

Episode 73-- Gun Violence and the Murder of Black Trans Wome...

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SPEAKERS

JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson, Imara Jones



JJ Janflone 00:08

Hey everybody, this is a legal disclaimer where I tell you that the views, thoughts, and opinions shared on this podcast belong solely to our guests and hosts, and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please note, this podcast contains discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing. It's okay, we find it disturbing too. Eelcome back everyone to "Red, Blue and Brady." Today, my co-host Kelly and I are joined by Imara Jones. She's an Emmy and Peabody Award winning journalist, intersectional news producer, chair of the first ever UN high-level meeting on gender diversity, creator of Translash, and so much more. Together, the three of us are discussing the tragic, and often underreported murder of Black trans women. Nearly three fourths of transgender and gender non-conforming Americans killed in the last three years, were killed with a firearm, yet rarely is this community included in conversations about gun violence prevention. Today, we're hoping to change that by discussing the impact of gun violence on members of the trans community. Then in our "unbelievable but" section, we're talking about why there are so many stories of people accidentally shooting themselves, while going after raccoons. Finally, in our news wrap up, we're talking about the tragic, ongoing realities of gun violence across the US. I feel like this is such a big topic and probably the first of many podcasts that we have to do to address this. But I want to go ahead and jump right in. And maybe Kelly and then Imara, can I have you two ladies, introduce yourself?



Kelly Sampson 01:51

Hi, everyone. My name is Kelly Sampson, I one of the attorneys at Brady where I focus on Constitutional Law, our racial justice issues, and also our legal alliance.



Imara Jones 02:00

I'm Imara Jones, I'm a journalist and the founder and creator of TransLash, I am also a Soros Equality Fellow.



JJ Janflone 02:08

And I'm so excited to have you here. I in particular, I love some of the writing that you've done. I was that person this weekend, when we found out we booked you, was reading your stuff aloud to my partner in the car. So it's really nice to at least virtually meet you.



Imara Jones 02:23

Thank you. Thank you so much. It's nice to have people actually read what I have written in this video and digital age.



JJ Janflone 02:33

That's true as someone who runs a purely audio format, nevertheless, I really do love when people have written stuff, because I think you get a different perspective on people's voices and things. There's a lot more that can be held there. Yeah. So beyond this being, sort of, wish fulfillment for me and Kelly, who I know is a fan of yours now too, I'm wondering if you can tell our audience a little bit about why you're here and talk a little bit about TransLash.



Imara Jones 02:58

Well, TransLash is a journalism and storytelling project, which aims to center the humanity of trans people through revealing and unveiling their narratives, at a time of social backlash. We believe that fighting ignorance is a key to keeping trans people alive. So as I tell everyone, we tell trans stories to save trans lives.



Kelly Sampson 03:24

You know, there's obviously been a long epidemic of violence, especially gun violence against the transgender community, and it disproportionately impacts trans women of color, specifically Black woman, as we've seen, just this week. We see over and over again, women who've lost their lives. And so I was wondering if you could just talk about that for a minute, and how that plays into the work that TransLash is doing?

I Imara Jones 03:46

Yeah, the epidemic of violence, and violence involving guns, against transgender people is an epidemic. And that's not hyperbole that is, according to the American Medical Association, which classified it as such. And I don't think that people understand that the United States has the highest number of murders on record of trans people than, any other planet on the country, except for Brazil and Mexico. And nine out of 10 of those who are murdered are Black. And so we have an epidemic of violence against trans people and black trans women in particular in this country, that's literally on a planetary scale. That's not surprising when you look at other indicators of violence and incarceration in the United States, but it is still astounding when you hear it. And the work of TransLash is to try to, as much as possible, to prevent our murders by getting people to see us as humans. You know, the more you dehumanize someone is, the more that you can do harm and violence to them. It's an age old understanding that we have about ourselves. And a part of the violence that is driven against Black trans women is that people don't see us as human, and against trans people in general. And so consequently, we center our humanity. We want people to understand that we have dreams, that we have futures, that we have a past, that we have families, that we have people that love us, that we work, we take care of people, all of the things that everyone else does. Because the more that we can do that, the less people will harm us. And it is an explicit drive to undermine that, and we do that through telling the stories of actual trans people, not only myself included, but many, many others. And I think it is essential work.

K Kelly Sampson 05:57

And could you just define transphobia, and, you know, some common ways that that might look? Because I think it's important for all of us to know, you might not be out on the street protesting, but you can still be contributing to a system that dehumanizes people.

I Imara Jones 06:12

I think a couple of things. I mean, there's so many ways in which it manifests, and there's a full range of them, and of course the behaviors are subtle and extreme. It would be like saying, 'what are some of the signs of racism?', we literally, you know, there are books and

seminars on that. So I think it's a similar range, quite frankly, I think it's important for us to realize that transphobia is an irrational fear or hatred of people who are transgender, it's pretty straightforward. And I think it's really important because the fear plays into that, because that can be more of the subtle sorts of things. And so if you believe that trans women aren't women, that's transphobia, for example, to be honest. You may not believe it so -- but it is. If you think that you would be nervous, using a bathroom with someone who is trans and that someone who is trans should not be using a bathroom. Well I'd tell you two things, I'd say one, you definitely have done already and just didn't know it, and secondly, that's transphobia, if you believe that trans people somehow are not, are imbalanced, or not capable, or strange, that's transphobia. And transphobia can range to active forms of discrimination and hatred, which should be apparent. So there's a wide range of transphobic behavior. And I mention some of those views, because most people will say that they are uncomfortable with trans people in this way or that way. And that's transphobia, you know, because it's rooted in an irrational fear.



JJ Janflone 07:47

And I think we have to talk about the role that that irrational fear plays. You know, we see a lot of hate crimes being conducted against the trans community, especially against trans women of color. We see high rates of police violence, you know. For example, in the case of Layleen Polanco, which recently just hit the news. And I wonder if we can, you know, discuss that that interplay a little bit?



Imara Jones 08:11

I think that there are two drivers, right, of the violence. And, I mean, when you read the details of these cases, which I've read, many of them, they are horrific, and they are brutal. And it is clear that there is something other here, other in these cases, than depriving someone of their life. We most recently learned, for example, in terms of involving guns, two Puerto Rican trans women who were shot and then burned in their car. Right? It's those types of combinations. There was, the same thing happened last year with a trans woman in Florida, shot and burned in her car. Like the way in which these violent episodes happen are profound and deeply troubling. And there are two drivers. One is intimate partner violence. So people that know these women either have dated them or want to date them, and there's some sort of refusal that can lead to violence. And then, of course, the state-centered violence that you mentioned, which overwhelmingly shows up in terms of brutality, and incarceration. In terms of the case that you're talking about with Layleen Polanco --- she died in police custody due to negligence -- because again, they just didn't see her as a human being. And even as they were taking her body out of the confined cell, the security guards were laughing and making fun of her, and she was dead. And so it's

this, this brutality right from individuals in the state, that's driving the horror and the reality for so many so many black trans women, and we have to acknowledge that. And on this larger point that you mentioned of hate crimes, we have to remember that every year since 2016 almost, has set a new record for hate crimes in the United States, that there's a steamrolling effect that is happening, in terms of what's happening. And so therefore, this personal violence, this state centered violence, and the larger sort of policy and cultural violence that we have, has led us to a very severe crisis point.



JJ Janflone 10:31

Well and we're in June, right. This is Pride Month. This is also where Juneteenth lands. This is also, right now, a time where we're seeing massive protests with the Black Lives Matter movement, with people protesting police brutality. And I wonder if we can talk about how this intersection isn't new, but it's sort of now coming to the forefront of people's minds.



Imara Jones 10:53

Yeah, I think that's right. And I think, you know, interestingly enough, I mean, one thing, also I think, one of the reasons why we are where we are, is because same thing, you know, which happened on on gun violence, after the terrible massacre in Florida, is that people can ignore something for a long time, but not forever. They just, it just reaches a point where you've been hearing it, but you push it away, you've been hearing it, you've been pushing it away, you've been hearing it, but you push it away, and you move on. And then it's just gets to a point you can't ignore it anymore. It's too, too apparent. And I think that that's one of the thought on gun violence for white people. I also think police violence and also gun violence, quite frankly, because Black communities as well, have been really strong proponents, as you all know, of gun control and measures to rollback on violence for a really long time. Like if white communities were where Black communities were, we'd have had gun control laws, 15 years ago, I mean, something else. But it's also the case that in this particular moment, that a lot of white people turned out to these protests nationwide. And it was the first time that so many white people had contact with the police. And they were shocked by what they saw, and realized that, going through their own experience and what they could see on television, that Black people weren't making it up. And if this is the way that police were comporting themselves during the day, when there are cameras and children and babies, and you name it, what would you imagine is the case if it's at night, no cameras in a poor neighborhood, where nobody's looking. And I think that that gap has closed to people. And we know that there's a problem that we just can't ignore anymore.



JJ Janflone 12:37

And honestly, you know, those are just the names that we know, that's just the data that we have. Because there are so many people who unfortunately are killed or who pass away who are misgendered, or who we just never hear about.



Imara Jones 12:47

I mean, that's a, that's a really strong point to remember is that, you know, we always say that these are the cases that we know about. I'm on the board of the Anti-Violence Project, and we talk about all the time, how we go back, you know, over the course of the year, and find people who are trans, who were murdered or who died due to police violence, but didn't know because they rely on news reports and people are often misgendered. So I think that what we know, is just the beginning of the problem. And yeah, I mean, there's a tremendous amount of violence against trans people. I mean, what Dominique Fells, who's one of the people whose death was announced on Friday, right before this big march. The other is Riah Milton was dismembered and thrown in a river in Philadelphia. I think that the the violence is so acute, that what we know about is absolutely only the beginning.



Kelly Sampson 13:44

Thank you for flagging the role that dehumanization plays in violence against trans people. Obviously, that's also really difficult, though, as a member of the community to both be confronting and combating that, while also having to, in a way, defend your own humanity. So how do you deal with that?



Imara Jones 14:04

Yeah, no, it is, of course hard. Because every time these murders happen, I think that we all feel, but then I also feel, you know, we feel powerless, that what we're doing isn't enough, that it's not making a difference. I mean, I don't have to tell you this. I'm sure that with respect to gun violence, this is a very familiar sentiment. But this idea that whatever you're doing is not enough, it's not working. Some kind combination of you're either not doing it well enough, or people don't care. You know, it's, it's all of that. And I think that those are natural feelings for us to have, you know, and that's what the violence is designed to do, right? The violence is actually designed for you to lose hope. I can deprive you of your life or I can deprive loved ones of their lives and therefore, you know, you are a subject, therefore you don't matter, you do not have the ability to make a difference to have your humanity centered. So I have to remind myself of that, I also have to remind

myself, that when you look at change in America, that it really is a long game, and it's a constant game. When you familiarize yourself with the writings of the Founding Fathers and founding generation, I guess were not calling them, fortunately so. That's the, that's what they set up. You know, James Madison explicitly says that, you know, we've gotten together, we've come up with these answers about what America is and how the government should work. But honestly, we don't know and we don't know because we don't agree amongst ourselves. So what we've done is we've set up a system where you guys can fight it out, and fight about what the future is, and fight about what America is, and we hope that in the process, we've designed something that allows that to happen without the whole country being torn apart. Literally, what is the case. And so I constantly have to remind myself that this is, these fights are long, these struggles are long, there are lots of setbacks, but persistence is what can win out, and what does went out. It's the only way to get out. And on your point about dehumanization, dehumanization is essential in all forms of mistreatment. It was essential, of course, in slavery, which continues to be America's founding contradiction, right? We're a schizophrenia country, because we have two, two ideas that are totally in contradiction of each other, and we're trying to constantly figure it out. It of course, is essential in the mistreatment of women. Most recently, it was essential in setting up gulags and torture sites during all these wars we've been fighting over the past 20 years since 9/11. And of course, it's essential and the mistreatment of of trans people. And so it's been perfected. I mean, I think that one of the things that we have to realize is that, those people who really set up a cultural system of racial prejudice, essentially, from 1500 to 1750, kind of the founding years of that, the first 250 years, really knew what they were doing. And they created a system that's really enduring. And so, you know, we have to just remember that.



JJ Janflone 17:21

Well, and I guess, to pivot a little bit back to the position, that sort of gun violence then plays in all of this is that, you know, we do see that when we have transgender or gender nonconforming victims of homicide, 60% of them involve, of their murders, involve a gun. And to me, part of that is because I feel like a gun is a really easy thing to let, to express your hate with. It's an easy weapon to use. But I'm wondering if we could talk about that a little bit the just the heavy rate of firearms violence against trans individuals. And then also how trans women of color specifically, are four times more unlikely to report being attacked with a gun, than other trans respondents. And respondents that identify as transgender or gender nonconforming already, you know, half as likely as other respondents to report being attacked to the police. So I'm wondering if we can even try to begin to unpack all the structural things at play there?



Imara Jones 18:27

Well, on the role of gun violence, you know, it's really interesting, I think I read this study actually did a lecture once about the connection between gun violence and male power and transness, last year at Minnesota State. And one of the things I read in preparation for that, that shaped part of my views, is this idea, that gun, you know, children who want to play with guns can be okay. But you worry about the people who the gun becomes an expression of their power, right, playing with the gun is an expression of their power. That's the those are the kids that you worry about. That's, that's where it is. So symbolically, it's not only that, it's easy, but it is symbolic for a lot of people who, for whatever reason, don't feel powerful, or don't have a sense of themselves, that this thing gives them power, right. It gives them agency, it's that kind of obsession. And I think a lot of these instances where people are attracted to, or have been intimate partners with, or have neighbors who are trans, that they fear for whatever reason, for whatever reason, ironically, they don't know what to do with their feelings in a certain way, and that feeling is disempowering, and therefore the only way for them to remedy or to feel like they have a sense of themselves, again, is through the expression of the gun. This is particularly true for men, right, because of the association with masculinity and power. So we have to understand that and there's something about the just the mere difference, the idea of difference rather, that that trans people represent, that for a lot of people is threatening. That threat does then translate into them feeling not powerful and then they have to feel like they have to take action through a gun. And on the on not reporting violence and gun violence, in particular, I think we have to realize that, again, trans people have a really fraught relationship with the state, that you could, many people have had terrible experiences with police officers, where police officers don't take you seriously because you're trans, don't listen to you because you're trans, or find a way to make whatever situation in which you called or ask for police, about you, and you're the problem, and thus you get arrested. Another issue is that there are many trans people, because of extreme marginalized, have participated in sex work. And so therefore, if you've had any type of record with the police, and you call them, that's another layer of complexity and fear. So there are lots of, lots of reasons why that doesn't happen. And I think overall, the reason why we are on gun violence and trans communities is because, as I have talked about all the time, it's not only because one thing is failing. It's because everything is failing. Everything is failing trans people and black trans women in particular. And so the result of those failures that you see, is the violence, right, and we have to keep that in mind, these larger links that are going on.



Kelly Sampson 21:45

So studies have shown that 40% of trans and/or gender nonconforming people have attempted to take their own lives. So when we talk about gun violence, we also have to talk about suicide as well.



Imara Jones 21:59

Yeah, I mean, I think that horrible statistic that you mentioned, is not surprising in, again, a terrible way, when there's so many combined factors that face trans people that lead to profound stress and agony. One, gender dysphoria, right. Being your mind working in one way, and your mind actually being wired, hardwired in one way, and your body being the exact opposite. It immediately produces depression, and a whole host of other things that people have to deal with. So that's one level. Secondly, you then, as a result of this, face extreme hostility from the world -- in every way that you can imagine. One out of three trans people who have jobs, leave them every year, because of on-the-job discrimination and harassment. Trans people are afraid to go to the doctors because of past horrible experiences with health care professionals. We mentioned the police, not to mention schools, which are a tremendous breeding ground for transphobia and trans hatred. To courts, to housing discrimination. We know that the Trump Administration, for example, last week, rolled back housing protections for trans people. So you combine all of that, and that's an extreme amount of pressure. And you know, suicide, people who commit suicide, it's not that they don't want to live, it's that they want the pain to end. And if there's so many pain points that are being driven by the way that our society operates, in every single way, that pushes people to the brink.



Kelly Sampson 23:41

And I just think that's, you know, so important, because a lot of times I'll see these arguments in the news that try to use that as a way to argue for why people should not transition rather than taking a step back and looking and saying, "Well, what kind of society have we created?" And, you know, how might these forces that, you know, we're supporting, put people in a lot of pain? So I just think it's really important, especially when talking about gun violence as well.



Imara Jones 24:05

I agree. Absolutely.



JJ Janflone 24:07

I think it's too, this idea that there's, again, we're going back to like, there's so many intersections of things happening. So you know, for example, I think of just the sheer number of underage kids, minors, teens that are LGBTQ who are kicked out of their homes, or who don't find that they have a safe space at home to go to and so then end up in really vulnerable positions, because the people and the systems that were supposed

to care for them actively are harming them.



Imara Jones 24:35

Right. That's right. That's right. I mean the, I mean, the disaster that is trans teen homelessness is, speaks to that, and is also one of the other fundamental failures. And there are just so many points of hostility that trans people have to contend with.



JJ Janflone 24:51

Well, and I think, to that end, I feel like we've, we've continued to ask you questions where there are no easy answers, or at the very least quick answers. And this next one is par for the course with that, which is how do you feel that the US is failing trans women, specifically trans women of color? You know what, what are some of the things that we need to see change immediately?



Imara Jones 25:14

We need schools to be radically different and safer spaces for trans people. We need the Trump administration to say that trans people are protected by civil rights protections and regulations in schools, so that schools can be held accountable as safe spaces for trans people. That is an immediate one. When it comes to police violence, we need to repeal a lot of the tools that police use to target trans people. So specifically, loitering laws, certain types of prostitution. So this suspected prostitution thing is a problem in New York City, there's actually a law walking around, walking around trans, where police used laundering laws disproportionately target trans people. As well, there's a "two condom rule," whereas if police find two condoms on you, they can arrest you on suspicion of sex work. So I think that that's a really important thing for us to shift and change. We need to not only have equal access to housing and jobs, but I think that there needs to be some consideration of ways to actually spur hiring. I think that trans people honestly need affirmative action, which I know is a bad word. But I think that that's the only remedy, quite frankly. I also think that we need to address capital needs. So allowing trans people to be able to have small amounts capital to start businesses where they can provide employment for it themselves. And others, I think that, you know, we may want to think about making sex work, decriminalizing sex work. So technically still keeping it as a crime for a lot of reasons, not legalizing it, but decriminalizing, it would be a massive thing for us to do, at this particular moment. I mean, I really believe that the swath is so large, that we could go on, and on, and on. But there are a string of policy provisions. And one thing that we need to do from a legal standpoint nationwide, is that we have to pass an equal rights law for

LGBTQ people overall, in which trans people would be included. We don't, in 27 states in this country, well, not now because of the Supreme Court ruling. But up until then, you know, it was legal to discriminate against people who are trans. Yesterday, that was literally yesterday. So there's a lot of work that needs to be done across the board. I think that it's also just important to realize that, you know, overall, trans communities need a tremendous amount of investment -- in all the forms of investment that we think of -- from housing, to education, to labor, all of the things. We need substantial investment, and that's where a lot of institutional actors can, can play a really important role. That's also really, really important as well.



JJ Janflone 28:04

And you know, one of those things that really needs address because it's such a, in that it touches everyone, is gun violence. And I wonder, if you're at all comfortable, if you could comment on sort of your own experiences with firearms, and how that shaped some of your recommendations.



Imara Jones 28:18

Yeah, I grew up in a household where guns were actively used to threaten people, and understand, you know, how they can be seized in these really volatile moments. And that happens when people are out of control. And that was a fear that shaped me as I was growing up. And I think that people need to understand that this isn't an argument about human beings at their rational best, right, this is, these are when human beings -- ultimately everyone will fall into these moments of darkness and being lost -- and that's when it happens. And I think that one of the things that the gun lobby does is that they always make it into a very rational argument. But these episodes happen when people are irrational. And we have to, we have to acknowledge. That's why it's called common sense gun control, because we know that people can be at their best, and they can be at their worst. And when they're at their worst, we don't want them to have this symbol, this idea of power and intimidation when they're feeling totally disempowered, because it leads to really terrible circumstances. And that's just from my my own personal experience. But in those moments when those things happen -- all of the political rhetoric drops aside and you're just in the moment -- and the gun is either present, or it's not. And if it's not present things go one way, and if they're present, they go another way. It's really, really, the choice is clear.



Kelly Sampson 30:11

Thanks for drawing that out, because it's, I mean, when you mentioned, of course, that the gun lobby will talk about this as though it's a completely rational issue and we just need to think about different policy arguments on both sides. But, you know, it doesn't take into account human nature. And if you do take into account human nature, then, you know, it's clear that obviously, the presence of a lethal weapon is going to make a difference, in any interaction between two people.



Imara Jones 30:37

Yeah. And when one person has one and one person doesn't. And the other thing, that's crazy, right, about their argument, because it just is, I just have to say it, is that like, no one's completely rational. Like, if people were completely rational than most of the instances of gun violence that we had, wouldn't take place, and there wouldn't be a problem. So if the world was actually according to their point of view, we wouldn't have a discussion at all. The reason why it is, because the world doesn't work like they say it does. That's a fantasy, that you're using to advance an argument because you know, it's effective, and you poll tested it, and you've done a whole bunch of other stuff. But in reality, that's just not the way it works. That's why we have a problem. Like, you know what I would, if you were totally right, you know, Wayne LaPierre, and it was like, you know, totally rational, and these are totally sane people, and everyone behaves responsibly. And this is only hunters, and we only use them against bad people and duh duh duh. If that were the case, we wouldn't have a problem, and it would be, we'd be in a totally different world. But you know what, that's not the world that we live in. So that's why we, so therefore, your argument is actually specious because that's not, that's not actually borne out by the reality. It's just, it's just a fantastic sounding argument.



Kelly Sampson 31:55

And to tie it back to some of the points you made before, you know, also, if we live in a world where every human really was treated equally, where we didn't stereotype people and dehumanize people, that would also be a different argument. But because we live in a world where we, you know, devalue certain people, stereotype them, don't protect them, then that also has to come into play when we talk about guns. Because you're giving. you're allowing people to have power in this capacity to, kind of, externalize their fears and hatred and, and all those kind of cultural forces. So, yeah, I think it's a really good point.



JJ Janflone 32:38

Well and too, I wonder, what do you think that gun violence prevention groups need to be doing better? What are some of the weaknesses in the way that GVP groups are addressing this intersection of gun violence and trans lives?

I Imara Jones 32:51

Yeah, I mean, I think a lot of these, you know, a lot of those weaknesses have been corrected in recent years. But I think that it's really important for us to do many things on this point. Again, racially, I think it's really important to underscore that Black communities, for a long time, have been among the strongest proponents of gun control and in opposition to gun violence, that there are a string of organizations across the country that were doing the work and have been doing the work for a really long time. And the same is true for trans people and, and trans anti-violence. You go across the country and ask trans organizations, 'What are the most important things?' fighting violence and ending over-policing, and police brutality, are always at the top of the list. So that means that there are people in communities that are working on the same issues, and that care about the same issues. And so we need to partner with those communities, we need to resource those communities, and we need to listen, and we need to center those. But that requires a decreasing sense of your power and your role, not necessarily always centering yourself, but making sure that other people are centered as well. And they have what they need to become really strong allies and to extend the values and the struggle across the country. And I think that those are the things that are really important. There have to be fundamental shifts and how we see our organizations ourselves and our role -- less savior complex -- more partner complex. And this, this necessity, as I mentioned before, of the realization that we all go or nobody goes, and that extends so many social justice movements.

K Kelly Sampson 34:48

Yeah, I mean, that makes so much sense, especially when you talk about all these different intersectionalities that would be really important to have people have true rights. You know, when you talk about housing, and jobs and, you know, it's easy sometimes to go into these movements, gun violence included, and just think about, you know, the common stories that we see. But in order to, if we don't really address all the different intersectionalities, on what does gun violence mean, in the trans community versus what it might mean in the veterans' community, etc, then we might end up -- and obviously those communities overlap -- but I'm saying it might lead to different results and incomplete results. So that's a really helpful point.



Imara Jones 35:28

Right, and results that, that are constantly suboptimal. Because you're, you know, it's kind of, it's kind of interesting, right, like, in order to win, my friend has been like reading Sun Tzu recently. So she keeps, like, quoting me all these things and like, one of the things, Art of War, and one of the things is that, you know, you can't win by fighting on other people's grounds. You have to expand your territory. You have to expand the concept of where you're operating, when and where and how you're choosing to coalesce. I mean, the the gun lobby is a white movement -- period -- so you're not going to beat them by being a anti-gun white movement. You're going to beat them by forming a broad-based coalition of people from all walks of life, in all parts of this country, all gender identities, and racial backgrounds and economic backgrounds, to stop the epidemic of gun violence. And because those communities are disproportionately impacted by it. That's how you're going to win. So you have to totally reimagine how you're campaigning who you think you're talking to. And again, who's resourced, who's listened to, who's prioritized?



Kelly Sampson 36:44

As JJ says, I just want to say, preach. I mean, if you started out telling us that, I think, nine out of 10 trans women who are shot, are Black, if I'm recalling. And so obviously that's like a natural community of people who are very motivated to really make some progress on these issues. So, you know, like you said, the, it doesn't make a lot of sense to ignore that or leave that out.



Imara Jones 37:10

Yeah and then you know, there are there are LGBTQ anti-violence projects, programs, organizations, all across the country, and cities and in states. Again, a natural inbuilt infrastructure, right, to partner with. But partnering means that you, they care about your issues, because there's overlap, but then you also have to care about their issues, right. Like, there's this idea of reciprocity and some of the things that we're talking about, you know, you can't care about gun violence, and not care about anti-trans violence, for example, right? We can't stop gun violence if we don't talk about gun violence and gun culture within police departments. Because we know, for example, that police have over-indexed instances of domestic violence, which too often end in death. So that's one of your issues, too. So it is, you know, being true to these core values and the core issues, but understanding that for us to win, we have to show up for other people, so they show up for us.



JJ Janflone 38:17

So, Imara, I know that I have so many more questions, but I think just because of time, we're gonna have to say goodbye. But first, for more information, where can people find you? Where can they find TransLash online, or anything, any upcoming events that they should know about?



Imara Jones 38:31

Yes, so many things. People can find TransLash at TransLash.org. When you go there, before you enter the site, we will ask you to sign up for our newsletter, that's the best way to keep up with what's going on, so we ask you to do that. It's TransLash.org. And then across all social media platforms, our handle is at [@TransLashMedia](https://twitter.com/TransLashMedia), super easy. And you can find us on literally every social media platform that you can think of, except Tik Tok, so do that. And then on next Wednesday, on the 24th, we have a program called "The Future Of Trans," where we will be screening a short documentary that we have filmed and that's going to be on our special Lives at Stake program at 7:00pm on the 24th of June. And if you either go to our website or across social media, you can find details for how to watch that



JJ Janflone 39:25

Perfect I know what I'm doing now. Well, again, thank you so much.



Imara Jones 39:31

Thank you so much.



JJ Janflone 39:35

And now an "unbelievable but," featuring one fearless raccoon, and a raccoon hunt gone wrong. A Colorado man was outside, around midnight, when he saw a raccoon up on a telephone pole. For reasons known only to him, and maybe to the raccoon, he attempted to shoot the raccoon. Unfortunately, as he pulled out his loaded handgun, he unintentionally shot himself in the leg instead. The raccoon made it away without issue, but the man got a trip to the hospital and a citation for a prohibited use of a weapon. The sad reality is that this is just one of many stories where someone has unintentionally shot themselves while trying to shoot a raccoon. We begin this week's news wrap up by drawing attention to the number of young people being impacted and even killed by gun

violence. And just one tragic example. In New Haven, Connecticut, this weak 19-year-old Kiana Brown was found unconscious in her home. The medical examiner found that Brown had died from a gunshot wound to the head. Police do not believe she was the intended target, but rather that gunfire struck her home as she slept. Brown's loved ones say she was the type of person who always made sure everyone else was happy. She played basketball before she graduated from Hillhouse High School, and loved to dance. New Haven Police are still investigating. We also remember those killed and injured in the anti-Black Charleston AME church shooting. On June 17, 2015, in Charleston, South Carolina, nine people were killed during a Bible study at the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. This church is one of the oldest black churches in the United States, and has long been a center for organizing events which are related to civil rights. The shooter was a 21-year-old white supremacist, who was found to have targeted members of this church because of its history and stature. The shooter was only able to get the gun used in the shooting due to a gap in the background check process, often now called "the Charleston loophole." Legislation to close the loophole was passed in the House of Representatives more than a year ago, but still sits on Senate Majority Leader McConnell's desk, untouched. Finally, this past week, we honor Juneteenth, an annual holiday marking the end of slavery in the United States. While Juneteenth has been celebrated by Black Americans since the late 1800s, this year's celebration is resonating in new ways, as our country reckons with the systematic murders of Black men and women like Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Arber, George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks. Juneteenth is a time to uplift the economic, cultural and political contributions Black Americans have made to this country. Now, more than ever, it is also time to listen to Black Americans, to understand and address the systemic racism and inequality that is woven into American life. Gun violence, which disproportionately impacts Black Americans, is only one example of how systemic racism wreaks havoc on Black communities. Recognising Juneteenth is only the first step, it doesn't end racism or stop the disproportionate impacts of gun violence, but it is a step in the right direction. This is a time for white Americans to listen and learn from Black Americans, and follow their leadership in the movement to end gun violence. We at Brady and on Red, Blue and Brady, reaffirm our commitment to addressing racism and inequality. Oh look, now it's an ad! With more than 10 years of experience, NordVPN is a leading VPN provider. NordVPN gives you military-grade protection online, and you can access all of your favorite sites without restriction. They never log your activity when using their servers, and you can always trust your privacy to them. As someone who travels quite a bit to countries or places with internet restrictions, I have to say I do really enjoy NordVPN. Right now listeners have the opportunity to get 70% off on a two-year plan by clicking the link in the description of our episode. Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady, or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast. Get in touch with us at

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