



Reframing Gun Violence Transcript
March 29, 2023

0:03:01.3 Tanya Tucker: Good afternoon, everyone, or good morning, depending on where you are joining us from. Welcome. So glad that you could be with us today and join us for this very important conversation on reframing gun violence, wellbeing and narrative shift. I'm Tanya Tucker with the Full Frame Initiative, which is a national social change and social justice organization, and we are working to make this a country where everyone has a fair shot at wellbeing. Folks have already started, but please continue to introduce yourself in chat. We are joined by our ASL interpreters on the screen, closed captioning is also available via Zoom. We are going to have some dedicated time towards the end of the session for sort of a formal Q&A portion of the event, but I encourage all of you sort of throughout our time together, to share your thoughts, share your questions, build conversation with each other through chat, and we'll pull in questions as we go along and not just wait until the end of the session. So be as active in Chat as you'd like to be today.

0:04:41.0 TT: Before we dive into our session, I wanted to take a moment for a land acknowledgment to formally recognize the historical and continuing connection between indigenous peoples and their native lands. So I acknowledge that Washington DC, where I live and work, is the traditional territory of the Anacostan and the neighboring Piscataway and Pamunkey peoples, I acknowledge this legacy, as well as the ongoing struggles faced by the indigenous communities here in DC and certainly across the country for recognition and land ownership. We all have a responsibility to consider the legacy of colonialism in our history and as a nation. And I recognize the privileges we enjoy today because of colonialism and strive to understand and break down the systems that perpetuate these harmful patterns while building and supporting systems that are just. And so I hope that you all are taking a moment today to acknowledge your own native lands, where you stand, and from wherever you're joining us today.

0:06:10.8 TT: So first, thank you all for deciding to spend a little time with us today. I know time is a precious commodity for all of us. Unfortunately, we live in a country where no one is truly immune to gun violence. We're inundated daily with media coverage and stories, and we're coming into this event on the heels of yet another mass school shooting in Nashville and certainly every day, gun violence affects individuals, families, communities in every corner of the country. And the stories we tell, the stories we read and consume about gun violence have power. The Nigerian and British poet and novelist Ben Okri writes, beware of the stories you read or tell suddenly, at night, beneath the waters of consciousness, they are altering our world. And the stories media tells, they actually shape our perception of victims, of perpetrators of whole neighborhoods and communities and ultimately, these stories and narratives can reinforce harmful mental models and drive assumptions that can limit our access to well being.

0:07:50.9 TT: Power lies in framing the issues. Who gets to frame an issue, whose voices get heard and whose stories get told that's all power. And how we frame an issue helps us understand the causes as well as determine possible solutions for moving forward. So we're going to have a conversation today with some absolutely wonderful people about how we can actually begin to shift and advance new narratives and stories about gun violence that perhaps can lead to accountability, healing, and prevention. And so before we get to our wonderful speakers and conversation. I'd love to first find out a little bit about who's joined us today and what brings you to this virtual space today. So we've got a brief, very brief poll for you to respond to that should be up on your screen. We certainly recognize folks have many different identities, and in your whole selves there may be several of these options that apply to you and so I just ask that you pick one that is feeling the most relevant for you today. Please just take a couple of seconds so we can get a gauge of who's with us today.

0:09:20.9 TT: Oh, thank you, Christina. Christina put in the chat, you don't have to force and just choose one you can use multiple ones, thank you.

[pause]

0:10:16.7 TT: Alright, let's see the responses to our poll. Okay, lots of community advocates in our space, folks who've been impacted by gun violence, government, public sector, consumer of media stories aren't we all? Private sector, some journalists, storytellers, wonderful and putting this event together and, deciding on this topic, we knew it would appeal to a broad array of folks. So we just wanted to get a little handle on sort of the group that was gathered here today. So I am absolutely thrilled to be joined by four amazing leaders working to advance new narratives and shift power from media and institutions to survivors and impacted communities. We have three wonderful folks from the Philadelphia Center for Gun Violence Reporting. We have Maxayn Gooden, the Community Engagement Manager. Hi, Maxayn. Jim McMillan, who's the founder and director. Hi, Jim. Oronde McClain, who's the Credible Messenger Newsroom Liaison.

0:11:52.4 TT: Oronde, how are you? I hope you guys left some folks back on the team to do some work for an hour and 15 minutes while you guys are all joining me here today. Just a little bit about the Philadelphia Center for Gun Violence Reporting, it supports voices from the community through its Credible Messenger reporting program, and we're gonna hear a little more about that as we get into our conversation. It publishes research that explores the intersection of gun violence, impacted communities and the media and it supports and builds networks of journalists who believe we can all do better, make a difference, and stop the violence. So wonderful to have you three with us today. We also have Cheryl Thompson-Morton, who is the Black Media Initiative Director at the Center for Community Media at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at City University of New York.

0:12:55.8 TT: And in that role, she supports Black media outlets through training, research, convenings, and connecting them with financial resources, I think throughout her work and careers she's really focused on increasing equity in news media, thank you for joining us Cheryl and I know that my very short introductions of these wonderful people did not do them justice at all we could use the entire time we have for the event just going over their impressive bios. Hopefully you all have a chance to read their more fuller bios as part of the materials for this event and certainly as we get into our conversation, we'll learn more about them and what brought them to this important work. So welcome to you all and thank you again for being here.

0:13:55.6 TT: So I always like to start a conversation like this with grounding it in the why, right before we even get to the whats and, how we're working on the challenges and moving forward, what's the why that brings Cheryl, Maxayn, Oronde and Jim even to this event. So I'd love to start Maxayn and Oronde with you two because I know you have lived experience and personal stories that bring you to this work. So I'm wondering, Maxayn, if I could start with you, if you wouldn't mind, sharing a bit about your personal story and why you do this work.

0:14:50.6 Maxayn Gooden: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us, and I'm proud to be a part of this event today. To answer the question, my son, this handsome young man in the background if you could see his picture, was murdered in 2017. He was a senior at boys Latin on his way to college and went away for a Thanksgiving break to visit his sister in Harrisburg and

my son never came back the way that I sent him. And that took a lot away from me, however me being the person that I am, I turned that pain and just decided to push it into purpose. And so I just started dedicating myself to helping so many other moms in the community that have lost sons. I started to be a voice for so many of them that could not speak. I've done numerous work and spoken at the Soul Shots, portraits events. I am definitely an... I've done mentoring for young men.

0:15:53.2 MG: I've just thrown myself into the community when it comes to this issue. I joined PCGBR in 2000 and I think '21 as a Credible Messenger and through that I produced a project for Lasting Impact, which talks about how long after the cameras are off, how families, friends, and communities still have to deal with the loss of a loved one. After that news supporter has moved on to the next story, our lives are still impacted by losing our loved one. And then from that point forward, I decided, or Jim asked me to join the team as the Community Engagement Manager, which again, throws me out into being an advocate for others that wanted to share their story, but just didn't know how to. And so of course, me being who I am decided to hop on board and I've been here ever since and it's very rewarding for me, very rewarding...

0:16:57.0 TT: Thank you so much Maxayn. Oronde?

0:17:01.4 Oronde McClain: Hey, thanks everybody for coming. Like she said, my name is Oronde McClain and I started this work because at the age of 10, my mom moved me out to a good neighborhood, I was in a bad neighborhood. And April 3rd, 2000, I was 10 years old, I'm in the fourth grade, I got shot in the back of the head. I died for two minutes and 17 seconds. I was in a coma for six, seven weeks, and I had to learn how to walk, talk all over again. For example, I used to be right-handed. Now I'm left-handed. My whole right side is partially paralyzed and I'm a victim of gun violence. But I joined PCVR because I don't like people saying that we're victims. I think we're survivors and I joined... I did a Credible Messenger project with Jim because I was so angry at the world.

0:18:06.5 OM: I was so angry that I wanted to punish the whole world and through this project, I interviewed more survivors, doctors and public figures because I wanted to get their answers and that project changed my whole life. And Jim asked me to be a part of PCVR, and I'm now the newsroom liaison. So I go to different organizations, news organizations, have been all around the city to tell them about harmful reporting. For example, when the doctors didn't tell me I got shot in the head, I was watching... There's a popular station in Philadelphia, channel six. And it was flashing lights. It was something called Crime Fighters. It was flashing lights and was telling me about my picture, popped up and said two year old boy shot in the head. They never caught the person, if you know any information \$20,000 award. And right after that, I had a seizure. So I was telling Jim, listen, I wanna be a part of this because the news is terrible, it's so much yellow tape, bullets on the ground. It is hard for survivors and victims, even COVID victims that we don't wanna see that. So I joined this organization to help out.

0:19:51.1 TT: Thank you Oronde. Cheryl, I'm gonna come to you. What motivates you to do this work? What's your why?

0:20:03.0 Cheryl Thompson-Morton: Sure. So, my background, as you kind of said, Tanya first, thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here and be a part of this conversation. My background has really been focused on increasing equity in journalism in the industry and in making sure communities are accurately reflected and so that's taken me kind of on a bit of a journey all around

gun violence reporting into it. So my original work and my stomping grounds even today is in Philadelphia, in the greater Philadelphia area. And so, I did work, focused in Philadelphia in servicing people of color in Philadelphia, specifically improving our narrative around communities of color. And so, obviously in Philadelphia, gun violence is a big issue. And in communities of color, it's an even bigger issue because we are the most impacted.

0:21:10.0 CT: I eventually left Philadelphia and work in New York now and went to focus on Black media and I saw the way Black media covers crime, and it's very different, there's a lot of distinction, we've done some research about it. But there's more humanization, there's less coverage of incidental crime and when we cover those topics, we're talking about it, within a systemic context, and not just like these bad actors did this bad thing. And the humanization of the victims especially, we see much more. So, that brought me eventually into work. I now do work with Poynter. I've done some work with Philadelphia Gun Violence, reporting and have really been focused on what are the lessons we can bring from Black media into this space and also what is the context of how we got to this place of how we cover crime in a way that is so harmful and what lessons clues can that teach us? And what is the future? So yeah, that's kind of my realm into this space.

0:22:20.5 TT: That's great, you sort of teased the next question of, how do we get here? But Jim, I'd love to hear from you and your why of what motivates you to do this work, how did you come to this work?

0:22:36.8 Jim MacMillan: Well, thank you Tanya, and thanks to everybody out there today. First, I just wanna say I'm honored by my company on this panel, including my newer friends of the Full Frame initiative and all of you spending time with us. I see so many familiar names out there of busy people and really grateful that you're here with us right now, and of course to new friends as well. Especially, I just wanna say how great... Share, how grateful I am to Maxayn and Oronde and some other partners we have them in the community, people with the ultimate authority who put their trust and confidence in this work. Maxayn and Oronde, I could spend the whole session telling you about how they amaze me and give me strength every day. And it's important to me this is hard work and I can't do it without you.

0:23:21.7 JM: To answer your question, how did I get here? I mean, on some levels it's kind of obvious, good fortune and privilege and maybe a little hard work. I've spent 40 years in some related fields, at first, in the trenches. I came into this as a newspaper photographer for almost 25 years, 17 of those here in Philadelphia, and most of those on the Breaking Newsbeat. And when you're a breaking news photographer in Philadelphia, that means that you cover a lot of gun violence. Over those years, I pulled up in about 2000 shooting scenes, and that's maybe even a modest estimate, and still only about 10% of the people that were shot during those 17 years here, and I always had my doubts, but then the next thing that happened was then I found myself in this sort of mid-career in the Ivory Towers, I won a big journalism award, and since then, my life has been filled with faculty appointments and fellowships and residencies.

0:24:21.6 JM: And the real benefit for me and for this work is that it filled my life with more critical perspectives on journalism than you get while you're sort of on the hamster wheel everyday. And then finally, the third leg of the stool, better late than never, was that I got engaged in the communities that were actually impacted. To be honest, I sort of got roped in it first, and it's the best thing that ever happened to me, I like to tell the origin story, that may take a moment about 15 years

ago, I was teaching a trauma journalism course at Temple University here in Philadelphia, and I invited Dr. Dorothy Johnson in spite of Mothers in Charge it's one of our city's leading violence prevention groups to talk about the trauma and experience of working with journalists, she had also lost her colleague to gun violence about 20 years ago now.

0:25:05.1 JM: And I said that thing you always say, when she left the room, I said, "Thank you so much for coming and let me know if I can ever return the favor." And she must have gone right to her car and texted back five things I could do for her. [laughter] So, I wound up, since then I've been volunteering for about 10 or 12 years, I've been on the board for a bit, I've learned so much about leadership from Dr. Dorothy, but I also, as you might imagine, have learned so much more at their conferences, they had a couple of national conferences they called the Cost of Violence Conference and they've... Even in other events, the experience is infused in all of their events, even their galas, even their celebrations or learning experiences, and they've even invited me into some grief support meetings, and client intake meetings for the grief support services.

0:25:55.1 JM: But of course, what happens is I take away much more than I can ever give back and taking all of those elements there I am... There, I was, suddenly at the nexus of journalists on ground level, some of whom still remember me, even though I've been out for a while. And scholars, even though I'm not one of them, but who seem to like working with me and those in the community who sometimes grant me trust, I guess maybe because they've been around for a while now. So I feel really incredibly fortunate as you might imagine, but also responsible to do something and this is what we're doing. The last thing that brought me here today, of course, is that I was invited to the Full Frame Initiatives Wellbeing Summit a few months ago and I'm excited about where that may lead us as well.

0:26:34.7 TT: Wonderful, thank you, you're one of my favorite new friends, Jim, so thanks for being here. So I mentioned at the top of the event about FFI and really what guides us, what we call our North star, is really making this a country where everyone has a fair shot at wellbeing. And we know we're not that country now because it's actually racism, sexism, lots of other othering and oppressions that are just actually baked in right to the design of our systems, to our structures. And that's made it easy for some to access, wellbeing and drastically reduced access for others. And so I imagine we're not all here today because, if we could... There's just a couple of journalists who are getting this wrong, and if we just worked with them, we'd all be good, if that were the case, there wouldn't be a center.

0:27:43.5 TT: You wouldn't be doing your work, Cheryl, so I'm interested in... So that tells me that this is a systemic issue and there really isn't a system that gets a pass in the country when it comes to sort of undermining, individual and community wellbeing and so I'm wondering, so how did we get here and what has been sort of the history of reporting on gun violence and what does that look like and how folks kind of built on that to kind of get us to where we are today that we even say, "Hey, we need to be doing this differently" and we need to refrain and reshape this. So Cheryl, I'm wondering if I can come to you for a little primer on the history of how we got here and sort of the evolution of gun violence reporting.

0:28:38.4 CT: Sure, and I'll try to be as brief as possible, there's a lot of places to go. I think one of the first things to be aware of in case... I know we're not all journalists in the room, is that most people get their information needs met through TV, the main vehicle people get their news from is the television, and so the way that broadcasts tells stories about crime is particularly important as a

result. The modern broadcast, as we know it, it's really an invention of the late '60s so it's a fairly recent phenomena. I know some of us were alive in that, [laughter] period of time, so it's within our lifetime that this happened, we had the advent of eyewitness news and action news, which I'm sure pretty much everyone here is familiar with, and the idea of both of them was to move from a model where someone's sitting at a desk sharing the stories of the day, to being out in the community, capturing action. Unfortunately, as opposed to being out in the community and being a part of the community, the main way that broadcasters filled their time was by listening to the police radio waiting for a crime to happen, going out there recording the crime scene tape, the bullets, the blood, the chalk outline.

0:30:10.6 CT: And the reason that happened is because it was a really efficient thing to cover and it also feeds on a lot of our feelings of... When people are afraid they're more likely to engage it's a very powerful emotion and it's also cheap to cover. And so for both of these outlets, when they saw this... When they changed this model, they went from modest... What's the right term modest viewership to hop in the charts, just immediately saw that happen. So it's a very profitable model. But when you think about the audiences that or the business model of broadcast, it's about selling to advertisers and who were advertisers trying to reach in this period of time, it was not inner city communities, they were trying to reach, usually people who lived in the suburbs, people who are usually white, are more affluent than the broader population of the city.

0:31:19.7 CT: And so as you saw things evolve in broadcast of covering weekend fairs in the community or parades or things like that, that would happen in communities outside of the city. But the coverage of crime would mainly happen within the cities and so it created a picture of in which, inner city communities, which tended to be Black or Browner were crime ridden that there were really no good things happening in these communities and painted a very different picture of communities outside of the city. And what we saw historically throughout time is that, there is a link between the way media covers the communities and disinvestment. So in the '60s when we saw all of the coverage about the riots, the race riots, we saw as a result, there was historic disinvestment in the communities, which led to less wellbeing, led to more poverty, which we know is linked to increased crime.

0:32:31.8 CT: So it actually made communities less safe. And we similarly saw this in the '90s with this idea of the super predator. And that young Black and Brown men were going to become more violent and take over and the crime bills of the 90s that about juvenile lifers. And so we know that there is a cause and effect, where the coverage that we are producing can lead to worse outcomes for our communities as opposed to making them more safe. So that's just a little context as to how we got here.

0:33:10.9 TT: Thank you, Cheryl, it has me thinking of why we never talk about systemic change as just systems in a silo. So, right, it's so interconnected and the media role in... As you said, how that was linked to disinvestment in certain communities and how it shapes our picture of not just the places, but the people who live there and what we attribute to them. Jim, anything you wanna add to this picture of how we got here and what's in place that keeps that status quo?

0:33:54.0 JM: Thanks again, Tanya. And thanks Cheryl for setting that up. So I've had the great fortune of being in the same space with her a couple of times, and that outline is just priceless. The first thing I wanna say... I wanna note for us of course, with respect to all of my former and new colleagues, we see your great gun violence prevention reporting, we see the reporting on solutions.

We see evidence-based reporting, and perhaps most importantly, community informed reporting. Some great examples, WHYY that here, public media here in Philadelphia, they now have two gun violence prevention reporters. The Trace does great in fact they provide incredible public service reporting, both nationally and now they have a local bureau with three people here in Philadelphia, and they have others in Chicago.

0:34:42.4 JM: Helen Ubinas at the Philadelphia Inquirer writes these incredible survivor stories. Bill Anderson has a Save Our Streets program at Fox 29, and the Billy Penn news site has gun violence prevention on their primary news category menu on their website so there are great things going on. I also wanna say that I know firsthand as I explained, it's demanding, traumatic, uncomfortable, work and often feels very thankless but maybe this is a good time to foreshadow, I'm also going to talk about our new research on harmful reporting, and there's much too much of it, but I'm gonna hold that for now. But for now, to answer your question more directly, I can offer some free... Sort of bring what Cheryl did down to the ground, because that's where I was, I was in the trenches and I didn't come from journalism school.

0:35:30.0 JM: So that meant learning in newspapers when I started my career learning on the job, learning from the people, and frankly in my generation, the guys who came before me who looked just like me. And what I've now come to understand in hindsight, it's much easier, is that there are these incredibly powerful perverse incentives to do things the way that we do. We treat breaking news like we're a cowboy. We had licenses to drive in like Batman, it's a rush. I'm gonna say it feels great, you think you're just doing the greatest job. Police indoctrination is incredible it was a generation before me that the police actually handed out badges to news photographers in Philadelphia. In my generation, they gave me a special pass to the headquarters so that I could come and go that most journalists didn't get.

0:36:17.2 JM: I was the guy that was out there so often they let me inside the yellow tape, you get a little bit drunk on that too and the power in the newsroom is enormous. I did this work that now... That I thought was helpful, but I now learned is harmful, and I found it on front pages, hanging on the walls of the newsrooms it brought me awards and bigger assignments. But most importantly is just the belief, I believe from the bottom of my heart that I was providing the best public service, that I was doing the right thing because of all these incentives, I was working so hard because I care, because I love this city, and because I thought I was making a difference. But it's so obvious in hindsight, I was largely misinformed because I wasn't listening to the communities that I was covering, that I was parachuting into the stakeholders, the people whose lives are at stake. So now, right now, right now today, every day in Philadelphia, there are people I look at and I think I was just like you they're getting up in the morning, they're working hard because they care. They believe that they're helping and in many cases, they're doing a great deal of harm, but it's going to be a tall order to change that culture.

0:37:33.0 TT: Yeah, thanks Jim. So speaking of, really centering community and those impacted by gun violence, I wanna turn back to Maxayn and Oronde to talk a little bit about the Credible Messenger piece of the work of the center and what that is, and what impacts you've seen, and really how, that work is different from sort of the, traditional reporting we see and kind of, the harms that causing. And basically whoever gets to their mute button first to unmute, gets to talk first.

[laughter]

0:38:31.6 OM: Okay, okay I'll go first.

0:38:33.1 TT: Oronde wins.

0:38:33.3 OM: It was a great experience. So like I said, I was angry I got a piece of paper, and I wrote all the stuff that was wrong with me tried to commit suicide 22 times, partially paralyzed on the right side, journalists doing harmful, reporting, everything, blaming politicians, blaming the doctors. And I was paired up with Cheryl, not Cheryl, Ms. Greg from WHYY and I said, "listen, we need to do this, we need to exploit all these people, all these politicians." And she like, what are you, why are you doing this? And I'm like, because I got shot at the age of 10, I'm mad and they need to pay. And she like, "Okay, but this is not how you should do it." But they let me do it and I interviewed a doctor, a couple politicians and some survivors, and they all said the same thing. Like, "Why are you so upset? We didn't shoot you" And, I had to sit back and think like, yeah, you're right and when I tried to reach out to these survivors, some of them was like, they said, "You are not gonna exploit my story" One guy he said, "You're not gonna exploit my story."

0:40:11.0 OM: I'm not talking to you" And I really had to think like, you know what? I can't be like a reporter, I can't be like the rest of those people. I need to come with a different angle and I talked to him and I told him my story and he said, "Okay, I will work with you" And when I was talking to the politicians and the doctor and they said, "Well, I became a politician because somebody got shot or somebody in my family was impacted by gun violence. I wanna make a change" So that made me rethink the whole project, and it made me like be a bigger person, a better person. And I tell Jim this all the time, maybe this Credible Messenger project changed my whole life and it did change my whole life because now I'm meeting different people and I am like just saying this is incredible, this 47 minute documentary changed other people lives, changed my life in the making, and I'm sharing it to the whole world. And it's like, this is a blessing.

0:41:24.7 OM: And the people that I'm talking to, they like, "Well, how did you get shot at?" It is giving me more opportunities, opening the doors for more things. Now, when I became the newsroom liaison, I'm actually in the meeting with the Inquirer, with Channel 10. Imagine a survivor, a person that got shot is in the meeting with these people that are printing the papers, going on the news, and they're really listening. And I'm like, "Oh, wow, this is incredible and they're really listening to me."

0:42:00.0 TT: That's great. Maxayn what's this Credible Messenger work mean to you?

0:42:07.6 MG: It means the world, it's ooh, just number one, my project Lasted Impact was amazing, I showed it at so many different places, schools and how it just opens up the conversation in a safe space. So many people are walking around with so much pain and so much hurt and don't have a safe space to share it. And I remember showing my film at, West Catholic High School, to the entire student and staff body. And I remember afterwards the teacher came up to me and he said to me, he said, "You don't know how much this meant to me and how much it has helped me" He said, "I lost a student three years ago" He was like, "And I carried this pain with me, but this opportunity allowed me to just be able to see this film to, heal to be able to understand it's okay" And in that moment I'm like, this Credible Messenger project is just so amazing because it helps people that are in the community that sees these projects and I feel like communities are walking around traumatized, so if these projects can help heal them, that's amazing, we need that.

0:43:25.7 MG: And also being a part of this project, it allows me to... Let's be honest, when it comes to our Black and Brown youth that are shot to death. The first narrative is that, oh, what were they doing? Where were they at? Things of that nature. When my son was murdered, my first thing was my son was a great student, he was where he was supposed to be, he was not doing anything wrong. It was just at the wrong place at that wrong time because of that other person, so my first thing was, we're going to first, let's make sure that this narrative, this story of my son, everyone knows the real story. So that was my first thing, and I think from me being such a fighter with that, to be honest, news people started coming to me and wanted to share the story of my son, the positive things that he did, the things that I was doing in the community, I remember, I don't know if she's still with the Inquirer, but Heather Khalifa had reached out and my son actually had a four page story front page in the Inquire. So being a part of this project, again, allows me to help moms that don't have a voice, don't have the strength to share that narrative of their child. So being a part of this project is just... Is healing for the community, is healing for me, and it just helps so many others so I think this Credible Messenger project is amazing, absolutely amazing.

0:44:48.5 TT: We've got a question from the audience you wanna know, like, "Okay, how can I see your films that you guys developed both Maxayn and Oronde, are they on the Center's website?"

0:45:05.0 OM: Yes, yes.

0:45:06.0 TT: Okay, we'll put the website link in the chat and also, and follow up to everyone. Jim, can we come to you to talk a little more about the center? And I know you mentioned sort of some fairly new research that you all put out about the harms, can you talk about that a little bit?

0:45:32.8 JM: Yes, thanks again, everyone, this I wanna follow up on everything Maxayn and Oronde were saying too, but I'll answer your question. So we launched the Philadelphia Center for Gun Violence Reporting two years ago, the mission in my mind at first was to explore the hypothesis, the changing the way that journalists and news organizations reporting gun violence could actually prevent shootings and save lives and I'm still interested in that, but our research collaborative has helped refine that question, that work to lead us to be more focused on harmful reporting practices. In the big picture now we say we're working to... Our mission is that we're working to define with the most empathetic, ethical, and impactful reporting would look like. In terms of ingredients overall at the center briefly, we organize this community reporting project to shift power to people with lived experience as you've been hearing.

0:46:23.3 JM: We also have a professional development program intended to support journalists who are already covering gun violence, but, may not have the same stakes in the community to help them learn how to build relationships and earn trust. And we have this research collaborative, as I said, helping identify harmful reporting practices. And now in terms of where we are, our next steps are, we're working on... We're focused on implementing what we've learned and synthesizing all those programs for maximum impact and sustaining the center. I can talk about all of those things, but yes, the biggest news is our new research, we have a research collaborative led by our director of research.

0:47:01.6 JM: Dr. Jessica Beard is a widely published public health researcher, including with great focus on gun violence, gun violence prevention, and the role of the media. She's also a trauma surgeon at Temple University Hospital here in Philadelphia, where she treats firearm...she saves

lives. She treats firearm injured patients every day, the nights that she works. She's a professor at the med school as well and a Stoneleigh Foundation fellow. So the study we published a few months ago... And they named me as a co-author, but I'm not on the level of research analyst that my co-authors are, I was mostly a collaborator, facilitator, administrator, but it's titled... Well, it's all in the title, "Like I'm A Nobody: Firearm Injured People's Perspectives on News Media Reporting about Firearm Violence."

0:47:57.7 JM: It was published in the Journal of Social Science and Medicine, Qualitative Research and Health. The research was... It's qualitative research study that included interviews with 26 firearm injured patients at Temple University Hospital within two months of their injuries. When they returned for... When after they were saved, went home, returned for clinical care, they were invited to opt into research interviews and asked about their views specifically on episodic news reporting not that solutions reporting, but the other end of the spectrum that harmful reporting, that fear-mongering reporting, that reporting that's often informed only by police narratives and no community voices. And the response was pretty powerful. They said that the sort of reporting left them feeling scared, that it left them feeling hopeless, and left them feeling dehumanized. They also said that this reporting, they felt sometimes put them at risk by identifying what hospital they've been brought to and where they could be found, and as Maxayn, I think alluded to, they talked about the harm to their reputation.

0:49:03.9 JM: And this is me just talking for a minute, not the research, but I've often... It looks to me as if police treat almost all victims as suspects with rare exceptions and as long as journalists follow the police narratives, that's what we see in the journalism as well. So people feel like they suddenly have to defend where they were and what they were doing to their loved ones just because they got shot. There were other hints, less clear signals around the risk of news reporting leading to gun acquisition and of course, there are endless studies that show that where there are more guns, there will be more gun violence. At the other end of the spectrum, there was no evidence of any beneficial value to this reporting... Of this reporting to those... Research subject to those were interviewed.

0:49:53.6 JM: A couple of other interesting points. We asked them if their story had been covered in the news. Half of them said no that tracks exactly with our previous research it wasn't done under the banner of the center, but that some of the same folks collaborated on also led by Dr. Beard that showed that half of the gunshot victims in the city are never reported in the news. And that might not be the impression that you always get from journalists, that half of the victims never got one mention once in one news organization based on our research team's analysis of reporting from the gun violence archive. And maybe most interestingly, of the 26 people who were or were not covered in the news, not one of them had been contacted by a journalist so I implore everybody to learn more about this and I can talk a little bit later perhaps about our theory of change and how we think that research might play a role in changing the practice. But for now, that study is on our homepage, it's pcgvr.org or just search The Philadelphia Center for Gun Violence Reporting, I think it's the second item down on the homepage now and there's also, since it came up, a tab for the Credible Messenger Reporting Project and if you click that, you'll find Maxayn and Oronde's videos as well.

0:51:09.3 TT: Awesome, thank you, Jim. So Cheryl, how do we change this? What does that work look like and what does your work look like to shift this reporting and reframe this issue in the media?

0:51:31.3 CT: Yeah. So similarly to the team that I have the pleasure of being on the call with, I also am focused on working with newsrooms to think about how they cover crime broadly, not just gun violence differently. So I am an adjunct professor with the Poynter Institute and I'm co-leading a class called Transforming Crime to Public Safety Coverage. And this class is aim to take 25 newsrooms per year through a change management process of thinking through, what does it mean to actually produce reporting that keeps communities safe or that makes community safer, especially those who are most impacted. So it starts by having newsrooms think about, is the way that we're covering crime actually leading to people being safer? And there's a lot of evidence that no, it does not, especially for those who are most impacted. And so what would it look like to create a new mission statement or create a mission statement to begin with of why we cover crime and how we cover crime, and how do we change the policies in the newsroom because and that sounds easy.

0:52:54.1 CT: It's easy to put it on paper, but it's much more difficult to actually enact that change in an organization that has been doing things consistently for a period of time, especially when there are other incentives that incentivize the previous type of reporting. When we think about the types of stories that get the most clicks, that get the most attention, they are usually stories about the most salacious types of crime. And Jim brought up the fact that a lots of study show that only about 50% of crimes get covered there's a lot of reasons for that. One, I mean, there's a capacity issue, we can't cover everything happening more likely than not, but also when we look at the types of crimes that get covered the most, it's typically when there is like a benevolent victim or one that we view as benevolent. So those are children, elderly people, women and affluent people those are kind of the people who have their crimes covered more often than not, and also wider than the global population.

0:54:09.1 CT: And so when we look at the stories that are covered like Maxayn bringing up the point of like, "I had to tell people my son wasn't doing anything wrong," Because if people don't do that, their story doesn't get covered, or if it does, there are very harmful stereotypes that come into play despite the fact that there are very few things you can do when your life should be the... What you have to give up to repay whatever debt. So that's the work that I currently do on really trying to help newsrooms practically put the steps in place in order to cover communities in a way that leads to greater safety and greater wellbeing as opposed to the current model, which only exacerbates issues, makes people feel less safe, and leads to, as Jim said, more guns in the community, which is not a thing that leads to more safety.

0:55:15.4 TT: Right, there's a question from the audience on how we can hold media accountable while also ensuring we don't label media as bad or lying. And particularly in our country's context today where media is under fire and folks have waged war, it's... The media message has to align with particular points of view and all of that so how do you hold media accountable and not sort of the label of bad and ill intent. Like you said, Jim, when you were talking, "Hey, I thought I was doing the right thing and doing good work, and then I realized I was doing harm, so"

0:56:17.6 JM: Yeah, if I know I was just talking about, I think this is kind of the sweet spot for me if I may jump in again. So, I get so...because I get this question all the time. So the first thing I always tell people is to, and forgive me if there's some people with deep expertise in this audience, but globally, I tell people to educate yourself first. Earn your authority, learn about gun violence prevention, and develop some media literacy so you know really know what you're saying and then

raise your voice. One way, in my opinion anyway, in my experience, journalists are incredibly accessible on Twitter. And some are so overwhelmed with feedback that they can't be many, many are very responsive.

0:57:00.3 JM: If you don't know how, learn Twitter search to search profiles and find the people you're looking for. In general I find in this engagement work, probably universal, never go in and tell people you're doing it wrong, but you'll probably prompt a conversation by asking people why they do it the way they do and then you might find some common grounds. Alternatively, should you come in to news organizations from the top of boycotts or something, I don't know. I've got no experience in that area, but I've heard others say that. But one another thing that I do that you can use once you're in contact to engage a journalist, and this is sort of a part of trick and I'll confess that I'm stealing it from Kelly McBride at the Poynter Institute, where Cheryl now works, and she's one of our most prominent media ethicists, and she has this exercise where she asks journalists, why did you become a journalist?

0:57:52.0 JM: And most of us have some heartfelt stories and there are some cliches we like to... Some are about power and some are about responsibility. We write the first draft of history, or we want to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable and hold leaders accountable and tell people stories and then turn back and ask how episodic reporting serves those ambitions and watch their expressions because they're... And this would've been me, they're suddenly lost for words and often directly concede, no it doesn't. And I don't... I think that there's good ways to start conversations and once you get in them, it's probably just as valuable to listen as it is to talk.

0:58:35.0 TT: Yeah, audience is interested in how can other communities utilize Credible Messengers without having them on teams as tokens and props?

0:58:57.0 JM: I'm hesitating over what that question might imply, I hope it's not the worst. But so there are... I'd say two things about Credible Messengers. One is that it's the language of people with generally extensive lived experience and unique expertise to play a role in gun violence prevention. So we adopted it. It's often used by violence interrupters. And I guess there's always the risk when you're trying to connect communities that some can get exploited. And we try really very hard to address that. And if there's a more specific criticism I'd be interested in hearing it and as well as what anybody else thinks.

0:59:41.9 CT: For me, I think you can take that question as Jim said, two ways. But I think, Credible Messengers are a very important piece in many different ways just like Jim said, as far as violence interrupters, the Credible Messengers also are always used, because we have a... We can be relationable to the community. We can be relationable to victims and co-victims. That's very important. They are very more comfortable and open to speak with us because we have shared experiences. When it comes to the newsrooms, example, we did a workshop with journalists and everything, I think it was last year we did it. And a lot of times when they report, they don't know how communities feel, but at that moment, they learned how people in the communities feel when they come out to report on shootings. And a lot of them left with a lot of valuable information and kind of tried to adjust how they do reporting. So I think Credible Messengers are a very important piece when you want people to work in the community that can help the community. Because if I don't know you or you have no experience with what I'm going through, I really don't wanna talk to you. I really don't even wanna hear what you have to say.

1:01:09.2 JM: If I could jump in to just follow up briefly. I see the follow up question that wasn't the intention and we took the... And of course we're never above approach and we always wanna learn more. I don't know if it would make sense to reframe the question around how to prioritize the Credible Messengers aren't tokenized, for example. And I have thoughts about that, but it's actually not in our sort of official practice. And I'm realizing that it's such a good question that it's stumped me that we'll have to work... I'll have to work on a more coherent response. In the meantime, we have the sort of... For what it's worth, the accountability of the people that we... All of this work is based from the very first meeting, from the very first act on bringing frontline stakeholders together to inform this. And that seems like a good first step. And if we're doing anything wrong, we all wanna hear more about it but it's a good challenge and I appreciate it.

1:02:05.6 OM: Oh, I can just follow up because a couple people ask me that question as well. But it's for people that wanna tell their story because the news told it wrong. So is not like... Is a application process that we go by and if they don't wanna tell their story, we're fine by that too. But it's a lot of people that wanna tell their story 'cause it was told wrong.

1:02:34.3 MG: And just to jump in as well. I think, we also need to train journalists on trauma. Journalists have a lot of trauma as well. You think about what they're doing, they're often going to cover the worst thing that happen in our community. And there is very little discussion amongst journalists until recently about the trauma that they have experienced and actually unpacking that. So it's hard to really know and expect people to deal with trauma well. For others when they're not dealing with it for themselves, and so I think there's a need for training on being trauma informed... In dealing with trauma both for self and for others.

1:03:25.1 JM: If I could add a bit to that as well, I think it might be worth sort of filling in another perspective. Which is I had some... If you might imagine, some personal... Or I think the therapist call it occupational exposure to a great deal of trauma in my work on the Crime Beat, and I also covered terrorist attacks in... Spent a year in Iraq covering the war. So I learned some things firsthand, but then I have completed two sort of mid-career journalism fellowships focused on journalism and trauma about 15 years ago and taught one of the first courses. And that's just for context, but what I wanna tell you is that the vibe then among other journalists like talking about trauma was this incredibly new thing that we hoped could be infused into newsrooms.

1:04:09.7 JM: And now 15 years later, I've been sort of cross-examined by grant making panels on what our trauma plan is for participants, which is incredible. I even saw a... Well, after mass shootings that make national news, sometimes we see a young journalist speak up and have their doubts about how journalists are behaving in those cases. And I saw one young journalist say, "Why aren't journalists leaning back on their trauma journalism education from school?" And I guess, I would be understandable that she wouldn't know that that didn't exist until 15 years ago and it's pretty unusual now. And then, I tell you, just like in the big picture, the same has been true at the center.

1:04:58.9 JM: So I've gone into this work with the benefit of two trauma journalism fellowships and that's worth something. But we're a lean and nascent startup and I hadn't systematized everything, but at this point we now have a trauma trainer working with us. Professor Ivan Latti at Temple University has been a great partner in our work since she got there a year ago. And she has completed both of the Dart Center Trauma Fellowships, one in reporting, and one in journalism education. And so we have an event coming up tonight and another one coming up next month

where she's going to kick off with a trauma talk. And at our very, very first event, we actually did it right, and we're doing it better in person events than with the Credible Messengers today, but that's changing. But our first event we kicked off with a trauma talk by a doctor from the health department here in Philadelphia. And we're working hard to fill in the blanks to make sure we do better across all of our programs.

1:06:09.8 TT: So we have about 10 minutes left. I've got three questions here from the audience, so I'm gonna try to get to all three and get as quick of responses as we can. So one is around what you all are thinking about sensationalized true crime media content that has become so popular over the past few years. And they've really been a major means of people consuming narratives about crime. So what role do major media companies like Netflix, HBO play in this conversation around shaping narratives that could be positive for communities?

1:06:57.8 CT: I can kick us off here and I'll try to be quick. I think there is both good and bad that happens with those documentaries. There's a lot of really positive things that have come out of that, showing the way media has gotten it wrong, showing the way that police have misused their power, etcetera. There is a general theme with quite a bit of true crime reporting in that it can spend much more focus on the killer or the perpetrator and not give much context to the victim as opposed to pushing forward the narrative. And I know that has been a major critique and I think that's something that some people are trying to address in the true crime genre. But others are leaning heavily into that.

1:07:52.4 CT: I think we saw that with the Dahmer Show and what came out of that, even though I think the intent of that show was also to show the victims there's just a way that some of these perpetrators become the story. So yeah, I think there's a part that this plays as well but I think there's a good and bad on that front.

1:08:21.1 TT: Thank you. There's a question we've been talking about. The trauma for those impacted by gun violence, survivors, the communities, the reporters, media, journalists themselves. Audience wants to know how is healing a part of the process?

1:08:53.8 OM: I can take a quick on that.

1:08:55.0 MG: We were fighting. I'm gonna let you slide. Go ahead.

[laughter]

1:08:55.4 OM: Stuff like this is healing. The Credible Messenger is healing. Doing the work and talking to the journalist is healing like me as a survivor. I'm trying to change the narrative, that's healing. It might not be the whole healing, but it's healing for me. And I talk to survivors and victims and they wanna join what I'm doing, so I see they see the healing.

1:09:20.1 TT: Maxayn, go ahead.

1:09:23.1 MG: Yeah, he said it all basically. Me helping others have helped me in so many ways. Like when my son was murdered, I took off just doing what I do. And what I will say is when I talk to other co-victims that share their story a lot, I always help them with the check-in. I ask them, I said, "When you share your story, how does it leave you feeling? If it doesn't leave you feeling

empowered and if it leaves you feeling drained and going back to that place, be careful how often you're sharing your story." Because a lot of times as co-victims, we want people to know about our loved ones but you gotta think about, "When I share my story, how is it making me feel?" And so for me, as I share my story, I don't go back into that place. It just keeps pushing me forward to healing me even more, to helping others heal. So it's just... For me, all of this work is very healing where with some others, it may not be.

1:10:21.3 TT: Thank you. Another question here let's see. We here at Californians for Safety and Justice have tried to think through media trainings to train reporters but have found it very difficult to get reporters, media to see the hook that would make it worth their while to attend a training. So do you have any thoughts or strategies on how we might try that outreach to reporters again?

1:10:52.7 JM: So I can share my experiences, which might be helpful. I think the secret sauce is in bringing people together, rather than telling them... And I would say... I share very little of my personal opinion, except that we need to do more of what we're doing. So I think sharing the power of bringing people into spaces, I mean the 101s, the building community, putting a meal in somebody's belly doesn't hurt, acting like you care, asking questions rather than telling people... Like I said, rather than telling people that they're doing it wrong. That's the key to everything we do. And yet it's been very hard work or maybe at the same time, this is kind of off the cuff, but to let them go, if they're really pushing back against you, they don't want to hear it. They're not ready.

1:11:46.6 JM: I guess that's a question of picking... It's not even picking your battles because they're not all battles but looking for your opportunities, looking for allies, looking for collaborators. The bottom line for me is asking questions rather than telling people what to do and bringing them together. You know that first event we had before that we formed the center, we called it our Community Conversations Day that I mentioned, we started off with a trauma talk. Another thing we did was we had a speed networking event with journalists and people with extensive lived experience. And they sat down for 15 minutes each, but looked to each other in the eye, heard their voices, but sure, they got to ask questions and get some answers, but they saw people across the table and not monolith or not focus groups and so I'm probably missing some bits, but those are some things that have been working for us.

1:12:41.4 TT: Thanks. So I wonder if each of you and 30 seconds, 30 to 45 seconds, what would be sort of like the last word piece of advice or whatever it is that you'd like to leave this audience around this issue of reframing gun violence? Cheryl looks ready. Cheryl's like, "I'm always ready for this question."

[laughter]

1:13:16.8 CT: I was like, "I'm giving you the wrong face then."

1:13:22.3 TT: Oh, sorry.

[laughter]

1:13:24.4 CT: I know most of us in this room are not journalists and so just be more mindful of the type of coverage you're engaging with and engage with the content that you wanna see, I think is good advice. Just being more mindful of what narratives are going out and what you can do via

your eyeballs. Because if the eyeballs decrease [chuckle] they'll move on to something else. Peer pressure is quite a powerful tool.

1:13:57.0 TT: Thank you.

1:14:02.8 JM: I can jump in again. I might add that we... I can talk about this all day, but we have a proof of concept by the way. I always start this, but I'm old enough to remember when journalists covered incidents of suicide, like novelty. I'm old enough that I was part of that harmful reporting as well. And then starting with a landmark study in the 1990s, and 100s since then, we've learned that local news coverage of incidents of suicides leads to contagion, leads to copycat suicides and causes more people to die. Over the years, throughout those decades, the standard practice has changed. And now the Associated Press style book, one of the main guide books for journalists says, "Do not report an incidence of suicide. Report on the issue, report on solutions, maybe report on trends." And they do make room for exceptions. And so that's how I look at the future of reporting an incidence of gun violence. No, don't do it. You're hurting people.

1:14:58.3 JM: And maybe we need to refine that conversation a little bit longer. But the bottom line is, we changed the practice before around suicide, and we're going to change the practice around community gun violence to stop the harm and to protect the fruitful reporting.

1:15:14.3 TT: Thank you, Jim.

1:15:15.5 OM: I would just say watch what you say to people. Always try to do a follow up story before you do the story. Don't leave the survivor or the victim hanging or the family and think about what would you... How would you feel before you ask the question.

1:15:33.8 TT: Thanks, Oronde. Maxayn.

1:15:37.3 MG: I think my last statement would be just do everything with love, compassion, and purpose. I had to write this down. Don't give up for what you feel is the right thing for humanity. When we can look at each other as human beings, I think we do things in the right way.

1:15:58.3 TT: Thank you, thank you, thank you. So I will leave us with words from another writer. "Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity." And I'll add my own. Stories can reinforce assumptions and biases that undermine our wellbeing, but stories can also show people and communities in their full frame and work with our universal drive for wellbeing. And I think through all of the work that all of you are doing each day, that's the shift that you're making in the stories that we consume, tell and hear. So thank you very much for the wonderful work that you're doing. Thank you everybody for joining us today. Have a great one.