

**TAVP Visions After Violence Interview
Interview with Liz Gonzales**

Interviewer: Sam Kirsch

Narrator: Liz Gonzales

Transcriptionist: Aleisha Fitzgerald

Interview Date: June 21, 2023 - 6:04 p.m. CDT

Location of Interview: Austin, Texas - Joined via Zoom

Interview Format: Audio & Video

Summary:

Liz Gonzales recounts the story of what happened the night when her son was killed, the ongoing journey of grieving and healing, and how she is turning her emotional pain into organizing in her community, and fighting for a better world.

SAM KIRSCH: Hello, my name is Sam Kirsch. Today is June 21st, 2023. It's 6:04 p.m. I have the pleasure of speaking with Liz Gonzales today. Liz, how are you?

LIZ GONZALES: Hey, how you doing? I'm okay.

KIRSCH: Good. So I thought we would start today—if you wanted to just go into talking about your background, who are you, how long have you lived in Austin?

GONZALES: I'm Elizabeth Gonzales and I'm from Third and Pedernales [Street], Austin, Texas. Lived there, in Austin, all my life. I have my son, Alexander Gonzales, Jr. He's like, my third born and – very exciting when he was born. I was separated from my other two kids. He was like six years apart from my older daughter, but he was my third kid, and he was awesome. Through elementary school, he did awesome. He was in T-ball, softball through Junior High. He went through it like nothing, he was in football. He was a football player, went through it like nothing.

High school was kind of rough for him, but he went through it like nothing and he graduated and he was great, was studying to be – well, first, he got involved with his CDL (Commercial Driver's License) with his dad, because he wanted to be a truck driver like his daddy. So he started working out with Centex Materials, and got involved in there. And then after that, he's like, Well Dad, I want to go something bigger than that. So he quit Centex Materials and went to Capital Pumping because that has like, the big arms that go through the cement – that go through the big, big arms. He loved being – doing that, and seeing his daddy and seeing his father and him on the same job site, that was awesome for both of them. They were, like, just so awesome.

So as my son got a little bit older, he's like, Hey Daddy, let's go to UTI (Universal Technical Institute), which is a diesel university school for sports – for, like, car racing and for diesel mechanics and that's what he was going – that's what he was fixing [to] go into, really wanted to go into that, my husband and him were really into that within a couple of months before prior to

that. And once my – once my son got murdered, my life was shattered. I haven't been the same. I'm not the same person. I've changed, like, for the best of me.

I try to do nothing but advocate, work with Austin Justice Coalition for people and victims, like me – or victims period, with police brutality and everything, because I know I, myself, can't change the world. I have to do it as a team, as a group with everyone, who – whatever organization is willing to work with me to help me out. So we can all come together as a unit, as one, you know, because I can't do it by myself. I mean it takes a group of people. And knowing, in this field, you have to know – and get to – have to put yourself in places where you've never been, or put your – put you in a spot where you've never been, and you're just like, oh my God, this is something so brand new to me. So, but I'm learning to go to school for it, you know, to be a radical advocate, because that's something that – this is a journey for me now because my son's murder, you know, because he was done wrong, and either way that anybody sees it, there's no way that anybody should deserve to be treated – or be shot so many times. Like my son.

There was no way in hell that they should have handcuffed him when he was already murdered. That – I want to make a law of that. If somebody's murdered, there's no need for you to handcuff them, what are they going to do to you? They're already dead. You know, that right there can never go out of my mind because it's just something that I saw in person – in the videos. They can't lie to me, you know, so that hurt me deeply about that – that the police brutality has to stop somewhere, somehow, somewhere.

Yeah, they show, whatever they show on TV about the cops whoop-dee-doo, but they never show the real truth. And they're not going to push me away under a carpet. I am not going away. From nowhere, from nobody, and I know what the challenge is against the cops. I know it is, but that's something that somebody's got to stand up and say enough is enough. And be the voice for people, and that's going to be me, if people let me and allow me to do what I got to do for our community, for our people, for everyone in the world, in general, we all got to come together. And this violence has to stop. You know, I wake up every morning crying. I go to sleep crying. Because I miss my son every day. I can't talk to him no more. I miss when he calls me and tells

me, Mom, what are you doing? Mom, what's up? I miss all of that. I can never hear that ever again from him. And that right there is what hurts me because my son was everything to me as I told everybody before.

You know, my son needed something, I was there for him. When his car broke down, I was there for him, but when I needed him, he was always there for me also. You know, Hey, son, can you come over tonight? I need you over here. My son would always stay the night with me. I mean, I would see him every night. And for me from one night – to know – and for the cops, for them not to go to my house until later on in the afternoon and tell me, that was my son, after the news already said it. You know, how fair is that to me? A hundred and forty-two days it took them to let me see the body.

KIRSCH: Hold on. I'm sorry, I'm having – I'm so sorry. Liz, I'm having some audio issues. I can't hear you. Can you can you can you say something again? I'm so sorry.

GONZALES: I knew, I know – everything in general, you know. Can you hear me now? Okay, you know, that I can't do it alone and change the world by myself. But as a team, as a group, as an organization, as all of us come together as one, we could do it, because it takes a group of people not just one person. Because one person is not going to make a difference. A whole group of people will make a difference. A lot of alliances will make a difference behind me, you know, and that's what I want. I want to be part of every organization, if I could, just so we can stop the violence within our world, with the police.

KIRSCH: Absolutely, Liz. We're gonna, we're going to touch on everything you said. And thank you so much for being able to talk about all of this. I just want to step back for a moment. And just, for those who don't know, can you take me through the night of January 5th, 2021, going through what happened that night.

GONZALES: I was asleep. My daughter goes in my room at 4:30 in the morning and tells me, Mama, Jessica told me that Alex is murdered. They murdered him, they murdered him. And I was like, What? They murdered him, Mom. They murdered him and I didn't know who murdered him. I was just so scared, but my husband was at work and I had to go tell him because I couldn't drive over there. I had a call to his job and tell him, I need him home immediately because our son had just got murdered (crying).

My husband was on-site and he's a truck driver. Do you know how long it took them to get home? Fifteen minutes. It took him fifteen minutes because I was going crazy (crying). Because I couldn't believe that what they did is took my son. I was just, like, weak, and then to see the video on TV. That right there. That crushed me because (sobs) my son was already shot in the head. When it – when (sobs) his car turned (sobs), Gabriel (Gutierrez) had already shot five or six times into my son's car (crying). My son was already shot in the head. One bullet in the head or in the mouth. So when he was getting out of that car, out of God's will, God's will, he got up and he walked around that car. And if you see, he had his hands up like this, and he had his hands on the car because he wasn't of, mind you, he has a bullet through his mouth. He can't comprehend nothing right now. There's a bullet in him. But all he hears is, the baby, the baby in the background. If you hear – that's all you hear, is the baby, the baby, the baby, my son got up and he checked on his baby. And when he checked on that baby little do you know? In the recording that I got you hear Gutierrez, shoot him, shoot him. He's got a gun, he's got a gun. He's got a gun. But what was protocol then, what was protocol then? (Luis) Serrato all he did was unloaded the whole clip on my son. All you had to do was just push him and he would have been dead already. But he unloaded his whole clip and so did Gabriel Gutierrez. So, how many bullets do you think we're in my son's – in my son's body – out of the car, out of Jessica, lucky enough that baby – nothing happened to that baby. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ. God was watching him. That's why my son, he did what God would have done for anybody. He put his life before that child. So he went to heaven, because he did, he pulled a miracle for what he did. He got up out of that car with a bullet in his mouth – dead. To walk around that car to see that kid, to see if he was okay and then they unloaded on him, I cannot forget that. (Crying)

That stays on my mind every day, every day. Why did he have to unload on my son? Why wouldn't he shot him one more time? He unloaded the whole clip. Why hasn't the city of Austin done anything for me, and done anything for them cops? Why? Probably because I'm low-income, but it doesn't matter. I'm a human just like everybody else is. (Crying) My son did not deserve to get shot as many times as they think that he did because of whatever – because they're lying, they're lying and they're hiding they're trying to hide this, but there's no lying with me and there's no hiding no more, because they better be scared of me because I'm coming after them. I don't care. I'm coming after them for what they did to my son. The city's going to pay one way or another. They are going to pay one way or another is all I got to say because what they did to me and what they've done to my family. (Crying)

They destroyed us, I can't even work. Because I'm so much – everything. I can't be around people because of what this does to me, what it's done to me. I have to get fixed, because I'm broken, but I know what I'm saying and I know what I'm doing, but I'm broke inside and I'll never be fixed. Unless I have – unless I heal it. The only way for me to heal it is to continue this advocate work that I have for my life in front of me, for my people, for my son, and be a voice for others that can't stand up for themselves. And I know it's a challenge for me because it's for the cops And if that's what I'm willing to do 100 percent by myself, or with, or with tons of people behind me. That's what I want. I don't want to be alone in this. I want tons of people behind me and backing me up on what I'm saying. It is correct. I'm not saying no lies, and I will never spit lies out of my mouth. If unless, unless it is, I will apologize but I – only truth comes out of my mouth. And facts, that's it.

KIRSCH: Liz, that was so, so powerful. I'm blown away right now. I have to ask you. You talked about – it took a hundred and forty-two days for APD to release the body cam footage, and Gutierrez was off duty, right? And the policy for releasing body cam footage is supposed to be within 10 days.

GONZALES: Exactly. And all the world, all around the world was doing that for 10 days, except my, except me, except us here in Austin. A hundred and forty-two days.

KIRSCH: What was it like to have to wait for so long and what was going through your mind when, you know, all that – such a long time to have to wait? What was going through your mind?

GONZALES: For one, I was like, okay. Then they got a different kind of view of the way I'm seeing it. So they got to be, they gotta see what I see. Okay. So when I was in the – in there, you best believe I was – they were looking at me like I was crazy because every time they showed the clip, Well, where's this part? Well, how come you cut it up? Because this is what's happening and I saw all the way to this part. So why are you cutting it out? Where's this part? Because this is the way it's supposed to be. Where's this part? Because I seen it all, and I've already seen the video that they were showing the people, but they weren't showing the truth about it. They were covering it all up. Every–

Where was protocol? Where was protocol? None throughout the whole damn thing, throughout all of it. Even though when Jessica got shot, there still was no protocol. It took'em a long time for the ambulance to get there. Now, what, what the hell? Where's, where's protocol then? Because they didn't mean, they didn't mean nothing to them. Because they're doing, they're trying to figure out – I'm gonna find a way to cover this up. No siree. You just messed with the wrong family. I'm the wrong mama – mama bear that they messed with, that – I'm not going away. I'm going to make a rattle and that's the way it's going to be whether they like me or not. It's gonna be like that. They're gonna have to answer to me, why they did, why they did, they haven't apologized to me. They haven't done nothing. Because the cops are not supposed to be like that. They're supposed to care about people like me, of what I'm going through. And what – I'm – what they need to do to help me, but ain't no – nobody's reached out to me, ain't nobody nothing but that's okay. It's okay because I've got to do the best with what I got, which is US Hill or other organizations that are helping me out to heal.

That's what's helping me out, the community, the people out here. Not the cops, they've done nothing for me. So what is the city? What is the city expect me to do, you know? No, I'm gonna sue them for what they did to me. Because I'm messed up. My family is broke, my family is broke, my family will never be the same again. To see my son or my husband's – that was my husband's line of having his name carried on. It just got killed, and it just got murdered, and it's not gonna be like that. Now, we have my daughter, but it's not the same for her to carry her – my husband's name through my son and my – it's done, they killed that for me. They killed everything for me. When he's gonna get married, when the grandkids? They killed all that for me, they crushed that for me, I'll never see that ever again (crying). All the good he was gonna do in school when he was going out to show me and his daddy what he could do at UTI, you know what I'm saying? Right there is what got my heart, and I'll never let that go because they took that from me because my son was a mechanic, he was a man of all trades. He loved to help people. You ask people, people will tell you good things about my son. He was very giving, he would give you the shirt off my back, whatever he needed to. That's the kind of loving son that I had, the son that would always didn't bother – didn't – [He] cared about – anybody. If he saw somebody homeless, and you walked, Here's five dollars, dawg. Or, Here, dawg. Here's food. He would feed whoever that he saw that was broke, and that's how he was. He was so sensitive like that, where, like, just like me, where, like now, if I were to leave, I see somebody, I'm going to give him five dollars. Or I'm gonna give 'em something to eat because that's just the way we are, you know, because you never know, that one little person could be God. And you never know, you never know. Just, you might lose that chance by letting that person go and not saying no. So you've got to feel what's inside in your heart, and feel what we – everybody feels hurt. You know, and hurt feels – it hurts bad, you know, but I'm trying to heal that by doing my advocacy work because that's what makes me feel good about myself and to help others in my situation, or different situations, doesn't matter. You know, as long as I'm there helping with whatever I can, and my source.

KIRSCH: Absolutely, absolutely. I've had the privilege of getting to know you over these past few months and I've seen you inspire so many people

speaking. I've seen you take action in organizing, you know – you and your daughter were there at polling sites on voting day, right? Telling people to vote Yes on A, No on B for police oversight. You've been organizing and learning how to organize with AJC and from the outside, from the way that I've seen you, it really seems like you are, you know, turning your grief into fighting for justice that in a way – that seems really like, personally transformative. I'm wondering, if you could talk about the way that you have seen yourself change over these past couple of years, and the way you see the path that you're on now.

GONZALES: Okay, it has changed me for the good. I'm going to Austin Justice Coalition Radical School. It'll be over in October, I'll be graduating in October. It has changed my life. I try to get myself involved with any organization where there's anything, anything – whatever it is, I'm out there. I like to show myself out there and to let them know you got my support. I'm there to help anybody and anywhere, and it has changed me, for one, like – for a better person and I like to – I like it because it they, Austin Justice Coalition, took me to the Capitol and showed me something that I never knew, like the bills, and I know it's going to take time and that's how I, like, before it was just like, I want it now, but (laughs) you know, you can't always have it like that. That's something that God's taught me, to have patience, also, through this process because you have to have patience through this process – is to have faith and believe in everything that you do. And just live it, day by day, as much as you can. Because if you were to let this stuff tear you up, you would, just like me – I would just go to pieces. I would go down, but I look at it where this, this is something that I have to, something that I have to take on every day. Every day as being a better person, being a better mother, being a better advocate, being a better person out there to anybody. Who are – all right – whoever I meet, you know, or explain myself, who I am, because I really don't like telling people, but sometimes I do because it needs to be out there and needs to be heard, you know, and I love this advocacy work because it's done me nothing but good and nothing but good people along the way, and that's the positive thing about it because I'm not in it alone.

I've learned to know a lot of more people and a lot of more organizations and that put me out there that I like to be – to show up and to, you know, to even just like the Brown Berets or, or like

anybody, you know, just Austin Justice Coalition, or like I'm saying, like, something – Black Lives Matter, or your organization, or anything. I want to be a part of that. I want people – I want to leave my mark everywhere I go. So they know, well, you know what, that lady, she's good and she tells nothing but the truth, you know, and she's a good – and that's what I want, more people to want to rely and depend and want to come and talk to me. Because I want to be that person, where I can also try to help to heal, not much, but I can teach her what I'm going through and what the process and what I've learned and who I've met along the way and who's good and who's not and who you should use and you who shouldn't use, because it makes a big difference, too. I'm still new, I'm not perfect, because I ain't – nobody's perfect, you know? And I will admit I make mistakes just like everybody else. And I would admit if I did something wrong, I will apologize. And I will say, Hey, I did something wrong, and you know, I would admit it was me, but – and I would tell on myself, too (laughs). That's sad but I would – you know, because I have heart and compassion and that's what you do. You have guilt if you don't – if you did something wrong, you've got to just express yourself and tell other people like, you know what? You know I did, I did this and you know, I'm sorry, I apologize and I didn't mean it, you know? Stuff like that because like I said, nobody's perfect you got to learn as you go along this way. That's how you get it. That's how you get around this, as I see it now. And it's a hard job but I'm willing to take it, you know, and the strides that I got for it right now – it's like non-stop for me. It's just like, I want – I'm like a sponge. I'm just ready to absorb more and more and more and be out there and learn more of what I have to, for these people. You know what? People can understand what I can understand – is learn to teach them, you know what I'm saying? But my way of explaining it, you know, that's how I see it now and I love it.

KIRSCH: Absolutely, no. I think you have all of the – all of the traits of a really good organizer, and all those things you're talking about are all – I think, really, you know, normal parts of learning how to organize people and be part of organizations and how to, you know, who you should be aligning ourselves with and who you shouldn't. And on top of that, you have just, such, you know, immense motivation, right, as you talked about.

And I want to maybe try to transition into talking about some of the wrongdoings and changes that, you know, you feel, we need to see in Austin. And I want to, I want to touch on the – one of the things that, you know, just seems so cruel. On top of everything, on top of murdering Alex, that the city and APD are putting you through, right? Like not only did it take 142 days before you could see the body cam footage. But after two years, there's no criminal indictment against Gutierrez and Serrano. The Community Police Review Commission recommended both officers to be fired, [the] director of The Office of Police Oversight recommended Gutierrez to be fired, and then APD Chief Chacon let both of them return to the force and be on the streets, become cops again. I wanted to just get your reaction to that and what was going through your head when that, that – when that decision happened?

GONZALES: Well, for one, I was angry. Very angry, because that's not right for them to put the cops back out there and – to kill again. Okay, that's for one. Okay, that's putting bad cops against a good – like I told you, bad cops against good cops, the bad cops outweigh the good cops because they're putting the, the bad cops back into society where they could kill again and that's not right. When, when do you see for us – okay, as human beings, when will you see us? Okay, let's go murder somebody and get away with it and, you know, not do nothing about – that's impossible. Why? Because we're civilians and we're normal people, because we don't wear their badge. Just because they wear the badge, they can do that? No, sir. That does not give them the right to murder people. And it's not just because of my son. This happened way before even my son.

The bad cops outweighs good cops, no matter how big, how little it is, this little outweighs this, because that's all we see is the bad cops because – who do they harm? Us, us people, the, the brown and the black, that's what we're scared of. What – do we have to have a class now in school to teach our children? How do you act when a cop pulls you over, they don't teach us that. We don't teach our kids that because we don't know. But that's something that came in my mind, like maybe we should start something like that, for a hint – that – to start explaining to our children what happens when, what happens if a cop pulls you over, you know what I'm saying? How bad could that be, you know, or even to your children, because you don't look, excuse my

language, but you don't look white, you look Hispanic, you know – or you know [stutters] how is it that? The other the – not that – like, Spaniard, you know, you look Spaniard, too, I mean, that does it – that – you could fall in our category. So what would that – how would you feel about your children every day? Walking out, Hey Dad, I'll be back, I'm going to school in this car. How are you going to feel? Is he going to be okay? Is it going to be a – you know, I tell my kid, I used to tell my kid, call me everyday before you go to sleep and call me every day before you go to bed, you know. To make sure that you're okay. When I didn't hear that from my son that day, that destroyed me.

And too, mind you, the day before, it was my daughter's 22nd birthday. So she'll never love her birthday. She hates her birthday because her brother died at 12:30, 12:48 on my daughter's birthday. And we were waiting for him that night because we were supposed to have cake and everything for him, and we had it there waiting for him, but he never showed up. (Crying) So right there, that killed my daughter's birthday forever in her life. January 4th was her birthday. So, 5th – forget it, because she doesn't even care about her birthday no more. It's destroyed and to her, all she hears is, Your brother's murdered, at 4:30 in the morning and clicks and hangs up. Who does that to any normal person? That sticks to my daughter's head, every day. She's stuck with that every day and wakes up crying or yelling at 4:30 in the morning. How do you think – I have to go out of my bed to go comfort her because my daughter has dreams like that.

Like I said, we're not normal. This has really messed me up. Especially in the mornings and at night time, I can't – I wake up going to sleep. I go to sleep, going to sleep, you know, at nighttime because I think about my son every day, every moment and what he's doing (crying) and how it's changed my life. But for good. Because I have to try to make it good for him, you know. I have to make good for us as a family also, and stake it out the best that I can because that's what moms do is put it together and try to stake the best that you can. And that's all I got to say, is be the best that I can be. And that's what I want to be for everyone in general, not just for my family. (Sniffles)

KIRSCH: Liz, do you – if you could, if you could talk to Alex one last time, what do you – what would you say to him?

GONZALES: I wish I could trade places with you. (Sobs) I wish I could trade places with you. I wish I could trade places with you. I wish it was me instead of you. I wish it was me instead of you but it can't – (sobbing continues) it happened the way it happened, but that's what I would tell him, I wish it was me. I wish it was me. I wish it was me that went and got that milk for the baby and everything, but I was home asleep. I wish I would have had something for him, to give him something (crying) but that's what I wish every day, I wish I would have told him, I wish it was me, I wish it was me, I wish it was me, not you. He was too young to die, too young to die. I've already lived my life (sobbing) but that's how it goes sometimes. (Sobbing continues) You know, you're not supposed to bury your kids, your kids are supposed to bury you, but it's okay. It's okay, (voice breaks) I'm gonna be okay. It's gonna – it's gotta be okay. (Crying continues) 'Cause all I got left is my daughters, and my son, and my other daughter, and that's it. But my world is crushed. (Crying) It's like I said, I'm not the same person. I hurt on the inside, but I try to keep that healing, try to keep that within myself, because I don't need to express myself a lot to the world, you know, of how much hurt I am. I have so much hurt [00:32:06] in my heart that I'm trying to heal but I can't. But I'm trying to – doing this good advocacy work, and continue doing it for a while, because that's what makes me feel good about myself. And making me feel proud for my son, to be proud of his mama – (sobs) what I'm doing for him. (Crying) And I'm not going to ever be happy until I have justice for him, (crying) or at least a law for my son, a law for – I'm going to make a law for him. I mean, that's the only way that I can make myself happy – to do what I'm doing. And I'm not going to stop here, I'm going to continue moving on forward. Forward and forward and forward until they can't stop me no more. Until I can't tell the story no more. Until something big happens, because it needs to be told, it needs to be told of what I'm going through. And what my family is going through (crying) that nobody could understand unless it happens to your family, you know, because I didn't want this to happen to my family. But they came into my world and busted it and I'll never be the same. (Crying)

But to stay strong and look to, look up to mentors like you, like Roger's mom, Ruth, like Miss Ramos. You know, with y'all that I talk to everyday or every other day, because I'm in contact with y'all and I – and that makes me feel good, that I'm in contact with victims that I could talk to, that can help me heal also, you know, like Miss Brenda Ramos, you, Sam, my lawyer – my – like Austin Justice Coalition, Chris Harris, you know, I have a lot of mentors out there that I look up to, every day, you know, that can help me get through this every day. And I try to – it's hard, but you have to continue and do what you gotta do, and just stay – what you, just stay, stay above what you are. And where you're at – where you're at right now. Yes, sir.

KIRSCH: Liz. I want – I just need, like I need to just say, you know, everything you're feeling, not just, like, right now, but with – with all of this, and over such a long time, all those feelings are, what you're supposed to be feeling, right? Don't – you know, it's – I can't even really – I mean, I can't understand right? But, what you're feeling is, what you should be feeling, because that's real –

GONZALES: Yeah.

KIRSCH: – right? So I just, I don't want you to be afraid of –

GONZALES: – But I don't also –

KIRSCH: – going through, right?

GONZALES: But also, but I also don't want people to think that, you know – I am human. I do break. We do break as humans beings, you know, we do crush, but that doesn't mean that – I'm not – that, um, that I want something bad or anything. That doesn't mean that, that it means, I'm just – I'm just hurt by this whole situation and I can't go to explain how bad (crying) I really am hurt, and that I want people to know that I'm really hurt, everybody here, but turning that hurt into – not anger, but turn into something good, positive, like advocate work. And that's what I'm trying to do. Trying to turn that negative anger that I got into something

positive with the advocacy – that advocate work that I do. Because that's what makes me happy. And I don't want, I don't want to be angry because by being angry it's going to kill me more faster than I know it. And I'm – I'm not angry. I just got to have faith and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that things will be – come out okay. That's all I got to do.

KIRSCH: Yeah. You mentioned, um, you mentioned making a law for, for Alex. And I wanted to – want to hear you talk about, you know, what are some of the changes that you feel need to change City of Austin and with Austin Police Department?

GONZALES: I think that the cops should be accountable for what they do to human beings like me. I think they should be accountable. Them cops, when they kill people like my son or, or the first time they that they kill, they need to take – just take them off the force and never be cops again, you know, or put this on their cop records forever because they don't need to be cops. Once they kill one time, they're going to think they're going to be able to kill again and again, and it's going to be okay. And it's not right. That's something that I'm really focusing on, on really putting on – on trying to get a cop fired, on never becoming a cop again, you know, that's something that's – I've been really seriously thinking about, you know, putting that law out there because that's, that's not good. Why are we putting bad cops back into our force, or back into our next neighborhood? That badge is to protect people. To protect. Not to kill nobody, not to murder nobody, but to protect our people in the community. The money that we give y'all to protect – not to kill us because you're in a rage or so – whatever, I don't know, or don't believe in going in protocol. That's what I think that I'm going to go after, right there, is fucking cops should not be allowed to be cops once they murder. I mean, murder – and something different is different, but murdering, that's one of the things that they need to have them cops be accountable for, for murder. Murder. Because they – my son had more than fifteen bullets in his body. More than fifteen. So you tell me that's not murder? Hell no, that is murder. Fifteen and above is murder, you know. People don't know how many shots they got in my son, I do, but I'm not going to say more than what I already said just now, you know?

KIRSCH: Yeah.

GONZALES: So you – you picture that on – if the shoes were flipped on the other way, picture your son getting shot that many times in front of you, in front of the world, in front of the video. You know? That's proof enough right there what they did. And people still think that it's innocent – that they're innocent? Bullcrap. Protocol. Protocol, and the City of Austin didn't do nothing. And you know what? That's why I want to sue them for all that they got, and every bullet that they put it to my son, because they ain't even called me, they ain't even apologize, they didn't even publicize nothing. So guess what? I'm coming after them now. That's why I'm coming after them, because nobody's called me to apologize or to check on me, how I'm doing. But that's okay because I got more advocates out of here more concerned about me, that I don't need the cops to. But that goes to show how concerned they really are. They better be scared and they better be worried because I'm coming after them. I ain't stopping, I'm not stopping.

KIRSCH: Liz, I um, you know, it's – it's two and a half years later. What do you think, you know, you mentioned they emptied – Serrano emptied his clip. I mean, Alex had a whole life that, you know, he wasn't allowed to live and that—

GONZALES: Yeah,

KIRSCH: —he should, you know, there's this whole life that – that he should have had, and that he could have had.

GONZALES: Yeah. And they took that from him.

KIRSCH: Yeah, they took it from him, right? I mean, what do you think, you know, you would be doing now and in the future, if they didn't kill him?

GONZALES: If you – he would be, like I said, he would be at UTI with his dad. I would be helping him with his baby while he was away because this is what he

wanted. He wanted to change his life around so bad for that baby that there was nothing stopping him, just like no stopping me. You know, people can be bad, yeah. But people can also do a 360, like, if it's changed your life because it hit reality – reality hit you, so, my son, reality hit him when he had that baby, he changed his whole life, wanted his whole life to be different, didn't want him to be nowhere. What he was around, we wanted to raise them the best that we could, then that's what he was going to be. And that's how I was going to be, you know, but for them – taking it from me has destroyed everything and it's taken everything from me. And I can't – (Sobs) – I'm trying to move forward because of what's going on, but it's hard. And his son is doing okay. You know, they're doing fine. It's just not being able to see him every day. That's okay. You know, I'll see him every once in a while, that's all right, they're doing fine also, but it's just him growing up without a father. The best father that he was going to have, the best father that he was going to try to be for his son. Because that's all he wanted was the best for him, and he told me and my husband one day, if something happens, Mom, I want you and Dad to take care of this boy for me, you know. I don't know why he said it, but he said it like that. And I promised him that I would take over and help him take care of that baby, because that baby needs a lot of love, especially what happened to him – for him to see his dad get shot. (Cries) That little boy is – but it's okay, he's gonna be okay.

That little boy is going through a lot of pain also, a lot of hurt, but we just got to pray with him and he's going to be okay, you know that's all I gotta pray is we're going to be all okay together one day. You know, we will. It will happen, it's just going to take time because we're all hurting in different kinds of ways right now. We're all hurting in different kinds of ways, and we just gotta learn how to heal within time. And that's what I'm expecting, is just to let it cool down a little bit and let it heal for a little bit, because that's what – I mean, a lot of people are hurting, like I said, for my son's loss. You know, not just me – Jessica, you know, the baby, they're hurting. I know they're hurting. So, I just got to let them go with their peace and, you know, get their comfort also, and let them know that they are – I know that they're in pain also, and I just got to go with the flow with it too, you know.

KIRSCH: And I know, you know, it's a long journey, for everybody it's a long healing journey and I'm really – I'm so grateful to have gotten to know you. And I, you know, I'm so happy that you are turning all of this into organizing and fighting for justice and I'm looking forward to being there with you. And yeah, is there – is there anything else that you know I haven't asked you that you want to tell the world?

GONZALES: No, I just want everybody to understand and know the pain and anguish that I'm going through every day, not seeing my son, not hearing his words, not saying, I love you, Mom. I miss you. (Crying) The city should be accountable for everything that they've done to my family and all the hurt that we have to go through every day. And the pain that we have to go through, the anguish every day, especially my husband, and my daughter, and myself, you know, nobody realizes what happens to the victims or what – what happens to the (crying) –

Because we disappear, because we don't want nobody to know what's going on, and how hurt, and how damaged that we are inside. (Crying) But we try not to let people show – show people, but it's hard, not to let people – show how hard it hurts inside, to kill a loved one. Until it happens to you, because you never can say, Nope, that won't ever happen to me, because it will happen to you. Until it does, then that's when you're going to understand the truth of it all. Because like I said, they busted my bubble and I'm learning so much by them busting my bubble, and becoming an advocate and doing all this type of work because of what they done to me. You know, I have to let – I have to turn my life around for the better. For myself, and for my son, and for the world, you know, that that's how we got to stick together as one. Together. You know, that's all I got to say.

And thank you so much, Sam. And I appreciate you because you've been so – you've inspired me, also, on a lot of things and on your story and, you know, and telling me about other people, too. You know, that, and you've been through there with me and you've seen what I see. We both got heart of what we – what we're into, and that's the kind of stuff that you need to be. And if you're in this advocacy work, you gotta have heart and believe in what you do. And once you have that heart and believe, then nothing can conquer you. But to just conquer the world from

their work, forward, you know what I'm saying? And that's how I see it now because of you, you know, and also because of Chris at Austin Justice Coalition. He showed me a lot of things, too – just letting things go and being happy and, and just moving forward because it's hard. But you got to, you gotta put one foot in front of the other to keep going forward and to not stay behind the world, because the world will leave you. While you're still back here, they're still moving forward, but you're trying to catch up. And I know what – you know what I'm talking about because you are in a world where everybody's just going faster, you're still stuck here, but you're trying to catch up and it's very hard because of the mental – and anguish that you're going through everyday. Every day. People don't understand that it's just not, it's just not something is going to go away. It's there, mentally, physically, forever. Forever. It will never go away. It could be forgotten but it will never go away, right here (points to temple), about what happens, you know? And that's the truth. You know that Sam.

KIRSCH: Absolutely. Liz, thank you so, so much for all those words you said, and for giving us your whole heart and your whole self in this interview. Thank you so much, Liz.

GONZALES: You're welcome. Love you. Love you, Sam.