lot of

them were like, Oh, you know, we understand, you know, a lot of them were kind of just closed, closed eyes but open ears, but still not really responsive or anything. So, for me and him, it was just more so like getting our point across. Like we didn't really care if they wanted to have a conversation. It was like, Okay, well, we know what we're saying is obviously not gonna trigger some type of bad reaction out of them. You know, rather than like, Hey, fuck you, like, you know, it wasn't like anything like that. We've already seen how they react when you meet them with aggression. They just meet you with more aggression and they're the ones that are going to basically get the pass to do whatever they want. So for me and my brother we're just kind of on a different route of let's go out there and just be as peaceful as we can and as educational as possible, you know, there's people gathering around just listen to me and my brothers would be, you know, just as far as us being together, we all united as one, we're stronger like, as a unit and all that. So we had a good amount of people just kind of come form a circle and just listening and actually, just making the, cops pay attention in a sense.

So that was like a really good moment, but it was shortly, shortly uh, disrupted because like some people walking by – they ended up throwing like something at the police officers and they just started shooting into the crowd because the cops – they didn't know who threw it. So they just started shooting at civilians with the non-lethal rounds and stuff like that. So it was just very intense at a point to where we're like you know we have to kind of question, Do we still want to be down here? Do we feel safe? Is it something that we like really ready to get injured for? And then, you know, reality kicked in, and we were like, Yo, people have died to get – standing up for what they believe in, when it's a positive. So I just felt like we were very understanding of the consequences. If it was to be something that we're doing positive, you know, be different. If we're gonna go, Let's go ride the store, loot the store, and if we get hurt it's like well it's like, no, we obviously knew that wasn't the route we wanted to take. So we just came to terms of like, if we get hurt doing something positive and peaceful and influential, it's basically worth the risk. So at that point, we decided to stay down there and, you know, just continue to march with the people down the highway. Yeah, but it wasn't very, it wasn't very aggressive – was a lot of people telling other people, Don't be aggressive, don't throw anything like just, you know, speak your piece. And you know, if you're, if you have aggression, yeah just like, you know, don't do it

around us and stuff like that. So you know, everyone expresses themselves differently, but we definitely wanted to be on the positive side and the peaceful side of it.

So as the day just kept progressing, you know, we just met with different cliques of people and hear their perspectives on the situation, and just, you know, everyone just kind of just coming together for one cause and that was so, you know, bring police brutality to the light and make sure more people understood the long-term history behind police brutality, and that is just not a new thing that 'woke people' – it's like oh, – this has been going on for years. People need to understand that, you know, the system has been set into place and this system is working, it's just not working for everybody. And you know, so we had to just kind of reiterate that a little bit of just letting people know that you can't just always trust the system because they're spoon-feeding you a bunch of BS and all that. So we're just like down there teaching people how to, maybe think for themselves a little bit and just think beyond what they've been seeing their whole lives and stuff like that. And so it was just a good interaction, you know, early from the start, and we had some rough patches but, you know, all in all it was a good encounter for the first half of, you know, the day.

And then, you know, it probably hit around 7, 8 o'clock, and my brother and I were just kind of like, you know, we're going to move to the Capitol, where everyone's going. We're gonna go out there and speak our piece, too. A bunch of people were headed that way, and that's what I ended up kind of just getting sidetracked, because a friend of mine that I knew from high school was down there like protesting and just kind of speaking her piece with her group. So I just wanted to stop and hear what they had to say. That's when my brother kept walking towards the Capitol, and he ended up meeting with the different group of people that he met earlier. So I'm like, Oh, he'll be fine, like, I'll meet him there. And so, it was all kind of just like a plan that I planned as I was walking to find him. But once I ended up getting to the Capitol, he wasn't there and I ended up just kind of mingling around and just kind of reading the vibe and seeing what everyone was, you know, doing. And at that point, it was already like 9, almost like 9 o'clock. So yeah, it's getting pretty late. I should probably head back and look where we originally parked. So that's when I walked to the parking spot, and he ended up not being there, and I was like, oh, okay, well maybe he's looking for me. So I ended up going back to where the police station was

because there was a bridge under there, and I just assumed that he would be under the bridge kind of waiting for me somewhere, and then I ended up not seeing them under the bridge. So I just started walking towards where the Capitol was because like – it was kind of like a cat and mouse situation was like, oh, maybe I'm trailing him following like, so I started walking towards the Capitol. And then once that kind of situation didn't come through, I was like, Okay, maybe I should just wait for him somewhere.

So as I walk back from the Capitol another time, I ended up walking towards the police station, and I'm like walking on Seventh Street towards the front of the Cap– in front of the police station. And as I cross the street, I just felt like an impact hit my left side of my face, and I was just like very disoriented, and I went down, like I went down on one knee for like a split second because I don't know, I think my adrenaline just kicked in like, Hell, just get out of there. Just move as quick as you can. So I just like God, like I got my, I got my balance, and then like a lady was next to me, and I grabbed her. Then when I was running towards safety, like on the side just because I in my mind, I was like, Oh there's they must be shooting in this direction. So it was like, my first instinct was to just get this person out of harm's way as well. So once I got out of the way, I was on the sidewalk by the APD building and she kind of was examining my face because she saw like blood coming from my mask, and she was like, Yo, you got shot. I was like, Oh, what – like, so I was just kind of like disoriented but still just like, very with it I was like oh God like that's crazy, like. She was like Yeah, do you know where you're at? I was like yeah I'm downtown Austin. Like today is May 31st. I know the year like, you know. She's like, Okay, good like but, you know, you just want to get that iced.

So I ended up kind of just walking towards this gas station area because my phone was dead. I didn't find my brother, I didn't have like anything on me, just because I knew the risk of like, bringing stuff down to like a protest. Like there's a lot of chaos goes on. You can lose stuff a lot. So and I ended up losing my phone and my brother – no, my phone was dead, my brother lost his phone, so at that point I couldn't get in contact with him. So that's when I just started walking towards like 35, like, like towards – up 35 instead of down 35. I was already down towards Sixth (Street). So I started walking towards, like where the IHOP is and all that. So I kind of was just thinking in my mind like, Okay, maybe as a civilian and I could ask someone for a ride, and as

I'm thinking, I'm like, Okay, well, there's the red light. Once I get to the red light, I'll ask someone at the light for a ride, and the first person I saw was like, I think a black woman, and I think I'll – let me ask her. So, but at this, like I knew that I was bleeding a lot. So I had like a mask, but it was still like blood on my shirt from the first realization I started wiping the blood off. And so my clothes, I was very – I like I just got done doing something that shouldn't have been doing basically. So, as I asked her for a ride, she just looked at me. She kind of was like, Uhh, no like, I don't like – I don't think so. Like, you know, getting – I don't totally understand because, you know, it's a protest like a lot of people are kind of just doing a lot of things. So in my mind I had to like be empathetic, Oh, oh, it's fine. Like I didn't take any type of bad feelings for it like, you know, you're a woman, a man's asking for a ride like, you know? So for me it was. All right, well I'm just gonna walk it. See how far I can get until you know, I feel like I need to get like some help urgently. Because I knew my mouth was injured, but I didn't know the extent of the injury because I was still able to talk. I was still able to open it, and I just felt like a loose, like bone inside, like under my skin. I could just feel like some loose bone cartilage, like moving around. So at that point, that's when I kind of knew something was wrong. And then as the walk continued, I kind of just kept trying to keep my composure, kept just thinking, Okay, few more miles, you'll be home, you'll be home. Because at that point I lived on William Cannon, so I was walking from downtown Austin to William Cannon and 35, and I was just kind of in my own mind just like playing out the whole situation but still just in the moment of like, just make it home, don't get distracted, just keep yourself motivated of just one step – one foot in front of the other. Because, you know, I just was spitting up a lot of blood, but I didn't feel like I needed to stop for super, like, help or anything at that point my journey was just like focused on getting home.

So as I'm walking I ended up getting to like the bridge before you get to Oltorf, and there's like a little gas station like right there off the bridge. And then I walked in the gas station and like I was like, holding my mouth and bleeding and I asked the guy [and] was like, Yo, do you think I get like a bag of ice? And he's like, Yeah, like you know – so I ended up having the ice bag to kind of help soothe the pain, and just kind of, you know, make sure, because I was like so dehydrated. So I like drinking the ice and icing my face at the same time, so it was like one of those, like a crazy just like warrior moments. Like I just felt like I needed – that I was at war. I was like,

Yeah, I need to get home, you know what I mean? I just had to like – they say a warrior's spirit. I definitely felt like I had to tap into my warrior spirit just based off of, you know, I didn't – I couldn't think of any number, like, to call off the top of my head. Because I was like – as I got down the street, I was like Dang I could have asked the clerk to use the phone there. But then I was like, you know, my mind was just going so fast. I was just like you – I don't know who I would call right now. It's like, already like 12 at night. I don't know who to call, like, so it was – and I had no numbers really memorized besides my brother's, which his phone was stolen that day. So it was like one of those moments of, just, a lot of thoughts going through my mind. But at the end of the day, I was kind of just knew that I was on my own in a sense. And I just been through a lot in my life as far as spirituality and just tribulations that I've overcome. So for me, it was just one of those moments of like, Okay, this is the universe testing you, this is your faith testing you. Like, What are you gonna do? So rather than just kind of like taking away my, like, really I just mustered up the strength but, like you know, I'm gonna make it home. I'm gonna walk this walk. I'm gonna get to my house and I'm gonna be okay.

So after about three or four miles in, I passed Riverside, I passed Oltorf, I'm coming up on – it was like, where the Atomic Tattoo Shop is off of the access road, you can see this parking garage and as I'm walking like towards the sidewalk, I look at the parking garage and I see a bunch of cop cars, just like having a meeting or whatever. So I waited across the street, I waited, and one of the cop cars came down, and they came to a stop sign. And I was about ten, fifteen feet away and I kind of like talked because I was still cautious, I was hesitant. Like after just being shot by a cop, I did not want to really like run up on a cop car and talk or anything, because just the way I looked. From a distance, I yelled, I was like officer, do you think you can help me out real quick? And then he kind of just looked and was like, No, we're busy. We got to go shut down the highway. And, you know, at that point they just drove off – didn't really ask what type of injury. They didn't really ask what was wrong. They kind of just saw me and didn't really see me, like screaming in agony pain or anything. And they're just like, Oh, well we're busy. And then so they just drove off, and at that point after asking, you know, officers for help, I was like you know, like I'm done. I'm not gonna try to get any more help at this point. If the police aren't going to do their job, like whatever. Like I said, this is basically the reason why we were down there in the first place, which is for cops not doing their job, or doing their job very shitty. So for me, it was

just like a realization like, okay, this is another test, you know. So I just had to treat it like another test and not, like, go irate, like fuck you, whatever. So I was like, okay, just continued my journey to my house, whatever, my apartment.

And then, at that point, I was probably like two or three miles away from home. So it was just the last hour of probably walking, it was just getting, I was getting fatigued. Like I said, my mouth was just getting more dry. At that point, I just felt super weak and at one point I was like, okay, I need to take a break. But even at that, I was like, I don't know. If I take a break, I'm just gonna keep spitting up blood because it was like so much blood I was spitting up at that point because I knew there was like a crack or something inside because I could feel it with my tongue at that point. So I just kept, like, feeling blood coming out of like this hole, and I was like, Okay, yeah, I can't stop. And I got about half, .5 miles away from home, maybe like .8 or .7 miles from my apartment or whatever. And I'm walking. I'm on the Motor Mile, and this car just swerves, and I don't know how, but some grace of God, whatever you believe in, I jump out of the way and the car, like, just barely misses. And they get back on the road and just drive off, and at that point I didn't know what to believe. I didn't even, I didn't think it was real. But I mean for sure it happened, but I just couldn't believe after all that I just went through, that this is the last little obstacle that I had to go through to get to my destination. And it was just very dramatic, just to kind of like, go through all that and be like, Yo, like I'm still alive. Like it was, it was a very overpowering moment because after that I ended up walking to my house, that last .7 or .8 miles in. And just kind of relax once I got home, took a shower, cleaned up. And then my brother ended up seeing me, and he, like, freaked out because by the time I got home, it was one o'clock in the morning, and he was already laying in bed. So once I got in the shower, he saw my condition and he just freaked out. He was like what the hell happened? I was like, Yo, I got shot as I was walking. I'm fine though. He was like, Dude. Like, you're not fine. I was like, I know I'll go to the hospital in the morning, I'll be fine. And then I tried to go to sleep, and then the pain just started getting too unbearable because the adrenaline was starting to go down, and I was like, okay, I need to go to the hospital. So at that point, I just drove myself to St. David's, right there, like off the access road by Ben White. Yeah, so drove myself there. I got admitted, and they asked me, What happened? And I told them, and they were kind of like, Okay, we'll get you taken care of.

So, they admitted me, you know, May 30 – I mean, I guess June 1st, I guess you want to say one in the morning, two, three in the morning. And by that time, nobody knew what happened besides my twin brother. Like, I didn't call my family. I didn't let anybody know or anything. So I was just kind of in the hospital just recovering and kind of trying to get my thoughts together and kind of like bring – present it to my family to let them know that I'm okay, but at the same time like I'm not okay.

So, I think two days went by, and I think on the third day, or second day at night, I think I reached out to my mom and I told her what happened. and she didn't know how to react. She was just so stunned, but so thankful at the same time. Like I said, I just kind of grew up in a very like, not religious, but a very thankful household. So my mom was just super thankful that I was alive rather than – the incident and stuff was still traumatic for her to hear. But at the same time, just to hear my voice and, you know, after hearing, Oh you got shot. But like you're still alive. So it was kind of like one of those moments of just kind of clarity for her that, you know, I'm safe, I'm good. And for me it was like nice to not have her like over – not overreact, but just like react in a way to where it's, like, Why would you do that? Like she was still understanding of the cause. And why I down there and, you know, she's educated on the Black history, of police killing Black people innocently or just people of color innocently and people died, dying for the bigger picture. So for her, it was almost like she had to take her mother emotions out of it and put her, you know, a man and woman, human being emotions, into it of like – the greater cause is kind of greater than ourselves, if that's what we believe in. So you know, she kind of reminded me of like, you know, Just be strong and don't rush your healing. Just do what you have to do to make sure you're safe and comfortable and all that. So it was just good kind of having that type of reminder of like, Okay, my family is here to support me, and you know, I did, I almost felt like I did something wrong. And you know, I didn't want to tell them, but it was like one of those moments of you have to just trust the people around you and, well very calming to just kind of hear those words. And you know, my dad was very supportive. He was upset of course, about the situation and the cop and all that – but this is the day, like I said, just being educated when you're educated on these type of things, it just makes it a lot more easier to go through knowing that you're still alive. And that there's so many other people who have been like wrongfully just killed

or just put in prison or, you know, just behind the police system and behind police brutality. So, just having them kind of remind me and having them understand that, too, because that was like a lot of my, like, remembrance of, like you know, there's people who've been raped by the cops and they get no type of case. They get no type of justice and people getting like, you know, beat to death by cops and no. So you see it all the time. So for me, it was just like a very clear understanding of like, We're all on the same page here of like, you know, being thankful for my situation of like the what ifs are a lot bigger than the actual reality of it. So for me, it's always one of those reminders that I still think about to this day.

So, you know, after telling my mom, she was just like, Well, let me know when you're able to get some type of visitations, and all that. So after the third day, they finally were able to have surgery, but just because I had so much swelling around my neck and my cheek area – was just like so much swelling, they couldn't do surgery. They had to wait for all the swelling to go down. And by that point, I kind of was, like, already at realization of what was to come. You know, they were like, We're going to open you up. You have a shattered mandible. So that's you know basically your jaw line where the hard part is at, kind of shattered it. It was like, broken into like, just pieces based off by the impact. So they were like, Yeah, we can't really like repair it. We're gonna have to just basically take that cartilage out and put a plate, like titanium plate through it. So that was the first step of, kind of like, the whole surgery thing was just making sure they could get a plate in there and making sure they could get the broken pieces out and clean all that under my skin. Which was – it was a good, pretty quick surgery. I don't really remember much, like I was definitely under for the whole thing. But umm at that point, when I woke up after surgery, I had my mouth wired shut with basically screws that went like across the top and at the bottom. So I had like screws, like actual, like drills and that go across and at the bottom. And they put me on with the liquid diet. Like – my teeth were just, like, shut, like, together. Like the whole time, I'm going to say close to two months, maybe a little bit longer, and at that point the healing was going decently.

But I think the hardest part was just being converted over to a liquid diet and just not being able to eat solid foods for that long. It was just like pretty, pretty hard. Like I like lost a lot of weight. Just felt like fatigue. I was like sleeping a lot just because I didn't have as much food in my

system or just as much, like, nourishment. And I just felt malnourished a lot, too. So they're just like going through a lot of different phases of understanding the process is going to be, like, a lot more difficult than just, like oh, gotta let my mouth heal. It's like, No. Like you have to understand that your brain's gonna change as far as thinking. Your body's going to change, I guess as far as just being fatigued, energy-wise. So for me, it just kind of adjusting with those changes and not letting it consume me and like sending me into a depressed state because you know, that's super easy to go through when you're – when your trauma is so dramatic. You're like, Okay, well I don't want to do anything. I don't want to leave the house. I just want to stay inside in my bed and I don't want to do anything, especially if I'm not eating already. It's like, I can't even eat my problems away. So for me, it was just kind of like just understanding that my situation was just a lot deeper than just like a physical type of healing. I just had to tap in and at one point, I was just kind of like, Yo I don't want to do this anymore. Like I just need, I need something solid like, you know. I just kind of was just at a breaking point. But for me, it was just reminding myself what I believe in and understanding that I'm going through this for a reason. So I kind of just had to just build myself back up mentally and just say, Nah, I like – I'm stronger than this. I'm not gonna let this injury like basically break me and in a sense. So, it was just building myself back up was probably like one of the most – hardest but most rewarding things. You know and at this – at that point, I kind of was like, Okay, well, it's a few more months. I'll be fine. I'll be able to eat, you know. I just keep telling myself I'll be able to eat, a few more months, a few more months. And then I got to a certain point where my jaw like swelling went down, but the plate that they put in my jaw was visibly showing through my cheek. So you could literally see like a screw, just it was regular skin but you'd just see a screw there, and I was just like that's odd. Like maybe it's just super sensitive, so it's not healing right now. So that was about a month or two, maybe more.

Since I had it like wired shut, I went in for a checkup just because you know my doctor was kind of like a city appointed doctor – wasn't like someone like that I was close to or anything, wasn't educated, informed about or anything like that. So my lawyer and their team were kind of just like, Well, get a different opinion see if this is something that is normal because we don't want you to be in pain. But just because it was very uncomfortable at that point, it was just one of those kind of feelings where I was kind of second-guessing the healing process, too. So, after

getting that second opinion – I went in on a Monday and they were like, This isn't normal. This is definitely something that you want to get cleaned and checked out because of the – I guess from their visibility, they could see a certain, like, infection starting to grow. So at that point I was like, Oh my goodness. Like what? This is crazy. Like, I had no – I was, like, basically not aware. Because I had a couple checkups with the doctor before that, the other one, the city-appointed one, and he never made it seem like it was abnormal or anything. So, it was just kind of odd just to see their reaction compared to his reaction. And, you know, they were very concerned at what this doctor had done. So for me, it was almost like, Oh my goodness, like it's almost like the same situation of police brutality. It's almost like healthcare brutality. It's like, you trust that the police are going to do their job to protect you. You trust that this doctor is going to do his job to make sure you are healed and healthy. And at the same time, they take advantage of someone, you know what I mean? So for me, it was just one of those moments of – hard to trust even this new doctor, you know. So it's the trauma on top of another trauma that I had to like, almost suppress because it's like, Well, I'm not going to go back to this doctor. What am I just gonna go to no doctor? So it was – for me it was just like, Holy shit. Like all right, well, let's just hope that this new doctor, you know – and everything does happen for a reason. Because who knows – if I didn't get this terrible outcome, I wouldn't have met this new doctor who did such an amazing job that, you know, you can barely tell the difference in my facial features. Before it was like, oh you can obviously tell.

So for me, it was just like kind of going through that with my team of lawyers that kind of helped me go through that route, because I definitely wouldn't have known where to have gone if that were the case that I didn't have them. So after meeting the new doctor, he kind of was just on board from the get-go. He's like, I know who you are, I know about your story, I know who your team is, I want to be able to help you as much as we can. So for me, that just made me feel super comforting rather than, you know, kind of just like I said, somebody you don't really have much background on it just like finding up. So for me, it was really cool to have my team actually know who the guy was and you know, refer me. So I felt pretty comfortable moving forward and he told me, No, it's gonna be a long little journey. I know you had a long treatment before this, but we're going to make sure that you're new and improved at that point.

So he admitted me into the hospital once he met me for that day, and I was in there for like, almost two weeks. Like I had no idea I was gonna go in so that long. So I just went in one day, and I didn't get to leave for two weeks. That just weighed a lot on me too just – like not being able to kind of just do my last free things because I don't know – the hospital is just such a slow place where you're like ugh, like it drags on. So for me, I would have liked to have had a nice day out before going in. So for me it was just like, Ahh all right. But like I said, he made it pretty known that he would do his best to take care of me and make sure that I got what I needed. So it wasn't like I didn't know what was going on, so that made me feel a lot more comfortable to, what was the road ahead and all that. But they ended up taking the old plate out. They cleaned the infection. They couldn't do surgery because it takes about a week for you to clean a good infection out, so they just had me on antibiotics and all that stuff. And I'm just in the hospital still just on a liquid diet, but at a certain point they kind of made it a thicker, like pureed type of diet, which – not the best, but so much better than actually just having to drink something. So for me, it was just like going through those phases again. You know, just going through the – just like the realizations of where I'm at during the healing process and not rushing it too much because you know there's certain days I'm like, Dude, I know I can eat some pizza. You know it's just like – just at the point in my mind where it's like, I don't want to push it too far and try certain things when the doctors telling you not to. And it's just being in the hospital that long. It just starts to make you want to push the limits of stuff rather than just kind of do what they tell you.

But at the end of the week that I was admitted, they were like, you know, We're going to start prepping for surgery after the weekend. It's been nine days. You're, you're ready for surgery. I was like, Okay cool. So they ended up putting a smaller titanium like bar in there. Instead of like a whole plate, they just put a titanium bar that goes across. And in order for them to kind of have the bar, the titanium, to grow onto, they had to go into my hip bone and take some bone marrow out and put it onto the jawbone. And that's basically what gave it the substance of actual, like, bone feeling. So, just having two surgeries in one was not ideal for me because I was just like, Oh, man, like my jaw hurts then, my hips should be fine. And then my hip ended up hurting more than my jaw was even hurting. So it was just like, it was like such a confusing time of healing and I was just like, Yo, like this is crazy. Like, I can't move my leg. I can't even lift it. So it was just unexpected, but I just definitely had to have a warrior spirit like – and that's kind of

what I keep referring myself to. And it's like you can only do as much as you believe you can be. So for me, I was like, I believe I can make it past this week and I believe – you know, so it was a lot of just mustering up true, just, courage in yourself and just not giving up on anything. Like, you know, I could have gave up a bunch of times and just been like, No, just give me all the meds. Like, you need a lot of times it was meant to like yo like I don't want to just be dependent on meds all day. So for me it was kind of just like mentally just tapping into, just the whole, just what you're capable of as a human being. So for me, it was just like a lot of self – self building, self confidence, and just understanding that I'm stronger than you know what the situation is trying to make me to be. Because, you know, you can either let the trauma make you or break you. So for me, it was more so about letting it make me into a better version of myself in a sense.

And, it was just a lot of ups and downs, and probably being in the hospital was probably one of the hardest parts. Just because you don't really have the support system that you would like. And for me, it was just a lot of alone time and a lot of time to kind of just go through the motions of what happened and the what ifs. And I think that's most of the time where I felt the most traumatized is when I was alone thinking about it. Like, you know, because it's like I said, the what ifs coming to play and what could have happened. So for me, it was like a lot of just kind of – I don't know, a lot of aloneness that wasn't really wanted based off of just being in the hospital.

So but, I mean at the end of the day, I feel like it did help me look at my situation a lot differently just because how many perspectives I did have to look at it from. And at the end of the day, I just feel like most just thankful for the situation in a way just because I feel like a lot of people came closer in my life based off the situation, and I saw like a lot of love, go around, and it was just like, pretty amazing just to see that type of situation. I always call it like a beautiful disaster, like I hate that it happened and you know – but like I said, I'm glad that I'm alive. But I did see a lot of beautiful things that came out of it and hopefully down the road and, you know, more people can start to stand up for what they believe in. And you know a lot of people say, Do you regret it? I'm like, I don't really, I don't regret it at all. I wouldn't have wanted to get shot, of course, but you know, I can't sit there and say I wouldn't have gone down there like knowing that I got injured. It's like no, like, my goal wasn't going to go down there to like get a settlement or anything like that, you know. So it's like I didn't go – like you know what I mean? Like, it wasn't

like, oh, I'm gonna go down there and get paid. It's like no, I went down there with the intention of going home safely. Like you know what I mean? Like speaking my piece and going home to watch the footage of like, Oh man, that's historical. So for it to kind of blow up and like now it can really be part of like Austin history, my history, and I still have the footage of everything that happened down there. So we want to, my brother and I – we want to definitely move forward and kind of like, you know, make like a documentary series or just kind of, you know, build our own little story around it and kind of put our perspective into like a lot of people's minds – because even to this day some people like don't really know why I was injured or how I got injured. So I feel like a lot of it goes into like, certain people's minds of like, Oh, you did – you were doing something wrong like you know, that's the reason why you guys should all, like you must have been doing something wrong. So for me, I just want to definitely, like, create some type of visual or story that people understand that this wasn't something that was just – could have been avoided, you know, if you weren't doing this. It's like well, you know what I mean. I was just walking down the sidewalk and I was shot. So at the end of the day, I feel like if a lot more people knew that, they would kind of have a little bit more clarity of how serious the situation is rather than like, Oh, maybe he was stealing something, he got shot, or maybe he was in the middle of like a like a shootout with the cops, you know what I mean? Just like, I feel like people build their own narratives around what they think happened. So for me, I definitely am blessed to have footage and have enough evidence to not even make – I'm not gonna say make myself innocent because I know like the type of spirit I have, another type of people that know who I am. So for me, it's just more so to leave that mark on a positive note of like, Yo, this is the footage that I have, like this is what I was like before. This is what I was like when I was down there, and this is what I'm like after, you know? So I just kind of want to incorporate that into my life story like a kind of, you know, share that with the world at some point.

But for the most part, I definitely don't feel like I would go back and change anything to be honest, you know. There – of course, people are like, well, you got money and then you got this, and I'm like, Yeah, well, money doesn't fix or change everything, like, you know what I mean? It's like a still mental type of healing that I go through like on a daily or whether it's like I'm out, you know what I mean? So for me, it's just like a lot of people just see what – they see money and they assume that everything is just good. And I'm like, Yeah, I get that, but money does

bring problems, too, and it brings more responsibilities. So it's like, for me, I was just glad that I got to kind of build my own maturity level up through it all and kind of not just be placed with all this at once and be Oh, I don't know. So for me it was just like kind of understanding that it is a blessing, and it is a lesson at the same time too, like so just going through it all. It was very spiritual and empowering because at the end of the day, I understand that people are still going through this. People are still being harassed and killed by the police, so I mean, at some point I definitely want to have more people that have gone through certain experiences like this around me, too, just kind of share their ideas and share their story to kind of help build their own mindset up, too. Because not everybody has, you know, that kind of warrior spirit to where they can like face their enemy again, you know, and I just kind of want to let people know. I know that, and you know, don't let your enemy win, you know. It's like you are your worst enemy at the end of the day that other person that puts you through that. Like you know it's like screw them at the end of the day, but don't let them feel like they have that power over you to where you can't be happy and that you can't live a beautiful life at the end of the day, because – that's what I want to motivate people that's gone through any type of trauma. It's like not – it's not the end, you know. Just because you knocked down, doesn't mean you have to stay down, you can always get back up. It's not about, you know, the battle. It's about the journey, all that. For me, I just want to uplift people and just show them that, you know, life is just a series of shitty events. And you know, it consists of a series of beautiful events too, so I just want to show people that perspective has a lot to do with just moving forward in life.

But yeah, like I said, my lawyers were a great asset to this whole situation. Basically, I really wouldn't have known what direction to take. So just having a bunch of friends, family. And like I said, it's of course, is something the whole thing just made it so much more easier to take down as a whole dramatic situation. But yeah, I just give my thanks to them as well. So I just got super blessed in that. People say, Lucky, and I'm like, No, I got blessed man. Like it could have been so much worse, you know. So for me it's just kind of understanding that moving forward. Just how to always move with the uplifting spirit. That's kind of like what I want to do. Like I'm just super effervescent all the time and stuff like that but um, yeah. I don't, I don't, I don't really know. I'm trying to think if I missed anything really.

KIRSCH: Well, I've got some, I mean, I've got some questions if you're cool with that. I mean, just firstly, thank you so much for sharing your whole story. It's really remarkable just thinking about your whole journey and even just – it's almost to me like, the day, the way that you described it, the day that you got shot is almost like a metaphor for the whole, for your whole experience. Like you went in that day with, like an attitude of compassion and caring and peace and reasoning, and you got shot for it. And then you walked for hours and hours and miles, you know, and just like – and at first, I – there's a lot of parallels. Like, I remember the really strong feeling of adrenaline and how that really will just motivate you and kill the pain, but, I mean, that doesn't last hours and hours. I mean, you just walking for that long and almost getting hit by a car and like, you know. That is such powerful, like internal motivation. And, one thing – there's a couple things I want to touch on that stuck out to me. But one thing I remember, I'm not sure you brought it up here, but this whole thing of the first surgeon of the second surgeon. Shoutout to Dr. Harshbarger who's both of our second, you know, good surgeons. But the first surgeon, you know, when you were talking about where you had like a screw sticking out of your jaw, I mean did you feel like there was like medical racism? Did you feel like because of the color of your skin that they were ignoring you, ignoring your pain, stuff like that? Did you get that feeling, or?

EVANS: I feel like in these situations it's pretty difficult to determine that, because I feel like the same doctor treating a multi-millionaire Black person would – you know what I mean? Like, it's just a social thing at this point, a social class thing. If I were to come in and I was already some millionaire dude that was injured, I'm sure it would have been a lot different. But it's like, this guy doesn't have – you know what I mean? Like, I'm pretty sure they knew my file. They knew how much I would be having to pay him. It was almost like, well, these are the tools we can use that save us this amount of money, x, x, and x. I could have been Black, I could have been Asian, I could have been white. I still feel like anyone in my social class and my situation would have got treated the same when it comes to the type of surgery that was done. But certain checkups were very odd and, like you said, it maybe had some like type of racism, how he handled certain checkups that he had with me. He was very aggressive and very just rough with my injury zones and stuff like that. And so maybe that, but it never really clicked in my mind that deeply to think of it on that level. Because I've kind of

already do think on that level, like I said, just knowing the history behind like Black people and the health care industry and doctors and all the fucked up shit that's been done a Black people by doctors and experimenting, like – people don't know about the Tuskegee experiments and all that. Like, it's like, it's a real thing that's happened to people in the real world. So for me, I've always thought like – I question everything, I judge everything. People are always like, Why is it always Black and white? I'm like, well, I wish it wasn't, but sometimes it just is, you know.

KIRSCH: Yeah, I know. That's a really good point there. And yeah, the economic class dynamic. There is, I think, really important to highlight that – what I mean one thing that stuck out to me, which was another parallel, was when you were talking about how, you know, it took a little bit of time. Like, at first, you told your brother, or your brother saw what happened obviously right – your, your twin. But then you also at one point called your mom. And that to me was something I remember really vividly of like, Oh my God, I have to tell my mom what happened, and just thinking, like I remember, going over in my head, like, literally, What am I going to say? Like, how do I – how do you even tell your mom? That and so, I don't know. I'm curious if you, if that was like a thing, you were like mulling over or if you remember, were you, did you just like – did you know kind of try to like lead into it or was it just like, Hey Mom, you know, here's what happened.

EVANS: I might have sent a picture with a caption or something, and then she might have been the one that called me. Yeah, so I think that's kind of how I pointed out and yeah, she's like reached out to me. She's like, What did you get shot with? And she's like, Oh, so it wasn't a real bullet? I was like, No. So, you know she was very quick to be like, Yeah, you're lucky it wasn't a real bullet. And I just felt like that was like her not being a mother in that moment rather than – let you know, like I'm gonna be like calling you. It's like, No, you're lucky it wasn't a bullet. Like, you know, like that was kind of her, her mean way of saying like, I'm mad at you. Like, you know what I mean? I mean, like, I'm mad, but I'm not. I want to say, I'm mad at you. Like, I'm glad that you're here, but I'm also mad that the fact that you're hurting, you know, for her, like almost like trying to like remind me, like, You're so lucky, you got lucky, like, you know, she didn't say that but, you know, she just like, it could have been real bullets, like, screws. Like, I know that. You know, so for me, it was just kind of like, not just

being selfish, you know, I had to like be completely honest and, you know, not hide anything drastic from her like that just because I know how much she already is a part of my circle and all that. So yeah.

KIRSCH: Yeah, no, absolutely. And yeah, I mean, I don't know, I hope this is okay. I'm like kind of jumping around a little bit, but the – just talking about, you know, having your jaw wired shut you said, for two months. I mean I'm just thinking, like I think a lot about it honestly, just how awful that must have been. I mean, I know you obviously had a really strong, like, self-motivation and I mean I know you mentioned having strong support from your family and friends. I don't know, I mean, if you're willing just to talk a little bit more about just what it was like with the soft foods? And, I don't know, I even think about things like, could you yawn? Could you sneeze? Like what – I mean, I don't know if you're willing to talk about some of those details but –

EVANS: Yeah. No, it's basically the human body just is pretty amazing. Like, the way it just adapts and adjusts certain things on its own. Because at certain points, I did think, Oh shit, I can't yawn until after the first couple, like two weeks. I think I would maybe yawn once every two days, and it wouldn't be a yawn. It would just be like, I don't, I can't, I can't explain like, it's like – Yeah, I don't know. I can't – it's like a yawn, but the most uncomfortable yawn ever because, like you said, it's like more – it's like your skin is going but you can still feel your teeth, like, together. So it was a lot of just breathing through my nose and stuff. And sneezing was pretty scary sometimes. I'm like, I don't want to sneeze. So I had to kind of hold it in a lot of the times and stuff like that. But for the most part, like my body just adapted on its own to just doing those motions less and less. So by the second month, I don't think I was really even yawning or sneezing at any point just because I was resting a lot, too, you know. They were like, part of the healing process is sleeping a lot. So I was sleeping and resting a lot. So there's no point for me to yawn super just because I kind of caught on to that. I think I'd rather sleep than just be tired and up, you know. So, I think that was, like, probably one of the biggest things was just like kind of reminding myself to get sleep.

KIRSCH: Yeah, no, that makes it – that makes a lot of sense. And yeah, I mean, I know you're talking about, like, you know, you really wanted, yeah, you really wanted to eat pizza. Like I had a really mild version of being on a soft foods diet, where – I mean, because I have surgeries that went in through my cheek. I mean I could open my mouth and I could eat like a soft tortilla. So it was, it was not on the same level. But I know at least a little bit, just like – there's boredom, there's just pain and texture. Like I don't know, I'm curious as for you, like, what – you know, how that developed and what's it like now? And how long did it take you? Are you fully there? Are you able to eat whatever you want now? You know how – like, was there a certain point where you felt like, Okay, this is kind of like good enough? How did you adjust?

EVANS: Well, like I said, for the first couple months – well, first couple months, first month or so, it was like broths and stuff like chicken broth, and I made beef broth, and stuff like that. And I think after the first two weeks, I was like, Yeah, if I drink another broth, I'm gonna vomit. (Laughter) So I just started drinking smoothies and making ice cream – just like little floats and stuff to drink. But at a certain point you just want something that has a grill flavor. So I think after the first month and a half, I just started making like smoothie food, if that makes sense. Instead of pureed food, I make my own, like, pureed burger. I would puree like barbecue. Like, I would literally just blend it up like a broth and season the water and ended up just like blending it down to a liquid and just drinking it or like sipping it through a straw and, like, I fucking loved it. At one point, I was like, this is good as shit. Like, you know, I had gumbo at one point that was just like made into a smoothie. So you know for me I was just like, Yo, if I'm gonna go all the way, I'm gonna go all the way. Like I'm not gonna you know, I'm not gonna limit myself to Only these, I'm like no dude. Like I want something with some food substance taste to it, you know? So I was making like spicy meals and just like blending them up and shit like that. So it was just like me, like I'm just that type of person like turn a shitty situation, and just like the best situation that I could possibly have control over. So for me, it was just like, Yo, if I make something that tastes good, like, I'm gonna eat it. So it was just at a certain point where I was just mixing different things in the blender that I knew was like food like – (Dog enters room, speaks to dog) Hey stop, go outside. (Turns back) And then for

me, it was just experimenting, just not being scared to taste something gross or make something gross. But yeah, I was just experimenting. I just felt like I made some pretty good pureed meals.

KIRSCH: Yeah I, uh, I respect the creativity, for sure. I love that. So do you feel like, are those things now – like, do you still eat purees? I mean, not because you have to you know. Will you just, like, make a smoothie or you just kind of like, no, no, that that was for that part of my life and I'm over that?

EVANS: Uh, yeah, I definitely like feel it. Because even at that point, I was doing it so much where I am focused on wholehearted meals, like whole solid foods. But I don't find it less appealing now. Like, I find it like okay if I want something, like I can like blend it up and make a smoothie all day. But I did it so much, I'm like, I don't want to make a smoothie, you know what I mean? I would rather go buy one or, like I said, for me, if I could also do certain – just like certain flavors of food for me, it kind of just reminds me of that moment. It just brings you back to like damn, I remember eating this when I had to like blend it up. So the only difference for me now is just, like I said, eating those solid meals with all of my mouth, just because the left side was like out of commission for so long. I just had to get used to eating on that side again or just chewing certain foods. It's very awkward. Like I just can't, I don't know, I just can't chew it on that side because it just feels really weird. And so, I'm always chewing on my right side. So, basically just eating regular foods again comfortably would probably be like, another – that's still – [I] think that I'm kind of working on, for sure.

KIRSCH: Yeah, no, totally. I mean, food is such a powerful thing. It can really make or break your mood and I mean, it's really tough. I mean, it's really amazing how you're able to get creative and adapt and, you know, still just like having a good attitude. I wanted to see – I wanted to touch on that feeling of powerlessness when you're talking about being in the hospital for weeks and just, you know, couldn't really do anything. Did you after – did you at any point end up going back out to protest or like, did you want to go back out afterwards?

EVANS: I mean, I couldn't. There was nothing like out – like by the time I got out of the hospital there was nothing like really going on in a sense. And basically, like my lawyers and stuff, I don't think they would have advised that. I'm pretty sure they said, Don't. So for me, it was just kind of like, okay, well we're in the middle of a case, I don't want to do anything to make my case more confusing. So I just kind of went based off of what they were telling me, like my lawyers and stuff.

KIRSCH: Oh yeah, totally. No, I mean, I remember I had doctors begging me not to go back out, and I was like, I'm not going back out there. Are you crazy? But yeah, I don't know, some people might have had that thought. And yeah, I mean it's also like – I also think about just even how long you were out, you know, in the hospital and how long you had to be recovering with food, and like, in a way you mentioned you're still kind of recovering. It's just like, it's an enormous loss of time. And like you were touching the whole thing about money and yadda yadda. But it's like, I don't think people realize just how much loss there is, in like, life you could have been living, that you had every right to be living, that you just had to be sitting in the hospital bed for weeks with your jaw wired shut.

EVANS: For sure, yeah. And like you said, I think it's just more like that outside kind of perspective for a lot of people, and for me it was just more so, I did have my brother as my roommate So yeah, I was never – like yeah, the hospital for sure, you only get nurses and stuff. But for me, I had people I could text throughout the day and stuff like that. So it was really just being able to understand being alone isn't the worst thing in the world. That was a lot of it for me. Like I never felt that way in general, but the situation definitely helped me feel isolated and not feel – you can be isolated and not feel alone, you know what I mean? So for me, it was just kind of like going through that. Like you said, time. For me, I was just kind of taking advantage of time, like I started reading a little bit more books and stuff like that. So it was just kind of how you manage your free time, and I definitely like experimenting with different ways of just, you know, just trying out different things about myself and what I'm capable of. But all in all man like I said, it's just perspectives, a lot of it. Perspective is the hell of a power to use.

KIRSCH: Absolutely. And I mean, maybe, maybe we can wrap up on, if you just want to talk a little bit about kind of like – I mean now, you know, you've gone through the whole headache of surgeries and the healthcare system and lawsuit and you know, you've had a settlement. And so – but I'm, you know, we'd love to hear just about what's going on with you now? I know you mentioned wanting to put together a documentary and kind of continuing to put the message out and keep fighting. But I'd just love to hear about what's going on in your life now. What's, kind of, the future looking like for you?

EVANS: Yeah, for sure. Right now, just slowing things down, like I'm just going really at my own pace. After the settlement, things were just going fast, and not in a bad way or anything. It was just like a lot of going on at once, just understanding the situation that has just been presented to me and it's the type of opportunities that are gonna like, start to come my way. So it was just kind of realizing who is really there for me and who to take advice from. So it was a lot of just kind of finding out, weaving, you know, different types of energy in and out of my life. But for the most part, like I said, I definitely want to take advantage of this settlement opportunity and help out my mom and like family as much as I can. And right now I just moved into my new place with my brother like two months ago. So just been taking that as a blessing and just kind of moving out at like a really chill pace. I went on a vacation like once or twice, but for the most part I'm just trying to stay at low-key pace. And I still work. So I work with my residents and they're always kind of just like, How's life? I'm just like, Oh, you know, it's going good. They're all just like always getting them inside on my little journeys I be taking, and my little accomplishments outside of, you know, work and stuff like that. So, it's always good to have that type of humbleness behind me, because it's, you know, working with the elderly, it's really humbling. It gives you a different perspective on just how precious your life is rather than like how precious the valuables you have in your life are. It's like even with all this settlement stuff that I got, it's like, Yo, like I'm still able to live, I still have my mental, I'm still able to have my voice. So that was my biggest thing is just not losing any real type of characteristic that I have.

KIRSCH: Yeah, do you want to just briefly expand a little bit on what you're doing for work and what you've been doing? Because it's such like a caring job. It mean, it makes so much sense.

EVANS: Yeah, so for like the past six, seven years that I work with – at first, I worked with Alzheimer's and dementia residents for like five years. I was handling medication and just giving them the proper love and proper compassion that they needed. And for me, it was difficult at first because I've never worked in that type of field. But the more I did it, the more I saw the difference in just myself, the type of people and residents I was interacting with, just kind of how they gravitated towards my energy. So for me, it was just like always one of those things of like, Okay, if I can make other people happy just being who I am, it's like why change who you are. And so for me it just really made me tap into just my identity, my personality. And, you know, just working with people who can't do anything for you really is just like a self-rewarding job in itself, and a lot of people aren't built for it. And for me, it was just kind of like I understood the process of the human experience and you know how things come back in full circle. So, for me, it was never like, Oh, I'm gonna do this job and hope that I get some type of crazy blessing out of it. Like no, like my spirit is fully fulfilled when I do, you, like, certain things and I get a super affection out of just this resident who's never wanted to be around someone and they're like they want to be around you again because of your good energy. So for me, it was just like always trying to put that out into the universe, and I just feel like it came back to me like in the worst time of my life. So, you know, that's just like the only way I could look at it as like a good blessing and a good karma came back to me in a shitty time. And, you know, like I thank whoever, every day, you know, whoever you believe in, and that's just kind of like how I just go move forward and like I said, just try to pay it forward. Help wherever I can and, you know like I said, don't take anything for granted. So that's just basically how I'm moving forward, man.

KIRSCH: Well, that's – yeah, that's awesome. I mean, you know, your story is just so – it's, to me, it's just such a powerful story of triumph and healing and it's just, it's just really great to just like hear how well you're doing and, you know, healing still, but on, you know – clearly like doing sounds like doing really well. And, you know, like looking

forward to all the best for you in the future. And yeah, thank you. Thank you so much again for sharing your story. Yeah, really, really appreciate it.

EVANS: Appreciate you too, Sam. Like I said, it's just unfortunate situations can lead to good outcomes. We wouldn't have met if there wasn't unfortunately for the situation, you know, we wouldn't have met. So it's just like one of those things, like I said, perspective. I could easily still be pissed off about the situation, which I do have my moments, but we're in the now, we're in the moment, like we can't, you know – living in the past is always gonna bring up terrible feelings. So for me, it's just, like, trying to be in the moment, and like I said, when I do have those thoughts, it's like, Damn, find something to be thankful about like, you know what I mean? So, yeah, I appreciate you. Like I said, I'm glad that this encounter got to bring this to each other's paths, and I hope to consider you a fellow friend of mine here now and in the future. So, you know, that's all I'm looking forward to is just now and what is moving forward.

KIRSCH: Yeah, absolutely. No likewise. I'm not going anywhere.

EVANS: All right, brother well, I have another phone call to hop onto, but I will reach back out to you or you reach out to me, vice versa, but yeah, sounds good.

KIRSCH: All right, I'll let you go.