

Escape from the Sunlit Prison of the American Dream

(Alternate working title: My Patriotic Education)

How an Unresolved Racial Past and Urban Sprawl Shaped a Life

Patrick Cass Moan

84,000 Words

March 2024

patrick@goodhumanhabitat.org

1644 Edward Street

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3J1

Canada

Table of Contents

PART I The Difficulty Finding Home	6
1. History’s Relevance to Finding Home.....	7
2. Two Central Problems with Finding Home	10
3. A Definition for Home and Why it Matters	13
4. American Cities Serve as Receptacles of Trauma	16
5. Barriers to Building at The Human Scale.....	19
6. Greater Levels of Freedom Outside America	22
7. The Sunlit Prison’s Endgame.....	26
PART II The Slaveholding Republic’s Legacy	29
8. Core Values Shaped During the Slaveholding Republic	30
9. The Continuity of American Life	37
10. Family Connections to Place, War, and Trauma.....	39
11. We Have Toledo They Have Wolfsburg.....	43
12. Might Have Been My Bedford Falls.....	47
13. From Operettas to Molotov Cocktails	50
14. Blind to Consequences. Blind to their Origins.....	55
15. Maps That Charted the Downfall.....	60
16. Lynching as a Form of Cultural Expression	71
PART III The Endless Production of Bad Human Habitat	77
17. Out of the Mouths of Babes	78
18. Describing Good Human Habitat by Way of Example.....	80
19. The Advantages of the Human Scale.....	94
20. Bad Human Habitat’s DNA: Single-Use Zoning.....	98
21. Racial Hatred Births the Single-Family Zone	101
22. How and Why the Federal Government Declared War on Walking.....	107
23. Speak of Design Not Density	114
24. Why Local Governments Still Create Bad Human Habitat.....	120
25. Rhetoric Versus Reality.....	127
26. Toledo’s Potential	136
PART IV Polarized as If It’s 1854	145
27. When a Family Buries the Truth	146
28. Lincoln’s Unfinished Work	149
29. Fundamental Dynamics Remain Unchanged.....	153

30.	Convergence at Sporting Hill	157
31.	The Birth of Alternate Reality and Its Unifying Properties	160
32.	A Responsibility for Understanding Our Past	167
33.	Life in a Receptacle of Trauma	172
34.	The Personal Responsibility Myth vs. Trauma’s Reality	179
35.	Prelude to Polarization	186
36.	Two Intertwined Narratives Fueling Polarization.....	191
37.	Polarization’s Unexpected Dimensions	196
38.	The Imagined Golden Age of the Negro Family	200
39.	Origins of Black Criminality.....	205
40.	The Short-Lived Illusion of Shared Purpose	211
41.	Civil War, Slavery, and Torture in Living Memory	215
42.	Caste, Defected Rage, and Violence in the Black Community	219
43.	Veil of Time	223
44.	All the Barbed Wire Fence Entailed	227
45.	The Tacit Agreement Underpinning Polarization.....	234
46.	Freedomspeak	240
47.	The War That Killed Healing.....	246
	CODA: Shared Fate (TBD)	256
	Endnotes	257

We do not live in our own time alone; we carry our history with us.
Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World*

PART I The Difficulty Finding Home

1. History's Relevance to Finding Home

What is home? Is it four walls and a roof? Is it a neighborhood? A larger municipal entity? Is it a feeling? Familiarity? Safety? Freedom? For over two decades of my adult life, I searched in vain for home in America. For the past sixteen, I've lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia raising a family, and trying to make sense of my experiences. It took me years before I understood what my questions were, much less the answers. In the end, I came to understand that there was a way of living that I valued highly, one that does not exist in the United States for the broad middle class but exists elsewhere. My inability to find this way of living had much to do with my country's unique history, American exceptionalism if you will.

In the late 1940s, the federal government kicked suburban sprawl into high gear by providing loans to builders on the condition that the houses could not be sold to blacks.¹ It wasn't some unwritten rule that kept them out, but rather the terms of the contract. In Levittown—America's first mass-produced suburb—standard paperwork contained a clause in capital letters that stated that a house could not “be used or occupied by any person other than members of the Caucasian race.” As whites like my mom and dad were emptying out of the cities for suburbia, impoverished blacks from the segregated South were pouring in, participating in the North's version of racial apartheid that would set the stage for the large-scale urban riots that would erupt in the 1960s.

While black Americans from the South were getting fleeced in decaying northern cities, my extended family and millions like them were being handed federally backed mortgages and tax deductions to live out the American dream in suburban pods. Our quiet

streets and large backyards were the be-all end-all of human existence, the envy of the rest of the world. The thing was, I didn't necessarily buy into the dream even as a teen. In fact, a few of us considered it something of a bad dream, even as we remained safely cocooned and separate from the large swaths of urban (i.e., black) America that was falling apart. We went to school and learned that Jefferson was a heroic founding father, Lincoln freed the slaves, and America was great. It was that simple.

By the time I was a pre-teen in the mid-1970s, I cared nothing about big backyards and felt alienated whenever I'd leave our subdivision to walk on the shoulder of a busy arterial road that led to the nearest strip mall a mile away. I instinctively disliked my monotonous environment and felt something was missing but, as a kid, I could not have told you what. Life in the pod could be soul-suckingly dull but I was exposed to little else aside from visits to grandparents living in imploding cities whose dynamics I could not possibly comprehend.

As soon as my friends and I were old enough to drive, we did, often engaging in that variant of Russian roulette known as drinking and driving. A Saturday night in 1980 often meant traveling long distances by car along back roads to and from a party with beer flowing through our veins, without a thought given to wearing a seatbelt. Given our behavior, I'm surprised more of us didn't die. The thing was, so little ever happened in our own pod, we were always driving somewhere. "Getting out" was an ongoing theme, although we never uttered the word "suburb" since we had little frame of reference to any other way of living.

The culmination of my high school experience was a week we spent in Ocean City, Maryland. I can still clearly remember the morning my friends and I gassed up my 1965 Dodge Coronet on a warm, crystal-clear blue morning in June 1981 to make the drive down from Central Pennsylvania to cavort on the beach. We'd just graduated and the future was ours.

If I sit with myself for a minute, I can remember the music, the drive, the beer, the friendship, and the laughter. In my still-developing, adolescent brain I had two notions of relevance rattling around that have since been proven wrong. The first was that time lasts forever. The second is that my nation's history was just that, history with little relevance to my own life in the present day. These weren't conscious ideas per se. The first—the

notion of time—was a feeling or a perspective. The second—history’s relevance—was more the case that I thought nothing about history’s applicability to my own life.

In my twenties and into my mid-thirties, I was still only vaguely aware of the passage of time. That started to change around the age of thirty-seven. When I hit forty, I thought life was going by way quicker than I ever imagined it would, and more than fifteen years on, I hold the view that history is much closer to me and far more relevant to my life than I ever could have imagined as a teenager.

2. Two Central Problems with Finding Home

On December 12, 1941, Roosevelt's Attorney General, Francis Biddle, issued an official memo to all his federal prosecuting attorneys referred to as, Justice Department Circular 3591.² The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor five days earlier and my father's aircraft carrier—the USS Yorktown—would leave four days later from Norfolk, VA to make its way through the Panama Canal en route to the Pacific.³ The title of Circular 3591 is “Involuntary Servitude, Slavery, and Peonage.” Its essential purpose was to direct justice department lawyers to eradicate slavery in the United States.

The U.S. government knew for decades that slavery was still being practiced inside the country, but then, consider the context. Little more than three decades earlier, President Woodrow Wilson had segregated the federal government, and just fifteen years before the outbreak of World War II, more than 30,000 white-robed members of the Ku Klux Klan paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue to adoring crowds and breathless coverage in the *Washington Post* that included lines like:

“Phantom-like hosts of the Ku Klux Klan spread their white robes over the most historic thoroughfare yesterday in one of the greatest demonstrations this city has ever known,”

With the outbreak of war, Roosevelt didn't want to hand the Japanese and Germans a propaganda victory. How would it look for America to be fighting for freedom and against fascism abroad when at the same time there were clear cases of oppression in the U.S.?

I mentioned events involving my father (a combat pilot) in 1941 to make the point that these things didn't happen so long ago. They are a fundamental part of our history and our culture. This continuation of slavery is part of what drove six million blacks to northern cities. Those people brought with them tremendous amounts of trauma, living in a country where enslavement was a fact of life within its present-day borders between 1619 and 1941. This 322-year period accounts for 80% of the time American culture has been forming and is what truly makes the United States unique among all Western nationsⁱ. This dynamic goes to the heart of the divide in American culture and is at the root of the polarization and dysfunction we see in American life, dynamics that shape what is possible in terms of how and where we live.

I grew up believing slavery was something that happened only to blacks and that it had little to do with me personally. I've since come to understand slavery in America as being a multifaceted disease that's affected all Americans in terms of how we feel about places, what we fear, and what we hate.

Whereas *slavery* has degraded the person, *urban sprawl* has degraded both the person and the place. The two are inexorably linked. Just as the United States is the only Western nation in which slavery has been practiced inside its present-day borders for more than three centuries, it is also the only Western nation in which a sizable percentage of the middle-class is not found in large numbers raising families in cities. The vast majority live in auto-dependent suburbs, which is typically considered the only viable option.

In America, the term "urban" brings with it negative connotations, a place where city life is endured by the poor, enjoyed by the rich (in select cities), and experienced by middle-class professionals in a small percentage of cities up until the day the first kid reaches school age.

Yes, there are exceptions. Cities remain viable for the LGBQ community and, more broadly, for those who never have kids. And yes, a small percentage of middle-class parents buck the trend and stick it out, but they're not the norm. And I say this based on firsthand experience raising children in an American city. The life I've led in two

ⁱ I'm suggesting here that a distinct form of "American culture" began to form with the arrival of Europeans to the New World.

different Canadian cities for twenty years—with and without children—differs in important ways from the years I lived in Philadelphia, Boston, Portland, OR, Baltimore, and Washington DC.

This brings me to the central problem that made finding home so difficult, namely urban sprawl and the legacy of slavery in America intertwine in ways that undermine quality of life. In practice, this means that older, traditional cities are not generally considered options by middle-class families, and the vast majority of new places constructed are built around the automobile rather than the human being.

3. A Definition for Home and Why it Matters

Quality of life is often used subjectively, referring to an individual's health, comfort, and ability to enjoy life events. I'm using the term to describe something very tangible.

Quality of life's cornerstone is living life at the human scale, which is to say that I can open my front door and walk to what I need over the course of a week be it a grocery store, school, restaurant, athletic field, movie theater, dentist, or pretty much anything and feel both physically and psychologically comfortable doing so. The buildings surrounding me elicit a positive response because they reflect my own human nature as well as the natural world around me. I can see the sky without needing to crane my neck because buildings range from two to six stories in height. Walking down the street, I can see or imagine lives being lived behind the windows and doors I pass by. The powers that be who shape such a place think in terms of design rather than density. Life lived at the human scale is about the quality of the walk, sustaining a physical activity that has been a fundamental part of the human experience for the past 2.5 million years.⁴

With this description in mind, the degree to which a city (or town) offers a high quality of life is the degree to which such a place is:

- 1) Built at the human scale, allowing its residents to comfortably walk or bike to everything needed or desired over the course of a week. (physical)
- 2) Able to provide convenient, direct access to nature. (physical)
- 3) Governed by people who understand the human scale and make decisions that sustain and enhance it. (social)
- 4) Populated by a functional middle-class society whose well-being, on balance, makes it possible to live comfortably and safely in the human-scale environment. (social)

This definition for quality of life brings us back to my initial question. *What is home?* For me, home is a psychological state that's established when these four

conditions are in place, conditions that are anything but theoretical. Over the better part of two decades of living in Halifax, my family and I have experienced a quality of life that I found difficult to find in the United States. In saying this, I'm aware that in the present day, I can find baby strollers in Brooklyn and viable, walkable neighborhoods in cities like Denver and Seattle. But a relatively small number of upcoming or outright pricey urban neighborhoods scattered across America doesn't provide middle class families in a nation of over 330 million people with much in the way of options.

Why does all this even matter?

Many Americans, especially those who are in their twenties or thirties today, are less enamored with the drive-everywhere culture that previous generations embraced so readily. Nielsen—considered the top market research firm in the world—surveyed millennials and found that 62 percent of them want to live in, “vibrant, creative energy cities offering a mix of housing, shopping, and offices right outside their doorstep.”⁵ That translates to 51 million people in just one generation alone: a sizable chunk of the population who want to live in places where they can comfortably and safely use their own two feet to get everywhere they need to go.

There are good reasons why many younger people are drawn to such a lifestyle. Plenty of research completed over the past two decades shows that relative to the auto-dependent suburbs we grew up in, walkable communities are better for us economically, environmentally, and socially, not to mention better for our health.

How we physically construct a community very much matters. Suburban sprawl is not the sole cause of the obesity epidemic, but eliminating walking from the average American's lifestyle didn't help.ⁱⁱ The intensifying climate crisis is not entirely due to vehicle emissions, but building auto-dependent places that maximize the use of oil is a significant part of the problem.

My own experience living both inside and outside the United States has taught me that how we treat one another also matters. The reason my wife Christine and I have been able to raise our three children without fear and stress in “urban” Halifax is not that Canadians are somehow more righteous. They've got a different history in terms of how

ⁱⁱ The term suburban sprawl and urban sprawl are frequently used interchangeably. In a later chapter, I make a distinction between the two, and use the term “urban sprawl” to encompass both horizontal sprawl (a.k.a., suburban sprawl) and vertical sprawl (a.k.a., high rise development).

its citizens have been treated which has produced a different outcome regarding how people behave on a day-to-day basis and—importantly—how they feel about one another in the present day.

Had British colonists been able to grow cotton in Nova Scotia, it's likely that the stars and stripes would be flying today from every flagpole around, and the kind of fear, hatred, and polarization that characterizes much of American life would exist here as well. The relative level of civility in my day-to-day life is more a function of geography rather than enlightened thinking. I can peek under the covers and find most of the same social pathologies as the U.S. They're just on a different scale.

4. American Cities Serve as Receptacles of Trauma

I got through college with the help of part-time work, grants, and a paid internship in high-tech. When I graduated, I had work experience and a job lined up writing software to test something called a virtual circuit switch. My supervisor was kind enough to let me defer my start date by two months which set me up to get a small bank loan, buy a backpack, and hop on a plane to Europe. The seeds of my dissatisfaction with quality of life in America were sown during those two months in Europe, during which time I fell in love with walking, becoming attached to the emotional world I experienced while immersed in inviting spaces designed around human beings rather than automobiles. I had no concrete way of expressing what I was feeling nor did I understand my emotions.

In my thirties, I wanted to know why suburban sprawl seemed to be the only game in town in America and what, if anything, might be done to change the way developers constructed space. These questions sent me back to graduate school to study urban design and planning in Canada. Experience as an urban planner in both the United States and Canada, coupled with years spent living in American cities fed a companion interest in understanding why things played out as they did in urban America. Why did both sides of my family abandon Philadelphia and Toledo in the 1950s and 1960s? Why did these places vibrate differently than European cities? What went wrong with the American city?

Thousands of pages have been written about the downfall of urban communities. Redlining, blockbusting, urban renewal, ill-conceived highways, the disappearance of manufacturing jobs, and poor governance are but a sample of legitimate, intertwined reasons. Although we may not understand the significance of each of these, there's one

dynamic Americans instinctually get, namely white flight—that collective, unspoken narrative in the minds of more than a few whites which includes thoughts not uttered out of fear of being labeled a racist. *Blacks moved in so we moved out. We could see the city going downhill. Something's wrong with the people who moved in. Look at how they live and how they die in such large numbers at the hands of their neighbors. No way we're living around that. Besides, their kids' test scores are rock bottom. There's good reason why we live in the suburbs.*

Experience in post-1945 America has shown that time and again after a black family moved into a neighborhood, the place remained integrated for only as long as it took the last white family to move out. In the present day, liberals focus on racism, and conservatives silently—or perhaps not so silently these days—seethe over personal behavior they find objectionable. The two camps shout past each other.

In some respects, I'm not so different from the conservative who looks askance at a lot of behavior in urban America. Christine and I spent three and a half years raising our two young boys on 11th Street in Washington DC and for a time, the city placed our house under police protection. For three nights, twenty-foot-tall, gas-powered crime scene lights lit up the front of our townhouse like a movie set. A police van and squad car sat beneath our bedroom window.

The DC government cared nothing for our circumstances per se, but local drug dealers had a problem with me and city officials did not want to see a *Washington Post* article with a storyline that read, “White, married father of two boys shot dead in Columbia Heights.” The visible police presence sent an unambiguous message: “If you kill this man, we will complicate your lives.” At the time, people got killed all the time in Washington D.C., but I was different; my white privilege was working overtime.

Years spent in urban America taught me about racial animosity, contempt, and limits in terms of tolerance and compassion. There's a whole set of candid discussions we're unlikely to ever have at a national level concerning personal behavior and diversity due to political correctness on the one hand and deep-seated racial animosity on the other. In the absence of such a dialog, quality of life suffers.

There is, however, an even more important discussion regarding our past that's required for any meaningful dialog about behavior and diversity to get off the ground.

When living in American cities and confronted with dysfunctional behavior that rubbed my value system the wrong way, I'd often ask, "*What's the matter with them?*" I've since come to believe there's a more productive question for me to be asking, namely, "*What happened to them?*" The first question is rooted in judgment. The second need not preclude judgment but leads to a fair bit more understanding.

Considering the facts—and mindful of the omissions and mythmaking in my high school American history textbook—black Americans were exposed to tremendous levels of intergenerational trauma. Of the six million black Americans who migrated to cities north and west during the Great Migration (1915 through 1970), many were able to move beyond their trauma, thrive and lead productive lives. Others, however, could not.

Growing up, I had a front-row seat watching how trauma played out in my parents' lives. During World War II, my father was wounded and his dive bomber severely damaged in an attack on the Japanese fleet during the Battle of the Coral Sea. Skill and luck saved his life. After returning from the Pacific as a hero celebrated in the Toledo press, he began to drink and it marred a promising life. As a child, my mother was abused by her father in a way that too many women would find hauntingly familiar. She spent her short life chafing against demons, denying her blue-collar roots, and died at age 46. When I consider how these two people were unable to overcome their trauma, why would I presume every black human being in America magically got over the devastating impact of heinous forms of abuse, persistent degradation, and terror at the hands of whites who frequently engaged in forms of torture that closely mirrors Islamic State atrocities? In a very real sense, the Great Migration turned American cities into receptacles of trauma. Just as with my white, relatively privileged parents, that trauma produced dysfunction that reverberates in the present day and degrades quality of life.

5. Barriers to Building at The Human Scale

When I left high tech to study urban planning in Canada in my mid-thirties, Christine and I didn't yet have children and I was indifferent to the difficulties raising a family in an American city and ignorant of black American trauma and its relationship to my own quality of life. Going into graduate school, I was focused on understanding the mechanics of how urban sprawl spread. I wanted to know what barriers stood in the way of creating the kind of walkable, human-scaled environments I valued, the kinds of places I'd experienced years earlier in Europe. Once I understood what the barriers were, I could then determine what, if anything, municipalities were doing to overcome them. If I could identify successful approaches, then they could presumably be replicated elsewhere. The fact my questions were ultimately answered by my thesis research and not as part of the core curriculum says something about urban planning education.

Ultimately, I identified three categories of barriers standing between a developer and the fruition of his human-scaled, mix-use project.ⁱⁱⁱ *Regulatory barriers* prevent him from obtaining plan approval. *Financial barriers* prevent him from getting the project competitively financed. Lastly, *citizen opposition to increased density* contributes to a political atmosphere that reinforces the status quo from a regulatory perspective.

Of the many suburban municipalities across the US that indicated they were attempting to stop building suburban sprawl and start building mixed-use, human-scale development, only one, Gaithersburg, Maryland, was getting consistent results on the ground. They had successfully overcome the barriers using a specific five-day public

ⁱⁱⁱ In my experience, developers have always been men.

process called a design charrette that had been developed by urban designers who I considered visionaries. Having found my golden key, I wanted to put it to use elsewhere.

Out of graduate school, I was hired by Baltimore County, who was ostensibly interested in my research. For me, it seemed an ideal fit because, if widespread change were to come to America regarding a shift in development patterns, the epicenter of that shift would be in municipal government since it's where development plans get approved or rejected.

My objective was to make the design charrette an integral part of the municipality's development regulations, which was a tall order. Gaithersburg did it and I wanted to show that this accomplishment could be replicated elsewhere. Unfortunately, circumstances did not unfold as I'd hoped. After being given the opportunity to leverage my master's thesis and craft a redevelopment policy focusing on distressed "first-ring" suburbs surrounding Baltimore, MD, I witnessed how organizational dysfunction and the political process can co-opt a good idea, dilute it, and ultimately render it impotent. Well-intentioned people who write optimistically about "suburbia running its course" and the "end of sprawl being in sight" have likely spent little time in a municipal planning and development office.

Over the past three decades, mixed-use, human-scale projects have been built, and some talented urban designers have worked with developers who share the vision of a walkable America. This said it's helpful to put the overall impact of these projects into perspective.

California is home to forty million people. And how many new human-scale projects do you think have been built in California over the past thirty years? Depending on your source, the number ranges from between six and thirteen. In other words, not many. I've spent time in two of these mixed-use projects in the San Francisco Bay area. The first, Santana Row, is an upscale outdoor mall with high-end restaurants and luxury condominium units. It's well-designed, but at the end of the day, it's an isolated shopping mall surrounded by suburban sprawl on all sides. The second spot called Laguna West was conceived of as a large mixed-use project, but it is 100% suburban sprawl in execution.

Despite the accomplishments of a handful of designers and developers over the past thirty years, most of what gets built today in California and elsewhere is largely similar to what I grew up in the 1970s. But when I say “the end of suburbia is nowhere in sight,” don’t take my word for it. Open up a web browser, go to realtor.com, and search for new homes in Austin, Cincinnati, Baltimore County, or any place of your choosing. Your search results are going to consist largely of single-family homes with an attached, two-car garage. Repeat the exercise three decades from now and the results will likely be much the same.

My experience in planning offices taught me the limits of pursuing transformative change. It’s exceedingly rare to find what’s required on the part of local politicians, developers, and municipal planners to stop building urban sprawl and start building at the human scale. Vision, knowledge, and leadership are needed from each group for anything to change, and the right mixture of these qualities doesn’t exist outside a handful of jurisdictions where education and income levels are higher than average. The net effect is that quality of life’s cornerstone is missing outside traditional cities and most middle-class families are faced with a choice between auto-dependent isolation and urban dysfunction.

6. Greater Levels of Freedom Outside America

A few years ago, our then twelve-year-old daughter mentioned that she'd walked to a grocery store in Halifax with a friend to pick up a few things for her friend's parents. At the time, I thought it unremarkable as the store sits eight blocks from our house, and she and I had walked there in the past. The thing is, there are few if any American cities I've lived in, visited, or otherwise know of where white, middle-class tween girls are walking around in an urban environment alone. The age and degree to which middle-class children in Halifax are free to navigate the city depend upon parenting style, personality, and gender. But at some point, kids do negotiate the place on their terms.

In America, much is made of freedom yet our children and their peers in Halifax operate with a level of autonomy and independence that could not be easily replicated south of the 49th parallel.⁶ Suburban sprawl requires children to spend inordinate amounts of time in CO2-emitting vehicles, sitting in traffic, walled off from others traveling through fractured landscapes that are impractical and unpleasant to travel through on foot. Simultaneously, dynamics put in play by slavery and white supremacy have contributed to the production of violence, poverty, hatred, fear, and anxiety in the lives of children and adults alike that make navigating most traditional urban environments a non-starter for the middle class. The proliferation of concealed carry (gun) laws across the country suggests fear resides in suburbia as well.

In contrast, our children live in an urban environment where not only do young people experience freedom of mobility, but also freedom from fear. As for their parents, I've never known or read of a single person who's expressed the need to carry a concealed weapon to protect themselves from fellow Canadians.

Slavery's feedback loops in America shape a culture that, at first glance, grows increasingly authoritative and antithetical to freedom in a broader sense. The historical record, however, reveals that today's dysfunction is but an extension of the past. Thomas Jefferson, for example, lived a lavish lifestyle, was frequently in debt, and owned over six-hundred human beings during his lifetime. He bought and sold them as if they were stocks to pay his many bills. Jefferson's regrets about slavery never got in the way of profit, and indeed he wrote to George Washington in 1798 pointing out that he was making four percent per year off the birth of black children without so much as lifting a finger. In one respect, Thomas Jefferson helped establish a national creed which says most anything is acceptable in America regardless of the cost to others, so long as it generates sufficient sums of cash for the right people. This is not an expression of cynicism, but rather a clarification regarding precisely what the historical record reveals.

As the descendant of a seventeenth-century Puritan named John Cass, I understand the whole freedom narrative. As a child, I was taught to consider people like my earliest relatives—who settled in Rockingham, New Hampshire in 1640—to be proof that the bedrock of American society is freedom. In the context of this reassuring narrative, I was given my middle name, Cass, in honor of my first cousin (four generations removed) Senator Lewis Cass who, as the Democratic Party's nominee for President of the United States, narrowly lost the election of 1848.⁷ His relevance to my story is that he was the first to articulate what amounted to be a racial doctrine that was designed to accommodate enslaving black Americans as the nation grew westward.⁸ Implementation of the "Cass Doctrine," in the form of national legislation, contributed directly to the outbreak of the Civil War.

I need look no further than my birth certificate to find an example of how, as Americans, we're influenced by inaccurate narratives regarding our past. My parents named me after a family member who was understood to be a hero when in fact, he was something quite different.⁹ Lewis's most consequential contribution to American culture was his central role in the degradation and exploitation of others. As Secretary of War under President Andrew Jackson (Trump's favorite president),¹⁰ Lewis Cass was responsible for removing all native peoples from lands east of the Mississippi River.¹¹ As

a leader of the Democratic Party, he successfully advanced constitutional arguments claiming white men could bring black men, women, and children into territories as property and keep them enslaved up until the point where yet-to-be-drafted state constitutions said otherwise.¹²

Deep-seated social problems that negatively affect freedom originate with powerful men like Lewis Cass and Thomas Jefferson—the kind of men who make decisions that irreparably harm human well-being in the name of individual liberties for the privileged, or otherwise powerful.¹³ Power imbalances of this sort undermine freedom and quality of life by producing lasting, morphing dysfunction.^{iv} These same power imbalances feed an American narrative regarding freedom that is not aligned with reality.

My claim that, as Canadians, our children enjoy a level of freedom that does not exist in the United States is rooted in more than perception. Various non-governmental organizations and think tanks measure levels of freedom within countries using metrics relevant to political rights, civil liberties, and economic opportunity. Each organization's mission and ideological orientation influence the selection and relative importance of the metrics they analyze. These organizations all compile a freedom index that ranks countries based on the scores produced by their analysis. Importantly, in none of these indices do we find the United States at the top of any list.

The oldest and arguably most prominent organization to produce a freedom ranking is Freedom House. Established in 1941 with the support of President Roosevelt, Freedom House's initial *raison d'être* was to counter isolationist sentiment at home by acknowledging the specter of fascism abroad. Bipartisan in nature, Freedom House's metrics are derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their most recent report ranks the United States 53rd out of 210 countries, placing it in the company of Croatia and Mongolia. Canada, by comparison, is ranked 4th. More broadly, it doesn't matter if the organization doing the freedom analysis is the business-oriented Economist Intelligence Unit, a libertarian-oriented Cato Institute, or the Fraser Institute; the bottom

^{iv} In Part II, I tell you more about Lewis Cass's central role in laying the groundwork for social dysfunction.

line is that the United States is not considered to be the freest nation on earth by any measure.

Countries consistently considered to be the freest in the world include those in Western Europe as well as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. What all these capitalist nations share in common is a commitment to social democratic policies widely rejected in the United States— policies like universal health care, subsidized child care, and higher marginal tax rates. Widespread support for these kinds of policies can be found in a homogenous country like Finland, a moderately diverse country like New Zealand, and a highly diverse country like Canada.

In the United States, any public figure who advocates for policies widely supported elsewhere is accused of wanting to turn the country into the boogeyman known as Venezuela—an authoritarian country that appears near the bottom of all freedom indexes. The social democratic policies conservative critics denounce are characteristics of the freest nations on earth. It's also worth noting that Venezuela and the United States share important traits in common in that both are plagued by high levels of income inequality and violence in a way that the freest nations on earth are not.

Having lived for years in both the United States and Canada I feel—in a visceral sense—somewhat freer in the latter. I value waking up each day knowing the clerk at my drugstore has the same healthcare I have. It doesn't upset me that some middle-class friends of ours receive monthly child benefit payments that my family's not eligible for. It seems reasonable to me that university tuition assistance is available to some kids, but not our own. I feel relieved living in a country where people of lesser means don't vote against their economic self-interest. And I value being part of a society in which I'm not considered left-wing because I don't begrudge paying more in taxes than I would in America to help make this stuff happen. These kinds of policies contribute directly to freedom by making better neighbors. If you want to live in a walkable, human-scale environment, the material and mental well-being of the people in your country matters a great deal.

7. The Sunlit Prison's Endgame

The way in which slavery's feedback loops play out in unacknowledged ways in American life, coupled with the fact that local politicians, planners, and developers habitually blanket the landscape with suburban sprawl produced within me a deep sense of confusion and dissatisfaction. It was the dissatisfaction that fueled the journey.

It wasn't any one thing but rather a whole lot of things over twenty years: the murder of a friend and the general sense of despair in my mother's blue-collar Philadelphia; the leafy suburban isolation and loneliness in swanky northern New Jersey; the car-choked madness of Tysons Corner; the work-first culture, shifting demographics, and gang activity in Arlington; the discourteous element and attendant alienation in Boston; the abandoned ruins that characterized my father's city of Toledo; the false promise of statewide land use planning and environmental destruction in Oregon; the ribbon of affluence that bisected Baltimore and the abyss that surrounded it; and finally, the racial conflict and violence that permeated our lives in Washington DC.

I knew life outside the U.S.A. was different enough. I'd not forgotten what I'd experienced in Europe living on borrowed cash. I'd lived that emotional life again with Christine for over three years in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Halifax. These experiences and others like them over the years fueled a desire to not let go of something fundamental that I wanted for myself—namely, to live life on my feet in the absence of fear. A seemingly trivial ask, but, in hindsight, one difficult to grant in a nation unaware of what's been lost through its attachment to the cul-de-sac and disassociation from what 322 years of slavery has cost us all.

In 1949, James Baldwin wrote of being “trapped and immobilized in the sunlit prison of the American dream.” It’s a prison that’s as relevant to the life of a married, middle-aged father of three as it was to a brilliant, twenty-four-year-old black writer living in Harlem over seventy years ago. For me, the sunlit prison is the product of slavery and sprawl’s feedback loops: a culture marred by fear, violence, vacuous materialism, poor health, intense hero-worship, the devaluing of education, environmental destruction, and a sense of disconnectedness from each other and the natural world around us. It’s a culture that feeds on itself and grows stronger with time. It’s not a challenging exercise to consider the conditions listed and match them up with observed life in a nation where most public school children are eligible for subsidized lunches, and seven out of ten will struggle with the burden of being obese or overweight once they enter adulthood. The gap between the dream sold and the experience delivered is significant.

My search for home was about finding a way out of this prison. I didn’t escape when I crossed the Canadian border. What I’d seen and experienced stuck with me and I only began to feel free once I could make sense of it all, which took time. In the end, two principal lessons regarding the prison’s endgame stood out.

The first is that the production of bad human habitat will remain the norm in America, endlessly pursuing development that fractures us socially, harms our health, and is disastrous for us environmentally. Constructing communities around the automobile rather than the human being will go down in history as one of the biggest tragedies mankind’s ever produced. The quality of life I’ve experienced in Halifax will remain elusive for most because local politicians, developers, and the planners who serve as their lackeys have little knowledge of and less interest in engaging in the work of overcoming the barriers to human-scale development.

The second lesson is that the United States is politically polarized today just as it was in 1854 and, as a result, the nation is unable to address the biggest issues of our time, with a profound impact on quality of life. I’ll explain 1854’s relevance to my story shortly, but right now just understand that the principal issue that year was accommodating people’s desire to enslave human beings as the nation grew westward. Today, it’s trauma-saturated cities, climate change, healthcare, income inequality, a woman’s right to choose when to have a child, and racial justice. If you don’t

acknowledge a pathological past and deal with it, you stay stuck in it, unable to even start to heal. This holds true regardless of whether you're talking about an individual or a nation. And that's precisely America's predicament—two fundamentally different worldviews pitted against each other to a degree that does not exist in Canada or any other Western country I've spent time in outside the United States.

PART II The Slaveholding Republic's Legacy

8. Core Values Shaped During the Slaveholding Republic

I didn't randomly pick the year 1854 out of a hat. America has been intensely *politically* polarized during exactly two periods of time. The first was triggered in 1854, produced a civil war in 1861, and faded by 1877. The second was triggered in 1964, produced a Donald Trump in 2016, and shows no signs of diminishing. Intense political polarization has only existed in America after periods in which sufficient numbers of white politicians took steps that threatened America's white supremacist state.^v Understanding the nature of this political polarization, then and now, clarified a great deal for me in terms of why it was difficult for me to find home in America.^{vi}

I said earlier that history is much closer to me and more relevant than I'd comprehended as a kid. My perception of time's passage has changed. Summer vacation at age eight lasted a good long time. This past year went by in a blaze. It's been twenty-seven years since my first date with Christine, yet I can remember everything as if it happened yesterday—walking up onto the front porch the first time, her appearance at the door in a white summer dress and cowboy boots, the rooftop dinner at Perry's in Adams Morgan, the warmth of the air, and my happiness in her presence. All of this remains imprinted upon my memory.

^v Later in Part IV, I briefly describe the evolution of the civil rights movement that began shortly after World War II. Mindful of limited progress on civil rights in the 1940s and 1950s, for the purposes of this book I consider the U.S. to be a full-out white supremacist society up until passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which dismantled segregation. This is a simplification of what I am saying in Part IV, but useful in that it provides structure around which to understand what's happened to us.

^{vi} As this story unfolds the central importance of the years 1854 and 1964 will become clear. For now just know they are the two years in which two distinct periods of intense political polarization were triggered in America.

My grandmother Nellie was born in 1882, which is an admittedly unusual statement to make in the year 2023 given one of our three children is still in high school. In 1915, at the age of 33, Nellie gave birth to my father. My father, in turn, was 48 when I came along in 1963—an event made possible by my mother who had not yet turned 30.

As a young boy in the mid-1960s, I'd visit my grandmother's house in Toledo and ride a little red fire truck around in the backyard. It was a magical place for my three-year-old self. Nellie was well into her 80s by then, yet still very independent, managing a Sunday roast fine on her own. Standing by her side near the stove, I'd feel a sense of peace that I didn't experience elsewhere. I adored her tremendously.

Nellie Cass was born twenty-eight years after political polarization solidified in 1854, and her immediate family incurred the costs. Her father's four older brothers fought in the civil war that polarization produced. Three died as a result. Her own grandfather's first cousin, the aforementioned Lewis Cass, served as U.S. Secretary of State up until a few days before South Carolina seceded from the Union, resigning in protest when Abraham Lincoln's predecessor, President Buchanan, refused to reinforce federal military installations in the South.

I inherited a family history written by Nellie's mother and read aloud at Cass family reunions held through World War I. It includes a page devoted to Lewis's accomplishments on the national stage as well as personal anecdotes that shed light on his moral character and his "kindly feeling for humanity." Reading my great-grandmother's writing, however, I find a poignant example of how the stories we tell ourselves regarding American goodness can bear little resemblance to the historical record. There were many in the 1850s who held an entirely different view of who Lewis Cass was and what he represented.

With the events of 1854 on their mind, *Harper's Weekly* published a political cartoon created by John L. Magee in 1856 titled, "Forcing Slavery Down the Throat of a Freesoiler."¹⁴ The image depicts Lewis Cass's central role in triggering America's first period of political polarization. It features four Lilliputian-sized white men working together to force a black man down the throat of a much larger white man who's physically tied down to a wooden platform labeled "Kansas." Two pint-sized men stand

in the foreground. One is dumping the black man into the bound man's throat. His name is Senator Steven Douglas. The other is grabbing the bound man's hair to force his head back to do the deed as the victim screams "Murder!" That man is Senator Lewis Cass. The other two I'll return to shortly.

The cartoon expresses outrage over Congress's passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. This legislation was intended to address the single most volatile, divisive question facing the nation, namely how to accommodate Southern demands to expand slavery into new territories. To understand Kansas-Nebraska's relevance to today, I'd like to provide context which is central to my life in America.

Historians make an important point when they say the United States was, in a literal sense, a slaveholding republic. On the eve of America's War of Independence, the towering English writer Samuel Johnson quipped, "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" In 1790, one year after the Constitution was officially adopted, nearly one out of every five people in the United States was enslaved.¹⁵ During America's first eighty-five years as a nation, slavery, and federal policy—both foreign and domestic—were deeply intertwined, with all three branches of government supporting slavery's existence and expansion. Most presidents preceding Lincoln were slave owners. When Lewis Cass narrowly lost the presidency to Zachary Taylor in 1848, America got its tenth slaveholding president—out of its first twelve.¹⁶ Throughout this time, slave-based cotton production was proving an ever more profitable and brutal enterprise which, by the 1850s, produced three-quarters of the world's cotton output. American capitalism would certainly have developed in the absence of slavery, but it didn't. The historical record is clear; American capitalism was built on slavery, and slavery was its defining economic characteristic in 1854. Throughout this period, a perverse set of values rooted in degradation, brutality, and seeing people as "other" was shaping American society in ways both obvious and unseen.

So, to what extent would the United States expand slavery into new places where it made economic sense to do so? Since the nation's founding, Southerners believed the Constitution authorized the federal government to protect their right to enslave people in new territories. Many Northerners claimed the federal government had the authority to

deny this right. Both sides believed they had congressional precedent to justify their position which considerably exacerbated tensions.¹⁷

To secure the Democratic nomination as a northerner from Michigan in 1848, Lewis Cass articulated a different approach, arguing that the people in the territories themselves had the inherent right to determine whether or not whites could enslave blacks. In this way, he reasoned, this increasingly contentious debate would be removed from the halls of Congress and decided by the people themselves. Referred to as both “popular sovereignty” and the “Cass Doctrine,” the underlying ideas were not his alone, but Cass became in effect the nation’s leading spokesman for what amounted to a racial policy designed to appease slaveholding interests determined to shape American society in their image.

The increasing tensions Cass sought to eliminate with popular sovereignty were sectional (i.e., North vs. South) rather than political. Support for slavery existed in each of the two major political parties of the time – the Whigs and Democrats. This said, northern Whigs and Democrats opposing slavery repeatedly found themselves in conflict with southern Whigs and Democrats who argued for slavery’s expansion. The bitterness of these disagreements becomes more apparent when you consider that after 1830, there were over seventy separate incidents in Congress involving beatings, stabbings, and duels between congressmen in the years leading to civil war.¹⁸ Sectionalism was an issue long before political parties realigned to amplify hatreds and animosities. This is the backdrop against which Kansas-Nebraska came about.

Understanding why Kansas-Nebraska unfolded as it did is a matter of following the money, and not losing sight of the aforementioned national creed.^{vii} While Lewis Cass was selling his racial doctrine to the American people in 1848, Stephen Douglas was serving his first year as a United States senator representing the state of Illinois. That year, Douglas also became a land speculator and began buying up 160 acres in what is

^{vii} That national creed again says that almost anything is acceptable in America regardless of the cost to others, so long as it generates sufficient sums of cash for the right people. This is, of course, a human impulse found across the globe, but when considering the major Western nations, this impulse is most prominent in the United States. In saying this, I also recognize that regardless of our considerable pathologies no other nation on Earth is more central to preserving and expanding human freedom, hence the relevance of this story.

today the South Side of Chicago in the vicinity of 31st Street and College Grove Avenue.¹⁹ Like any good speculator, Douglas wanted to increase the value of his assets, and what better way to do so than to make your property the terminus of a yet-to-be-constructed transcontinental railroad?

The problem was, a route between his land and the Pacific coast would require the railroad to run through a large swath of ungoverned land between Iowa and present-day Utah. As a practical matter, the federal government could not involve itself in what amounted to a large public-private partnership with two different railroad companies until that land was organized into one or more territories governed by law. To make that happen, Douglas needed the support of Southerners in Congress who, it turns out, wanted the transcontinental railroad built in the South. So, what could Stephen Douglas offer conservative Southerners that they didn't already have in exchange for their support?

His bargaining chip was, in a literal sense, human freedom. Going into 1854, there was a law on the books that disallowed slavery west of Missouri on land that sat above a line of latitude defined by Missouri's southern border. Douglas reasoned that he could do away with this law and replace it with one based on the Cass doctrine. In this way, Southerners could realize an opportunity to enslave people in two newly created territories called Kansas and Nebraska—land that had previously and begrudgingly been considered off-limits to enslavers. Southerners would profit from enslaving people in new territories. Douglas would profit from inflated land values in the wake of establishing territorial governance and constructing a transcontinental railroad. Everybody who mattered won.

After President Franklin Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act into law, it proved to be a perverse solution to an equally perverse problem. Settlers supportive of enslavement streamed in from slaveholding states to expand their way of life. Free-state settlers streamed in from the North and established separate communities. Pro-slavery elements attacked and intimidated free-state settlers with sufficient regularity that northern newspapers began writing blistering articles about "Bleeding Kansas." Once implemented, the Cass doctrine simply provided the country with a preview of the large-scale violence that would envelop America in 1861.

Kansas-Nebraska threatened and outraged most northerners, compelling anti-slavery Democrats and Whigs to leave their respective parties and create a new one to explicitly oppose slavery's westward expansion. They called themselves Republicans and their arrival on the political scene in 1854 marked the start of 22 years of political polarization with consequences for Americans of all colors.

Although not every new Republican sought racial justice, if you were a socially liberal progressive politician living in the Northeast in 1854, you were a Republican. If you were a conservative who was either tolerant or outright supportive of enslaving humans, then you called yourself a Democrat. To be clear, most Republicans, by and large, did not oppose slavery's expansion out of a sense of humanitarianism. They opposed it for economic reasons, as they did not want slavery to compete even further with paid labor than it already did in America. More broadly, these new Republicans did not want to live in a country where political power perpetually resided in the hands of slaveholding states. Unfortunately for them, this was where the country appeared to be heading in 1854.

Returning to Magee's *Forcing slavery down the throat of a freesoiler*, we can begin to consider its relevance to quality of life in the present day. Magee published the illustration during the 1856 presidential campaign as an expression of Republican anger over a conservative Democratic party platform and the positions of its leaders. That platform emphasized states' rights as it pertained exclusively to slavery, mirroring the central points made in secession papers drafted by the eleven Confederate states four years later. Reading that platform, you learn it threatens "civil war" and "disunion" if "sectional parties" (i.e., Republicans) interfere with slavery's expansion in the territories. Magee's captive freesoiler is a Republican forced to endure the consequences of living with this platform. Behind him, a fire rages and a man hangs from a noose in a tree, communicating that, by 1856, the Cass doctrine had failed miserably in Kansas. The name "Cuba" appears on the platform, reminding us that Democrats were taking steps to expand America's slave empire into the Caribbean. We see two other Lilliputian characters assisting Douglas and Cass with their crime. President Pierce kneels on the other side of Douglas, yanking the freesoiler's beard down to open his mouth.

Democratic presidential nominee James Buchanan stands on the far side of Cass to assist with forcing back the victim's head. The scene is one of national tragedy.

Magee's illustration depicts a deeply conservative, pro-slavery Democratic party led by four self-serving northerners who Republicans held in contempt for bending over backward to accommodate slaveholding interests to hold onto political power. Although Buchanan would win the presidency in 1856, he'd do it with little support from northern states. For the first time in American history, people living in the North and South were expressing fundamentally incompatible outlooks on issues at the polls. Four years later, political polarization intensified further, and our civil war was born.

We tell ourselves we're a different nation now. Our civil war changed us and made us better. The war transformed a collection of states into a single nation, a more perfect union with the expectation that we'll continue to improve our condition and serve as a beacon for mankind. It's a compelling narrative, but one that is both incomplete and inaccurate. Magee's illustration focused on political leadership and a Democratic party platform that were ephemeral—core elements of a slaveholding republic that did not survive our civil war. What did survive, however, are the slaveholding republic's fundamental characteristics and values. They shape what is possible and what is not in the present day regarding the quality of the lives we lead.

9. The Continuity of American Life

Political polarization in America largely disappeared by 1876. That year, the Supreme Court handed down a ruling in favor of white southern paramilitaries that effectively declared open season on blacks and extinguished any hope of preserving the civil liberties that briefly blossomed after the war's end.²⁰ The following year, the last remaining union troops were removed from southern states as part of a backroom presidential deal giving Republicans the presidency after a deadlocked election. Political polarization ended when white males—North and South—came to a tacit, national agreement that they'd set aside racial justice to accommodate white supremacy.

That agreement established a certain degree of cultural continuity. Before the war, daily life in the South featured the widespread use of black women as breeders, whippings, mutilation, and murder as a means of correction, routine splitting of families, the favored practice of rape amongst white slaveholding men, the outlawing of education, and the inability to move freely without identification papers. After the war, daily life—for black and white—was punctuated by paramilitary campaigns that eliminated nascent civil liberties, widespread lynching in the form of macabre mutilation for the live entertainment of thousands of white spectators, lynching postcards as keepsakes, the criminalization of black life, and the re-enslavement of tens of thousands in brutal, inhuman conditions to serve the needs of business cycles and corporate interests such as U.S. Steel.

Although America's entry into World War II prompted the Justice Department to stamp out lingering, contemporary forms of slavery, pervasive values in the slaveholding states were largely unchanged relative to what they'd been a hundred years earlier. This

reality, coupled with economic dislocation in the South, and opportunity in cities North and West, would eventually compel another five million to join the million or so black Americans who migrated before the Great Depression. Once out of the south, they found life improved, but only by a degree. Racist government policies and white hatred expressed in a thousand different ways had the net effect of boxing in newly arriving migrants into decaying sections of cities. Those same policies ensured that the decay would expand with time.

The Great Migration began the year my father was born in 1915 and ended fifty-five years later in 1970. During the first four decades, cities provided migrants with relatively stable, working-class manufacturing jobs that made community life viable for black men and women, despite persistent racism, inherited trauma, low wages, police brutality, poor housing conditions, and denial of financial capital in the form of mortgages.

By 1955, however, these manufacturing jobs had begun to disappear in cities across the nation. They weren't yet going to Japan, Mexico, or China. In most cases, they were moving to adjacent, recently constructed, white-only suburbs that were receiving large public subsidies in the form of highway and road spending, as well as mortgage deductions. This shift was, in fact, an economic transformation that left black Americans increasingly isolated in economically marginalized communities. Although this transformation took time to unfold, it had momentum by the time I was born in 1963. And by the summer of 1967, anyone paying attention might have concluded that the viability of urban life in America was unraveling as widespread rioting and violence erupted across the country.

10. Family Connections to Place, War, and Trauma

Nine months before the long hot summer of 1967 played out on televisions across America, my father had moved me and my mother from New Jersey back to his hometown of Toledo, Ohio. We lived in the suburbs, fifteen minutes by car from where he and his four brothers had grown up in the city in the 1920s and early 1930s. My grandmother Nellie lived in the same American Foursquare house, which at the time, was still lined with well-maintained homes and towering street trees.

Nellie was the sun around which my family orbited and she was deeply loved by everyone I knew. My mother was drawn to her warmth and a sort of midwestern wholesomeness and respectability missing in her own upbringing. Nellie and my grandfather—who had passed away by then—were of modest means yet all five boys went to college during the Depression to study engineering and law. During the war, four served as commissioned officers, and the fifth worked as a chemical engineer with Sun Oil producing synthetic rubber and high-octane gasoline for aircraft.

After my father returned from the Pacific in 1942, the city's newspaper, the Toledo Blade, published a handful of articles about him with titles such as, "Hero Honored. Lieutenant Moan Gets Navy Cross: Sank Three Jap Cruisers, Tender," going on to say, "The Navy Cross has been presented to Lieut. Floyd E. Moan, Toledo, credited with sinking three Japanese Cruisers and an aviation tender during the Coral Sea battle, according to a United Press dispatch." Another week, an editorial read, "The community has a feeling of warm pride over the awarding of the Navy Cross to Lieut. Floyd E. Moan, Toledo hero of the Coral Sea... The war will produce many heroes, but being one of the first is important. Such heroes encourage others to follow because they are an

inspiration.” Beneath the title, “Toledo Pilot Escapes Death,” was an article describing the series of challenges my father faced on his last day in combat, including being wounded during repeated attacks by Japanese fighter aircraft, and a mission that ended with a crash landing on the deck of his carrier. The Boy Scouts of America took out a full-page ad letting readers know he’d earned the coveted achievement of Eagle Scout in the service of community before serving his country.

Four of Nellie’s five boys served in uniform. The fifth worked as a chemical engineer producing aviation fuel. In late 1944, when they were reunited for the first time since the outbreak of war, the Toledo Blade published an article titled, “M-Day Unites 5 Moan Brothers First Time Since Pearl Harbor.” Months later in 1945, a Blade title read, “U.S. Cruiser Toledo Launched at Camden. Mrs. Edward J. Moan [Nellie] Christens Vessel as Four Sons Look On.” The article begins by clarifying why the Navy honored Nellie as it did saying, “Toledo joined the world’s greatest navy at 9:30 this morning. With unerring aim, Mrs. Edward J. Moan of 3836 Revere Drive, the mother of four service sons, one an outstanding Naval aviation hero [my father], shattered a bottle of Island champagne across the bow of the heavy cruiser Toledo and sent her sliding into the Delaware river from the ways of the New York Shipbuilding Co. this morning.”

As a four-year-old boy in the summer of 1967, I’d not read these articles linking my family to the city of Toledo. In a similar vein, I only vaguely comprehend the reverence that my uncles, aunts, and all my older cousins had for my grandmother, for I was the youngest out of them all. Eighty-one years separated Nellie’s birthday from my own.

No one quite understood my father or what had happened to him. His brothers just knew he’d become someone different from the rest of them and it wasn’t because he’d gotten a Harvard MBA or that he’d started work on his Ph.D. at Michigan. It was his demons and his belligerence. Nobody else in the family drank heavily, abused their spouse, or had difficulty keeping a job. It was only recently that I was able to make sense of it all.

An official Navy “after action report” details the activities of my father’s aircraft carrier on the final day of the Battle of the Coral Sea. When describing the recovery of Yorktown’s air group—returning after an attack on the Japanese fleet on May 8, 1942—

the report calls attention to only one severely damaged aircraft, describing the condition of the plane, its wounded pilot, and rear seat gunner. In another section describing the effectiveness of armor and self-sealing gas tanks, the report refers again to this same airplane, using it as an example of the unexpected amount of damage that an aircraft could sustain in battle. Later, the report details specific damage “suffered” by the air group, organized by aircraft type. This same airplane is described again for a third time, as being so badly damaged that it crashed on landing and was a total wreck. The plane in question was the one flown by my father and based on the report’s contents, his was the most heavily damaged aircraft to make it back that day to Yorktown.

In 2015, the Washington Post published an article written by journalist Tim Madigan titled, “Their war ended 70 years ago. Their trauma didn’t.”²¹ With the article on my screen, I immediately recognized the accompanying photograph of helmeted crewmen with fire hoses on the deck of the Yorktown shortly after Japanese dive bombers struck the ship during the Battle of Midway. The photo was taken four weeks after my father and his gunner were pulled out of their aircraft on that same deck. Sitting there, looking at the photograph and re-reading the title, I thought about the odds of that specific image being paired with a story that I’d never heard told before, but one that I’d lived with my entire life.

Sixteen million Americans served in the armed forces during the war. Of the roughly eight million who saw combat, over a million suffered from debilitating neuropsychiatric conditions.²² American filmmaker John Huston—known for legendary films such as the African Queen starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn—completed a documentary for the U.S. Army in 1946 titled “Let There Be Light.” The cameras follow a group of 75 men through an eight-week program at one of the VA’s 30 neuropsychiatric hospitals. In the film, we see hollow-eyed GIs who recently returned from battlefields in Europe and the Pacific. One young man was not wounded, but cannot walk. Another stutters. Others tremble or cry. We learn that they share a palpable fear of death and for good reason.

Huston’s stated purpose in making the film was, as he said, to “show how men who suffered mental damage in the service should not be written off but could be helped by psychiatric treatment.” He goes on to say, “The original idea was that the film be

shown to those who would be able to give employment in industry, to reassure them that the men discharged under this section were not insane, but were employable, as trustworthy as anyone.”²³ The film’s optimistic conclusion gives clear indication Huston hoped his efforts would help Americans continue to heal in civilian life.

Literally minutes before the documentary’s premiere at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, military policemen confiscated the film. The Army claimed privacy concerns, even though patients had signed releases and responded positively to the idea of seeing themselves on screen. Those releases, however, subsequently went missing without explanation. When Huston told the Army that he’d reach out to the men individually and ask for letters of clearance, the War Department said no. In actuality, the Army believed that allowing the general public to see soldiers suffering from the psychological wounds of war would dampen the enthusiasm to enlist. More generally, the film ran counter to the prevailing warrior ethos and made the egregious error of showing black and white soldiers being treated together, side by side with equal amounts of dignity. This, at a time when the military segregated men by race.²⁴ The film would remain suppressed for another thirty-four years until 1980.

Reading Madigan’s article and watching the film helped me to comprehend that there’d never been any discussion in my family regarding a link between my father’s combat experience and his behavior.²⁵ I found that people commenting on the article offered insight as valuable as the article itself, noting that depression, suicide attempts, alcoholism, and violence were themes in the lives of many who fought in Europe and the Pacific. These issues were simply never discussed in terms of PTSD, which is why a sense of gratitude pervaded comments that called attention to both Madigan’s article and the reflections of others who shared what they observed and experienced.

11. We Have Toledo They Have Wolfsburg

Toledo is considered a has-been city by many today, but it was once a place that many felt was worth fighting for. When the five Moan brothers were growing up on Revere Drive, Toledo bustled. My family moved onto the street in 1922, at a time when just about anything you could imagine was made in the city—exquisite mission furniture, stylish sewing machines, player pianos, clothing, a vast array of machinery, and automobile glass. As a boy, my dad sold newspapers at a busy intersection called Five Points, where he could catch a streetcar to anywhere in the city. Shops and businesses lined sections of nearby Sylvania Avenue. Three and four-story brick buildings dominated the downtown, much of it expressing the best in American architecture, rivaling anything found in Europe. You could visit four major department stores, a variety of banks, and potentially work at any number of large companies headquartered in the city.²⁶

When my dad returned to Toledo on break from the U.S. Naval Academy in the 1930s, he'd find downtown sidewalks full of people at various times of day and night. Toledo gave us Art Tatum, one of the greatest jazz pianists in history. Then there's Jon Hendricks, a twenty-something Tatum coaxed into playing with him in an after-hours club patronized by the police. This, at a time when Hendricks was barely fourteen years old. He'd later earn the title of poet laureate of jazz, performing in a trio simply called Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, an ensemble that *Jazz Times* described as “the most remarkable vocal group jazz has ever known.”

And of all the things that ever came out of Toledo, nothing is more widely recognizable than the iconic Army jeep that participated in every American military

engagement in World War II. Toledoans built 60% of the 900,000 jeeps produced during the war at the Willy's Overland Plant, just a three-minute drive from where my grandparents raised my dad and his brothers.

With this kind of history, I ask myself, why did Toledo implode? Why did my family's city—like so many others—go in such a different direction than, say, German manufacturing cities that are well regarded for the quality of life—places like Stuttgart, Munich, or Wolfsburg? Why does a house on Revere Drive today sell for less than one-third of Ohio's median sale price, with many of them in foreclosure?²⁷

Wolfsburg is an economically viable, clean, progressive city of 124,000 where over half work directly for Volkswagen. Wolfsburg produces cars, yet political leadership took steps thirty years ago to prioritize pedestrians over vehicles by converting the city's main commercial street from a four-lane road used by ninety thousand cars a day to a wide pedestrian boulevard that serves as the vibrant core of the city.²⁸ Twenty years ago, the city of Wolfsburg and Volkswagen formed a public/private partnership that fosters stakeholder involvement and shared decision-making targeting initiatives that improve economic vitality and enhance a vibrant urban center. At present, the partnership is focusing on reshaping 18 hectares of underutilized waterfront property into a bustling mixed-use neighborhood.²⁹

The giant car plant sits opposite the city on the other side of a canal. Standing on the bank of this canal with your back to the city, you'd see the Autostadt, part world-class museum and part customer center where you can pick up a newly purchased Volkswagen in style. The Autostadt attracts over two million visitors a year, which accounts for the Ritz Carlton adjacent to the complex's power plant. In the winter, you could swim in the hotel's heated, forty-foot outdoor pool, survey the scene, and contemplate the list of reasons often given for the socioeconomic wreckage found in a city like Toledo. Chief among these is that abandonment was the inevitable result of globalization and the by-product of automation. Others place blame on the unions who they say asked for too much.

When you look at a country like Germany however, these kinds of arguments begin to ring hollow and suggest something more is going on. Whereas America's traditional manufacturing cities are places to avoid, many German equivalents are cities

that tourists seek out on their European vacations. In Germany, you'll find a significantly high percentage of workers in the manufacturing sector belong to a union called IG Metall.³⁰ Globalization doesn't stop at the German border, and Germany has more industrial robots than the United States.³¹ At the same time, German manufacturing workers make more than their American counterparts and work shorter weeks.³²

The point here is not to depict Germany as some uber-ethical workers' paradise or urban utopia. Volkswagen, you may know, paid out \$14 billion in fines after getting caught selling diesel vehicles designed to pass emission tests, when in fact they were pumping out 40 times more nitrogen oxide than allowable by law. The country has a greater level of wealth inequality than any other Western nation except the United States.³³ The German government has implemented policies that incentivize temporary labor and short-term employment relationships which erode wages for less skilled workers.³⁴ Germans describe their fifth largest city, Duisburg, as a rustbelt city that has a growing problem with Kurdish, Turkish, and Arab gangs and has become dependent upon Chinese investment.³⁵ Germany has real-world problems requiring solutions. With all this in mind, however, what can be stated credibly, is that Germany does not have the kinds of issues found in Toledo and many other American cities with identical pathologies.

A few years back, the Toledo Blade ran an article titled, "Poor decisions accelerated decline of Toledo's downtown." It points out that many now openly acknowledge that public officials and titans of industry made one bad planning decision after another, shaping a Toledo that is, in every respect, the polar opposite of a city like Munich or Stuttgart. Summarizing the situation, the authors write, "The sad shape of large sections of downtown Toledo – rows of vacant buildings, gap tooth sections with empty structures separated with parking lots, looming giants of brick and steel that haven't seen habitation in decades—didn't just happen."

A public/private dialog with clear aims to foster vibrancy and quality of life never took place in Toledo. Quite the opposite. Instead, the private sector pushed the municipal government to extend water lines outside city limits to promote unfettered suburban sprawl. Corporations moved outside the city limits, leaving buildings empty and under-

utilized. Municipal engineers widened roads making them inhospitable to pedestrians. Wrecking crews destroyed block after block of historic buildings. In their place, the powers that be built alienating post-war expressions of modernity or nothing at all. You might be forgiven for thinking that all levels of government – local, state, and federal – planned for Toledo’s eventual implosion. As you’ll see, that’s largely what happened, and I find it heartbreaking.

12. Might Have Been My Bedford Falls

My aunt Suzi had the most infectious of laughs long after her marriage to my uncle in 1944. Visiting Ohio with Christine in the late 1990s, I stood at the front doorway and soaked in the familiar, delightful, whooping greeting she showered me with as a child. She had a habit of speaking her mind without being offensive and on this visit, she raised the subject of my being Nellie's favorite grandchild. Looking at me with a smile she said, "Patrick, you were her favorite, but it's because she felt guilty about your father." I laughed, loving her candor. Whatever the reasons for Nellie's affection, time spent with my grandmother left an imprint on me. The breadth of what's possible to comprehend at age four however has its limitations.

Looking up at flowers bordering Nellie's backyard, during visits in the summer of 1967, they seemed so high. Sitting in the seat of the little red fire truck, I'd press my legs into the grass and scoot in the direction of the detached garage in the back. Flowers drew closer, including roses Nellie planted along the side of the garage. It was the spot my father stood twenty-five years earlier for a photo in his dress white uniform after he'd been discharged from the hospital in Pearl Harbor. Turning my firetruck around, I'd see my grandma standing at the rear door, smiling. Scooting thirty feet back to the house, she'd then lean down and give me a kiss that she called a "smackeroo." Lips close tight. Faces come together. Lips briefly pressed together. Faces drawback, both smiling as Nellie says, "Muahhh..."

By 1967, only four out of twenty members of my extended family still lived within the city limits as they existed before the war. Aside from Nellie, only my father's

older brother, Uncle Glenn, and his two college-age sons remained, living just minutes away from her on Maxwell Road. Everyone else—cousins, aunts, and uncles—had all moved to newly built suburbs.

Uncle Glenn, who lost his wife to cancer four years earlier in 1963, would check in regularly with his eighty-four-year-old mom. A former naval officer, he was “born again” in 1955 at age 45 and cast his last vote in a presidential race for John Kennedy in 1960.

Like my grandmother, Uncle Glenn always meant a great deal to me. Starting at age twelve, I’d return to Toledo from Pennsylvania each summer to spend a few weeks with him, visiting family, and playing with kids in the neighborhood. We’d go to the YMCA and then eat at a downtown cafeteria called Links, where I was always the youngest by fifty years. Periodically, he’d talk with me about the Lord, and my still-forming brain would attempt to reconcile his faith with the little I understood about the world. Although I’d sometimes fret over my inability to believe, it never got in the way of comprehending his affection for me and, inevitably, we’d move on to the next activity of the day. Later in life, we found commonality in his views on the environmental costs of rampant materialism, and I took note of his listening to NPR. He remained, until his passing at the age of 94, a warm, friendly Toledoan who had no hesitation engaging a stranger with his alert mind, accompanied by a smile.

My Uncle Glenn and grandmother could have been characters in Frank Capra’s classic *It’s a Wonderful Life*, which is one of the reasons I’m drawn to the film.³⁶ The story casts the two worldviews I’ve referred to previously in sharp relief. The first, represented by George Bailey, is rooted in our interdependence. It links individual well-being with the well-being of the broader community. The second worldview is represented by Mr. Potter. This value system tells us that there is no such thing as too much money and it matters not how we acquire it. The impact of our actions on others is of no concern and thinking about human interdependence equate to weakness. As autonomous individuals, we exploit every situation presented to us to establish our place in society.

By the end of the film, tension, and conflict are resolved in favor of the Bailey worldview. George chooses life, and the community rallies behind him. In the final scene,

he holds his daughter Zuzu in his arms as members of the community stream into the foyer to dump dollar bills onto a growing pile on the table. The dour bank examiner approaches George, pauses, drops his own bills on the table, then joins in an ongoing rendition of Hark the Angels. The investigator approaches and rips George's arrest warrant in half, and breaks out into a smile.

It's at this point that George's younger brother Harry is rushed into the room by Bert the policeman. They've just arrived from the airport in a snowstorm and Harry is wearing the uniform of a Navy commander. As a carrier fighter pilot, he's earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for having shot down fifteen planes, two of them kamikazes about to crash into a landing craft filled with soldiers. Looking at George, Harry raises a glass in a toast, announcing, "To my big brother George, the richest man in town." And it's here, we've arrived at the moment where Mr. Potter's cruel vision of the future has been pushed to the edges of our minds. Light triumphs over darkness.

My father was not the unscathed Navy hero who anchors this final scene, but when I watch the film, I think of him. Toledo circa 1945 is not Bedford Falls, yet my mind blurs together the imaginary town and the city my father came of age in. A place worth preserving, defending, and improving upon, not to be thrown away.

13. From Operettas to Molotov Cocktails

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Moan brothers hopped on a streetcar on weekday mornings to make a two-mile trip to Scott High School. Designed in the collegiate gothic style by a Toledo architect named David Stein in 1913, the city built it at a time when civic leaders around the country were telegraphing the importance of public education by constructing beautiful schools in prominent locations. Scott High borders Toledo's West End neighborhood, an architectural treasure trove of homes built in styles ranging from Arts and Crafts to Italian Renaissance. The neighborhood's design quality attracted the attention of famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who studied the area in preparation for his work in Chicago.

Today the West End is one of the few viable neighborhoods adjacent to a now largely abandoned downtown core. It's home to a diverse group of committed residents struggling against powerful headwinds, mindful that the twenty-five blocks that make up their neighborhood are surrounded by hundreds more that are partially or entirely abandoned.

My father's 1931 yearbook, the *Scottonian*, is filled with art deco iconography, inspirational phrases, and poetry. Dapper teenage boys in jackets and ties look the part of young men with thick heads of hair often slicked back in the pictures. Few smiles are visible as they stare purposefully in the direction of the camera. Teenage girls wear their hair short, in the flapper style reminiscent of the decade that just ended. In contrast to the boys, the girls smile more. Some of the more sober-minded girls are associated with an organization called the Philaethean Literary Society whose motto is "Literature is the garden of wisdom."³⁷

These teens would fit naturally into the dance scene in *It's a Wonderful Life*, where George and Mary first lock eyes, dance away the evening, and wind up in the pool along with everyone else. My father's classmates are "future citizens of Toledo" and city dwellers. They're also all white. Toledo did not have legally segregated schools but you'd be hard-pressed to find anything other than white faces looking back at you from the pages of yearbooks during the time my father walked Scott High's halls.³⁸

Starting in my father's junior year, in the fall of 1931, he and other teens in his neighborhood began attending a new high school built closer to home. Back at Scott High, the football team remained entirely white that fall just as it had been since the school opened seventeen years earlier. In November however, two students, Pelham Hicks, and Leon Warrick, made the basketball team, noteworthy because they're among the first black students to appear in a Scott High yearbook. That year, Pelham and Leon also sang supporting parts in the Glee Club's presentation of the comic operetta, *The Belle of Bagdad*, and in the spring, they sang in another comedy called *Oh Doctor*.

Pelham and Leon's arrival at Scott High—along with a small number of other black students that year—marked the start of a transition that started off slowly then picked up speed. By 1941, black teenagers accounted for roughly 4% of Scott's student body. After Roosevelt declared war, demographic change became more apparent, and by 1955, that percentage increased to 20%. By 1963 and 1965, the figures were 55% and 80% respectively. And by 1967, nine out of ten students were black. Similar changes were taking place in urban high schools across the country.

That summer, as I scooted around in Nellie's backyard in my fire truck, students at Scott High thought less about singing operettas and more about the Molotov cocktails their peers were throwing through plate glass windows in other cities. The previous three years, my family and millions of others watched report after report on the evening news covering racial violence in Rochester, Harlem, Omaha, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. Outside of rarefied circles, there was little national discussion taking place as to why these things occurred. It was as if the past did not exist. All the while, more grandchildren and great-grandchildren of enslaved Americans were arriving from the South only to be

penned into decaying sections of cities shedding jobs and subjected to heavy-handed policing.

America's unresolved past was very present in 1967, and it hit the country like a sledgehammer. In the first nine months of the year, 164 civil disorders took place in 128 different cities. Of these, 41 involved sizable crowds engaged in firebombing, looting, and other forms of violence. Cities frequently relied on the state police and national guard to restore some semblance of order.³⁹

The first of eight civil disorders considered most destructive erupted in Tampa on June 11th after a white policeman shot a black teen in the back after he'd stolen photo supplies from a warehouse.⁴⁰ The teen's death proved to be a tipping point for a black community in which six out of ten occupied houses were in abysmal condition. Many were little more than rat-infested shacks with broken windows and leaky gas lines. Most black children in Tampa never made it past the eighth grade. Political representation was non-existent, municipal services substandard, and decent job prospects were fleeting. Law enforcement was harsh and inconsistent relative to its interaction with the white community. In other words, black residents of twentieth-century Tampa experienced a significant degree of cultural continuity with a past shaped by the values of the slaveholding republic. That evening, they looted white-owned businesses in their community that were particularly disliked and clashed with police. Targeted arson spread out of control, engulfing much of the business district, and destroying the cultural hub of the black community.

The next day, violence broke out in Cincinnati. The triggering event differed but the underlying issues did not. Four days later, it happened in Atlanta. More nights passed and the count of violent incidents crept upward.

On July 12th, violence erupted in Newark after rumors circulated that a taxicab driver beaten by two policemen had died. Five days, 700 injuries, and 26 deaths later, much of Newark was in ruins and being patrolled by National Guard troops.

The following week, on Sunday, July 23rd, 19-year-old William Walter Scott III threw a bottle at the head of a Detroit police sergeant standing in front of his father's illegal after-hours club after watching police manhandle patrons on their way to police wagons. The bottle missed the target, shattered on the sidewalk, and triggered one of the

most destructive civil disorders in American history in which forty-three people would die.⁴¹ Viewed from an airplane above five days later, large swaths of Detroit brought to mind images of Berlin and Tokyo after Allied bombings. Like Tampa and elsewhere, black residents firebombed white businesses that had operated in their neighborhoods before their arrival.

On the ground, Vietnam-hardened units of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions joined the police, national guard, and state troopers to constitute what amounted to be an occupying force of nearly 17,000 men. Airborne rangers and state police exercised discipline. Detroit police and national guard, less so.

Tanks occupied city streets and police shot looters. Elsewhere, sniper activity had soldiers warily scanning rooftops. One sniper murdered a white, thirty-two-year-old firefighter named Carl Smith, shooting him in the head as he raced across the street back to his engine. In a separate incident, a national guardsman manning a tank-mounted machine gun, mistook the flame of a match lighting a cigarette for the flash of a gun. Seconds later, fifty-caliber bullets penetrate the second-floor apartment's window and walls, tearing through the torso of four-year-old Tanya Blanding who was huddled on the other side.⁴²

Across the Detroit River in the city of Windsor ,Ontario, there was no violence. Canadians lined the riverbank, sitting on the hoods of cars and in lawn chairs – some with beer in hand, as if participating in some curious mix of silent vigil and sporting event. Thick black smoke and periodic bursts of tracer bullets rose into the sky as the sound of gunfire and sirens traveled across the water.

Toledo is the closest American city to Detroit, an hour's drive away. The day after Detroit erupted, black teens and young adults began looting and firebombing stores along a commercial street not far from Scott High. That night, violence spread to a handful of other locations around the city and police blocked off a few streets in response to motorists being attacked with bottles and rocks. By end of week, overt chaos in both cities had been suppressed. Firefighters in Toledo had responded to 79 fires. In Detroit, the number was 3,034.⁴³

On Saturday, July 29, 1967, just over one thousand firefighters from Detroit and the other municipalities that fought the infernos, marched two miles from downtown to

the Fireman's plot in the city's historic Elmwood Cemetery. A fire engine carrying Carl Smith's flag-draped casket led the procession. Behind it, followed a four-year-old boy with a crewcut named Dwayne and his devastated mother.

Carl Smith was laid to rest in the same cemetery as Lewis Cass. It's a beautiful wooded retreat filled with native hardwood trees, reflecting the vision of famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. If, however, you walk two blocks north or west of that cemetery today you'd find yourself on streets where most of the houses are missing and many that remain are dilapidated, just an arsonist's match away from disappearing as well. These surroundings are out of sync with at least one value that Carl Smith appears to have embodied, namely a commitment to community. It's fitting, however, that my cousin rests where he does, flanked by neighborhoods that bear the scars of the slaveholding republic.

As four-year-olds in the summer of 1967, Dwayne Smith, Tanya Blanding, and I experienced the consequences of the slaveholding republic's legacy in different ways. For Dwayne, there was grief and confusion. For Tanya, there was fear, pain, and ultimately, death. I, on the other hand, remained oblivious and unscathed, playing peacefully in Nellie's backyard on Revere Drive even as minutes away, young black males hurled Molotov cocktails at white-owned businesses. The consequences would remain largely hidden from me until I tried to find home in America.

14. Blind to Consequences. Blind to their Origins

There are no words written by or about Lewis Cass that suggest he possessed any insight into the kind of America his brand of leadership was creating. He was blind to the consequences of his actions. In the present day, we live with those consequences and are blind to their origins. The fact is, there is a strain of evil that runs through the veins of the American body politic. Lewis Cass and his ilk are the embodiment of that evil in terms of decisions made. And it's a straightforward exercise to trace how that evil rippled through life from his day to my own.

In 1830, Congress narrowly passed the controversial Indian Removal Act, which President Andrew Jackson loudly championed. That Act authorized the United States to use a carrot-and-stick approach to remove native peoples from lands east of the Mississippi. Federal monies served as the carrot and the military the stick. As Secretary of War, Lewis Cass wielded that stick. He also provided this legislation with intellectual heft. Months before joining Jackson's administration, Lewis wrote a 59-page essay published in a prominent literary journal explaining to Americans why native populations were inferior to and incompatible with the white race.⁴⁴ When asked by Jackson to draft a rebuttal explaining why his administration would be ignoring a Supreme Court ruling that supported the Cherokee's right to remain in Georgia, Lewis wrote, "Civilized communities have a right to take possession of a country inhabited by barbarous tribes [and] to assume jurisdiction over them."⁴⁵ The Act effectively set in motion a process of ethnic cleansing that played out over the next decade as tens of thousands were forcibly migrated to Oklahoma with thousands dying en route.

These clearances that Lewis Cass was a central part of opened millions of acres of land to slave-based cotton production in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida. Speculators bought this land from the government and sold it to a rapidly expanding class of entrepreneurs establishing slave labor settlements (a.k.a. plantations) to produce cotton, the world's most valuable commodity.

As native peoples streamed out, almost a quarter of a million black Americans streamed in during the 1830s.^{viii} They were part of a larger, sustained forced migration that took place between 1790 and 1860, during which time nearly one million Americans were moved from the “Upper South” (i.e., Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky) to the cotton-producing states.⁴⁶ As Congress abolished the international slave trade in 1808, the vast majority were born in the United States. Many traveled by ship, but just as often the enslaved were moved by overland routes. In preparation for delivery to destinations hundreds of miles distant, slave traders chained men and boys in pairs, then chained the pairs together to form a human train called a “coffle.”⁴⁷ Enslaved women and a supply wagon followed behind. Teams of armed men on horseback used bullwhips to drive a coffle forward for a period of four to six weeks until they reached the slave market of interest.

Having arrived in a place like Natchez, Mississippi or New Orleans, traders sold their human inventory to entrepreneurs who borrowed money to buy them in much the same way I'd take out a mortgage to buy a house. If the entrepreneur defaulted on a loan, the enslaved in his possession could be repossessed and sold off. Starting in the late 1820s, this credit increasingly came from new banks created by legislatures in slaveholding states. By 1837, banks chartered in the Cotton South had outstanding loans totaling over \$2 billion in present-day dollars, a third of all loans in the United States at the time.⁴⁸

To operate a bank, you need money to lend, which raises the question, where did these new banks—that seemingly sprung from the ground—get the money to lend to the entrepreneurs? The answer is the European and American securities markets as brokered by, amongst others, Barings Bank, the oldest merchant bank in Britain. An example

^{viii} I consider enslaved blacks to be Americans irrespective of their legal status. They lived their lives on American soil and whites included them in censuses. They played a major role in shaping our culture, and their great-grand-children have been my neighbors during my lifetime.

provides a sense of how it worked. In 1832, Union Bank of Louisiana issued over one hundred million dollars of bonds in present-day value that paid investors 5% annually. To assure Barings that these bonds were safe financial instruments, the Louisiana legislature committed to paying the bond obligation using taxpayer dollars in the event Union Bank was unable to honor its obligations in the event of widespread entrepreneur (i.e., enslaver) default. Satisfied with Louisiana's commitment, Barings purchased the bonds and resold them to investors in Paris, London, Hamburg, New York, and elsewhere.

This scenario played out throughout the Cotton South, as an entrepreneur class awash in credit purchased more and more enslaved Americans taken from the Upper South. By the mid-1830s, New Orleans had so many banks that it was a legitimate question to ask at the time whether the city would replace New York as the nation's financial capital.

The linchpins of the operation were the enslaved, over 2.5 million people by the late 1830s.⁴⁹ Their level of productivity determined whether the entrepreneur could repay a loan whose interest rate ensured bank profitability. To this end, every enslaved American had his or her own daily quota dictating the poundage they were required to pick during the six-month harvest season that began each September. Quotas varied from person to person, but there was constant pressure for an individual to improve their performance. In the fading light of day, people would line up to have an overseer weigh what had been picked. Falling short of one's quota triggered a whipping, typically, a single lash for every pound of the quota missed.⁵⁰

The ultimate purpose of all of this wasn't to pay back bank loans but rather to enrich the entrepreneur. Irrespective of economic downturns like a major financial panic in 1837, the system worked as designed. Between 1790 and 1860, cotton production rose from 1.4 million to over 1.6 billion pounds. (Insert sentence summarizing slavery's role economically from a national perspective). And just like today, a relatively small percentage of the population enriched themselves at the expense of the vast majority, black and white. Most of the country's millionaires were Southerners, with half of all American millionaires living in just one town alone: Natchez, Mississippi. Like New Orleans, Natchez was a major slave market surrounded by land conducive to slave labor settlements.⁵¹

This way of life was viewed as perfectly normal or at least tolerated by most white Americans. All other things being equal, had the South not seceded, slave-based agricultural production might have remained in place up through the 1940s—up until the time when that International Harvester unveiled the H-10-H Cotton Picker. The H-10-H was the first commercially viable machine that could harvest cotton without the need for human hands.^{ix} But of course, the South did secede after Republicans in Congress brought Kansas into the union as a free state and it became clear to Democrats that the Cass doctrine would not guarantee slavery’s westward expansion.

In my twenties, I believed as much as anyone that America was a force for good. When a politician would say something like, “Our past has been difficult, but our trajectory arcs towards a more perfect union,” I’d agree for reasons having to do with culture and family circumstance.

On hot summer days as a child, I’d occasionally find my father sitting in the kitchen with his shirt off. Looking at his shoulders, you could see where Japanese shrapnel had entered the body, visible evidence of his contribution to the defeat of totalitarianism. His grandfather’s four brothers fought against the Confederacy. I’m the namesake of a man named Lewis who fought the British in the War of 1812, just as Jonathan, his father, had fought the British at Bunker Hill. Everything I knew about myself and my family, told me that we were on the right side of history. The problem is, the stories we have been telling ourselves about being American are incomplete, and in many cases, inaccurate.

In recent years, the work of contemporary historians has allowed me to better understand my experiences living in the United States in ways I could not have done otherwise. It’s admittedly unconventional to equate historical scholarship with indirect mental health benefits, but that’s been my experience. Historical scholarship has helped me to understand how the socio-political turmoil saturating our lives today has been with us since the beginning. This knowledge, in turn, helps me to maintain some degree of separation from the dysfunction that has a historical context.

^{ix} As we will see in later, slave-base production of goods was a reality for tens of thousands of black Americans into the early 1930s. Given this, it is reasonable to assume full-out chattel slavery would have persisted up until it a time when it was no longer economically viable.

Among historians, there is disagreement over meaning and significance, but at the macro level, the picture revealed by the historic record is unambiguous. American economic prowess is rooted in the brutal degradation of blacks in ways that most whites do not comprehend. In this respect I'm no different than many whites.⁵² I have lived around blacks, harbored contempt for some, and befriended others, but I had never comprehended the depth and continuity of their collective experience. And I surely never linked their experience to my own in terms of a shared sense of well-being and quality of life.

I've heard slavery referred to as a "regrettable time in our history," a sideshow to the events that truly characterize our nation and make it great. Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, battles at Gettysburg and Iwo Jima, John Kennedy's inaugural speech. These are the things that have comprised our national story. It's a narrative, however, that needs to change as we're past the point where we can afford to be blind to the origins of perpetual pathologies and dysfunction that impact daily life. Far from being a sideshow, the story of what happened over 322 years—accounting for 80% of the time American culture has been forming—is the drama playing out on center stage in our lives whether acknowledged or not. It's not black history. It's American history and it shapes a culture that is caustic relative to western societies where social-democratic policies are not controversial, and livable cities for middle-class citizens are not abstract concepts.

15. Maps That Charted the Downfall

When my father and his two younger brothers were still in college in the late 1930s, the federal government started creating brightly colored maps for 239 different cities across the country. They're called Residential Security Maps and the government created them to assess the risk of extending home mortgages in different parts of any given city. And I find them rather pleasing to look at when I block out what they represent.⁵³

In recent years, much has been written about the degree to which these maps were used as the basis to deny black Americans access to the kinds of mortgages that my friend's parents took for granted. It turns out that as blatantly racist as the maps are, they were not widely distributed and, ultimately, not the main driver of redlining.⁵⁴ The government, however, produced plenty of other maps, charts, tables, policies, and procedures to clarify where blacks lived and what to do about the "problem." Regardless, these Residential Security Maps provide me with the clearest picture of how white Americans with northern European ancestry—people like my family—viewed the prospect of having black Americans live anywhere near them.

More important for me—and mindful that my story is rooted in self-interest more so than altruistic concern for others—these maps tell me two critically important things about my own search for home in America. The first is that my search was largely doomed thirty years before I was born. My second point has to do with fault. For my

entire adult life, I've heard many white male friends and acquaintances, politicians, and others opine or imply that the downfall of the American city is the fault of blacks. The historic record tells us the opposite; it was in fact white men who destroyed the American city and produced the black ghetto. The maps and the conditions in which they were made help clarify.

Although Residential Security Maps were conceived of by white men in the federal government, they're the product of a small, select group of comparable white men in each of the 239 cities considered sufficiently knowledgeable to assess neighborhoods and trends. When creating a city-specific map, these local collaborators—most of them lenders, builders, realtors, or appraisers—followed explicit directions from the federal government regarding how to create a map and describe its contents.

Each city got divided into “areas,” which are equivalent to residential districts or neighborhoods. An area could be as large or as small as it needed to be. Some of those created are as small as 15 blocks. Others are as large as 200 blocks. Most are in the range of 50 to 100 blocks.⁵⁵ There are 78 “areas” in Toledo, 239 in Detroit, and 580 in Chicago.

Each area received a grade in the range of A through D. If you lived in an area that had received an A, your neighborhood was colored green on the map and considered the “Best” to live in. Living in an area that had received a B meant that your neighborhood was colored blue on the map and was considered “Still Desirable.” If you had the misfortune of living in an area that had received a grade of C, then your neighborhood was colored yellow on the map and was considered to be “Definitely Declining.” And finally, if you were unfortunate enough to live in an area that received a grade of D, your neighborhood was colored in red on the map and was considered “Hazardous.”

When you look at these maps a pattern becomes apparent. The powers that be considered the vast majority of neighborhoods in almost every American city to be either “Hazardous” or “Definitely Declining.” In Chicago, 79% of the city's residential areas received a grade of C or D. In New Orleans, that figure is 85%. In Memphis, it's 69%. Pittsburgh, 63%. East St. Louis, 81%. What these figures tell me is that a full thirty years

before the so-called liberal policies of the Great Society were created, white, conservative males in cities across the nation had already deemed American cities as write-offs.

It's in the "Area Description" for each neighborhood where we find the thought process behind the grading. And to appreciate the thought process you need to know just a bit about how and why the federal government started inserting itself into the mortgage business a few years before they made the maps.

By the time my father graduated from high school in June 1933, one out of every two people who held a mortgage was either struggling or simply unable to make payments on account of the global economic meltdown that began a few years earlier.⁵⁶ That same month, the federal government got directly involved with the residential mortgage industry for the first time in American history.⁵⁷

Up until this point, if you wanted to buy a house, you needed to come up with enough cash to cover at least half the cost. You'd then get a short-term loan from a lender for say five years to cover the rest. During the loan term, you'd typically make interest-only payments and at the end of the term, you'd then make what's referred to as a "bullet" payment to pay off the principal. If you hadn't been able to save enough money to pay off the loan, you'd refinance again.⁵⁸ This approach works if the housing market remained stable, but in the early 1930s, home values were plummeting. And refinancing a house worth less than what you paid for it became an enormous problem for people.⁵⁹

In response to this problem, the white, mostly protestant men in our federal government did two things in succession.⁶⁰ First, they got into the lending business for two years and helped almost a million homeowners to refinance distressed loans so people could stay in their homes. They did this by providing amortized loans (i.e., payments that include both principal and interest) with lower interest rates payable over a longer, fifteen-year period.⁶¹ This was a temporary emergency measure, as the government had no intention of competing with private lenders. By the time the government started making Residential Security Maps in the late 1930s, they were done refinancing loans and focused solely on a longer-term effort to shore up the housing industry with a new tool – *government-backed mortgage insurance*. And it's here where the trouble originates regarding quality of life.

Prior to federal involvement, a majority of Americans found it near impossible to come up with a down-payment equal to half the price of a house. Our government's objective, then, was to make borrowing considerably easier to increase the percentage of Americans participating in the housing market. To do this, the feds partnered with lenders willing to make a deal. If a lender would offer loans that met the government's new consumer-friendly payment terms, then the government would insure the loans and cover any loss in the event of default. These payment terms have since become standard fare across the mortgage industry: a relatively small down payment, a competitive interest rate, and amortized payments made over 20 or 30 years.⁶²

Government-backed mortgage insurance and consumer-friendly loans that open up the housing market to millions of new people are good ideas in and of themselves. Similarly, it makes sense that every loan application be placed under scrutiny to minimize the government's risk of needing to cover bad loans at taxpayer expense. Knowing whether someone's gainfully employed and how much they make is essential. Understanding the fair market value of a home is, similarly, critically important. All good things. The problem was that the government established a criterion used to evaluate loan applications that were saturated with the values of white supremacy and, to a lesser extent, ethnic hierarchy. This fact set up an arguably perverse situation, with devastating consequences for American cities.

Distilled into its essence, core axioms of public policy as they pertained to government-backed mortgages and white supremacy are easy to comprehend. If you were black, you were not going to get a loan, period. If you were white and wanted to buy a house in a racially mixed neighborhood, or near a black neighborhood that was perceived to threaten your all-white neighborhood of interest, you weren't going to get a loan. If, however, you were white and living in a neighborhood considered free from the threat of black "encroachment," then you got your loan. And the overwhelming majority of the time that loan was for a new house built in a neighborhood that conformed to new suburban design standards established by the same federal government.

These axioms have a great deal to do with my difficulty in finding home in America. Our federal government played a central role in destroying the American city between 1935 and 1968 by effectively isolating an oppressed population of Americans

living in older urban neighborhoods and denying them the wherewithal to build wealth through homeownership in the way that my family was able to do.

If you were a middle-class black American looking to buy a home in a government-created ghetto in an American city, your only option was something called “contract buying.” White real estate agents and speculators would conspire to sell a house to a black family for two or more times its market value, then turn around and provide “financing” for that same house. Falling behind on payments that were higher than they would have been with a government-backed mortgage triggered a swift eviction, clearing the way for the next buyer. There was no such thing as building house equity. If you fell behind on payments, you lost everything. And this happened all the time. In Chicago, 85% of homes purchased by black Americans were made through such contracts.<TBD add ref> It’s a principal reason black America failed to build household wealth in the post-war era. These contracts were also the source of significant amounts of mental pain and anguish within black families.

These axioms didn’t come out of thin air. In the years leading up to World War II, men in government wrote unambiguously about their aims in the dull bureaucratic speak of technocrats. Two government publications served as the backbone for a decades-long program that gave us suburbs on one hand and unlivable cities on the other.

The Federal Housing Administration’s 400-page *Underwriting Manual* provided white men in government with the guidance necessary to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable loan applications.⁶³ The manual isn’t filled with declarative statements regarding the intent to deny blacks mortgages, but the language sprinkled throughout is clear enough. The manual’s authors wrote of their fellow citizens in the same way I might describe the prospect of my home being infested by rats. A loan examiner with the appropriate ethnic background following the manual’s guidance, nodded in approval when “natural or artificially established barriers” prevented the “infiltration” of “lower-class occupancy and inharmonious racial groups.” The examiner knew to give the loan application a poor rating when the property was considered to be dealing with the “threatening or probable infiltration of inharmonious racial groups.” In short, the underwriting manual serves as a cookbook for how to wreck a city. Historic sections of

town are routinely considered “obsolete” and a mixture of uses in those sections is automatically considered bad without consideration as to what that mixture entails.

Behind all this was a rigid school of thought about how cities grew in the context of social hierarchy, seasoned with a dash of scientific racism. The mindset originated in 1903 with the narrow concerns of a mortgage banker named Richard Hurd and quickly gathered adherents. A Chicago-based real estate appraiser named Frederick Babcock was one of them. He wrote the first version of the FHA’s underwriting manual. The adherent best known to students of urban planning was Homer Hoyt who, after getting his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Chicago, joined Babcock at the FHA to serve as the agency’s Principal Economist. In 1939, Hoyt wrote “*The Structure and Growth of Neighborhoods in American Cities*,” the FHA publication that reveals the racist, systematic thinking behind the Underwriting Manual.

When drafting the publication, Hoyt, and his team of economists at the FHA assembled all the tables and graphs necessary to lead the reader to conclude that the natural state of an urban neighborhood is one of decline. A house has a shelf life much like a bottle of milk. What tastes good today inevitably turns rancid with time. People want the next best thing, and it’s always being built a bit further out, on the urban fringe. Hoyt has a whole chapter dedicated to the segregation of uses and another chapter devoted entirely to where the “negroes” live. Taken as a whole, Hoyt’s synthesis promotes the existence of an ever-expanding, socially fractured, economically stratified, racially segregated society in which superhighways facilitate dispersion and allow the rich amongst us to live in peace away from the riff-raff.

My grandmother’s home on Revere Drive sits in Area B3 on the Toledo Residential Security map. When the maps were made three decades before the long hot summer of 1967, the neighborhood was considered a “Still Desirable” section of town with an area description that included the following:

1. Inhabitants: Infiltration of Desirable
2. Relief families: 0%
3. Negro families: 0%
4. Occupation: Skilled mechanics, and small tradesmen
5. Estimated Annual Family Income: 1,500 – 3,000
6. Trend of desirability next 10-15 years: Upward

7. Clarifying Remarks: One of the older, well-established, and built-up residential districts and within walking distance of Toledo's largest industrial center.

The section of Toledo where young blacks began throwing Molotov cocktails through store windows in July 1967 occurred in C18, an area considered to be “Definitely Declining” in 1937 because, as the area description’s “clarifying remarks” pointed out, “Negro encroachment is threatening from the east side.” That negro encroachment came from an adjacent area labeled D2 on the map, a “Hazardous” section of town that, like C18, sat just south of Scott High School. This is the neighborhood where the athletic, budding operetta singers Pelham Hicks and Leon Warrick lived when attending Scott High, the year after my father departed from the school. It’s also where Art Tatum and John Hendricks grew up—two men who, it’s worth reiterating, made monumental contributions to American culture in the twentieth century.

Five prominent, white Toledoans wrote the area descriptions for Toledo’s map on behalf of the federal government. Three of them held the title of President at mortgage and real estate firms. The fourth was a builder and appraiser. The fifth was a prominent realtor. Collectively, they considered the presence of black men like Pelham, Leon, Art, and John to be a problem for Toledo. And that’s largely why the area where Pelham and his neighbors lived was labeled D2, considered “Hazardous,” and given the following area description:

1. Inhabitants: Infiltration of Undesirable
2. Negro families: Yes predominating
3. Relief families: Heavy
4. Occupation: Common labor.
5. Estimated Annual Family Income: 500 - 900
6. Trend of desirability next 10-15 years: Definitely Downward.
7. Clarifying Remarks: A cheap run-down neighborhood, generally. A Government tenancy project was completed last month. Occupants are all colored. Area surrounding project, however, is bad. Large number of houses being demolished by owners and otherwise.

Like the vast majority of American cities, Toledo’s forecasted demise as evidenced by its Residential Security Map came to pass. Five Toledoans of standing, collaborating with the government, deemed 65% of my family’s city to be either Hazardous or Definitely Declining. And by the summer of 1967, most of these

“Definitely Declining” areas had begun to implode. Area C18, where the violence started on July 24th, was one of thousands of neighborhoods across the country that declined just as the “experts” said it would thirty years earlier. And area B3, where I played blissfully in my grandmother’s backyard, remained a viable place to live for the white middle class throughout the 1960s. The experts got it right.

The thing is, these predictions were self-fulfilling prophecies articulated by white men with strong, well-articulated views regarding racial and ethnic hierarchy. They set in place federal policies and practices that ensured American cities would decline. The policies worked as designed.

In addition to the public sector push for “dispersion,” there were hatreds and prejudices in the private sector that supported the government’s thinly veiled objective to empty cities of white, middle-class families like mine. I need look no further than at the bankers, realtors, builders, and appraisers who provided the information to create the maps in the first place. To cite just one specific example, consider a book, titled *McMichael’s Appraising Manual*. Written by prominent real estate appraiser Stanley McMichael, the *Manual* went through six separate editions, which is a testament to its success and influence on the real estate industry. The manual provides the appraiser with practical advice to assess the impact of racial and ethnic groups on land values and recommends the use of a ranking system. On the desirable end of the scale, there are the English, German, Irish, Scottish, and Scandinavians. Moving in the direction of being increasingly “undesirable,” there are the Northern Italians, Czechs, Poles, Lithuanians, Greeks, Russians, Jews, Southern Italians, Negroes, and Mexicans. The government had plenty of help from the private sector.

When I look at the Residential Security Maps and their area descriptions, they tell me something important about how men of standing valued cities and the people who lived in them. American cities were, by and large, throwaway places filled with undesirable, throwaway people. The bulk of these throwaway people were black Americans. While it’s not the case that every “Hazardous” area on a Residential Security Map had black residents, it is the case that every area that had black residents was designated as “Hazardous.”⁶⁴ You see the same thing expressed over and over again in city after city.

Syracuse's D3 area description reads, "A colored slum section occupied by the lowest type of colored race." In Kansas City, D25 reads, "This far-flung area, containing the principal negro habitat of Kansas City, is the old section where values were 'shot' several years ago." In New Haven, area D4 reads, "This is an older section of the city now given over largely to Negroes employed as domestics."

At the time these judgments were made in the late 1930s, northern cities were still overwhelmingly white. It wasn't until the onset of World War Two, that another five million black migrants began to join the one million others who left the South before the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. This second wave of migrants would bear the brunt of the white man's thought process.

During summers spent as a teenager with Uncle Glenn on Maxwell Road, I was living in area A4 on the Toledo map. Its area description reads, "It is the best class medium priced residential district. Well restricted. Trend is upward. Occupied by the younger element of professional and high salaried men." Until seeing the map, I had no idea that one of my dearest uncles—who, again, had accepted Christ into his life in 1952 and cast his last worldly vote for John Kennedy in 1960—lived in a "restricted" neighborhood that banned blacks. Yet during summers spent on Maxwell Road, I never once saw a black Toledoan. It's as if they did not exist, which is to say that our government's policies worked very well if you bought into the benefits of segregation.

During each summer visit, Uncle Glenn and I would make a 10-minute drive to visit a favorite cousin of the Moan brothers named Barbara. She'd married a bank president and they lived on the other side of the city line in Ottawa Hills, which government map makers designated as area A1, the most desirable part of the Toledo metro area in which to live circa 1937. Its area description reads, "This is the finest and most expensive residential district. Very beautiful estates. The 'cream' of better residential districts. Located in the village of Ottawa Hills, west of Toledo city limits." Thinking about those visits today, Ottawa Hills is precisely the kind of place where the federal economists and their collaborators claimed the desirable among us would aspire to. An area with large lots, curvilinear streets, generously sized trees, and no sidewalks. Conceived of before the age of mass suburbanization, Ottawa Hills served as an early

example of what successful white protestant Americans aspired to own. And, by and large, most members of my family gravitated to the “right” parts of the map.

My Uncle Glenn passed away in July 2004, a few months shy of his 94th birthday. Christine and I were living on 11th Street in Washington in a violence-plagued neighborhood, being fed urban life lessons that we could have done without.⁶⁵ After receiving the news, we packed up and drove eight hours to Toledo with good-natured one and three-year-old boys in tow. We had a funeral to attend in the same wooded, urban cemetery where my family said goodbye to Nellie three decades earlier.

Uncle Glenn was the last family member to purchase a house inside the city line as defined by Toledo’s Residential Security Map. Whenever I’d visit Toledo, it’s where I stayed. The room layout, furniture, pleasant scents, and sound of the clock had been etched in my memory as if it were my own home. Checking into a suburban hotel near the funeral parlor felt very different than seeing my uncle standing on the porch with a wide grin on his face, waiting to greet me.

My life at that time with Christine and the boys on 11th Street was a world apart from the relatively affluent, suburban family envelope we found ourselves in for a few days. I liked being with my extended family, but I couldn’t get past the anathema that was the Toledo suburb. Yet at the same time, our own neighborhood was rife with seemingly insurmountable problems.

The day after the funeral, I took Christine to see Revere Drive and the house where Nellie and James raised five sons. On the way there, a memory of a photograph of my father at age ten sprang to mind. It was taken in the empty lot next to his house in 1925. He and some friends had built a bunker out of wood and dirt that resembled the trench fortifications built during the world war that had recently ended. Five boys are in the photo. Three stand or squat at various distances from the fort. My uncle Harlan, age five, wears a sailor hat and is crawling out of the bunker’s entrance. All these boys stare into the camera. My father stands closest to the bunker, wearing a tie tucked into a white shirt. In his left hand, he holds a pole on which flies an American flag a foot above his head. His gaze is not on the camera. It’s on the flag.

Approaching Revere Drive, I felt unsettled as we passed by underutilized buildings dating from his childhood, vacant lots where buildings once stood, and more recently built low-end commercial development surrounded by largely empty parking lots. Looking at the intersection where my father sold newspapers and hopped on trollies, it was hard to imagine him encountering anyone on the sidewalk willing to make a purchase. There were no people to be seen in the present day. Only cars. Despite the fact it was a warm summer day, everything around me seemed forlorn.

Turning onto Revere, I saw that most of the street trees had died and not been replaced. Weeds sprung from cracks around sidewalks and aside from a few brick houses, most houses had their original wooden slat siding covered with vinyl, much of it discolored.

Approaching my grandparents' house, a pit in my stomach grew in size. The house itself had been covered in orange vinyl siding which had since faded. The bushes had been torn out and not replaced. And a car sat on a parking pad that replaced what had been the front lawn that the Moan brothers once stood on for family photos.

It was difficult reconciling the house I'd known as a child with the image before me. Large oil stains on the faded, cracked asphalt street told that a car was usually parked in front of the house. Directly across the street, someone had started to construct a front porch but the dirty gray color of the wood and the absence of steps led me to wonder if the job would ever get completed. Two houses down, overgrown bushes partially obscured windows covered in plastic. A Dodge Chrysler E Class with rust along the rear door sat on a cracked driveway slowly being overtaken by weeds.

An early memory came back of me walking along the edge of my grandmother's backyard garden looking up at a wall of greenery and flowers. Getting out of the car, I stood on the sidewalk looking at a backyard filled with crabgrass and surrounded by a chain link fence.

My adult experiences up to that moment in Toledo had left me feeling unsettled regarding finding home in America. Looking at what had once been Nellie's backyard, it was temporarily difficult to recall the peace I'd experienced in that same space. I felt cut adrift as the world I knew as a child was rapidly disappearing. Our government's self-fulfilling prophecies had been realized. The downfall was complete.

16. Lynching as a Form of Cultural Expression

For years, I experienced a mental disconnect between my discomfort living in an American city, and the underlying dynamics. The first city I lived in was Philadelphia. I moved there for college, and at the time, I could not have told you how long large numbers of black Americans had been living in the city, or where they came from.⁶⁶ It was as if they were a people without a history. But of course, they did have a history. It was a violent history that shaped the lives of whites like me more than I could have comprehended at the time.

Like many American kids, I consumed a Disneyfied version of our history that omitted important parts of a national story that would have explained why Americans view each other and live day to day the way we do. Of the things I've read, watched, or listened to that helped fill these gaps, two collections of media stand out for their effectiveness in revealing to me the depth of hatred and callousness in the mainstream strain of white supremacy in America that succeeded the slaveholding republic.

The first is a collection of newspaper articles covering lynchings assembled by editor Ralf Ginzburg and self-published in 1962 as a book titled, *100 Years of Lynching in America*. The second is a collection of "lynching postcards" assembled by a white Southerner named James Allen in a five-minute video titled *Without Sanctuary*. Both the video and articles are available on the internet, and that's where I found them in 2014.

Before discovering these two collections, mental images of lynchings and public hangings in America came from western movies. I believed lynchings to be quick affairs.

The outlaw sat on a horse beneath a tree with hands tied behind his back and a noose around his neck. Public hangings were more formal. The condemned stood on the gallows with a preacher by his side and a couple dozen solemn witnesses and gawking onlookers below. At no time did I associate lynchings with anything resembling Islamic State atrocities. The newspaper articles and postcards altered my perspective.

Despite a lynching's reputation for being a quick, on-the-spot action, it was just as often the case that lynchings were planned, communal events involving hundreds or even thousands of white Americans. Reasons for lynching varied widely. A condemned black man could be accused of sexual assault, when in fact he'd been involved in a consensual relationship that ran afoul of a state's anti-miscegenation laws that forbade the mixing of races. A review of lynchings in 1909 reveals you could also be lynched for transgressions such as keeping a saloon, protecting another "negro," having knowledge of a larceny, threatening political exposure, or quarreling with a white man.⁶⁷ Victims were frequently burned alive before enthusiastic crowds—bodies dismembered while the heart still pumped. Body parts served as souvenirs.

Reading *100 Years of Lynchings in America*, I found a book filled with articles that paralleled one that the Kissimmee Valley Gazette ran on April 28, 1899, describing events under a headline that read, "Sam Holt Burned at Stake."

Sam Holt, the negro who is to have thought to have murdered Alfred Cranford and assailed Cranford's wife was burned at the stake one mile and a quarter from Newnan, Ga., Sunday afternoon, April 23, at 2:30 o'clock. Fully 2,000 people surrounded the small sapling to which he was fastened and watched the flames eat away his flesh, saw his body mutilated with knives, and witnessed the contortions of his body in extreme agony.

...

A few smoldering ashes scattered about the place, a blackened stake, are all that was left to tell the story. Not even the bones of the negro were left in peace but were eagerly snatched by a crowd of people drawn from all directions, who almost fought over the burning body of the man, carving it with their knives and seeking souvenirs of the occurrence.

As powerful as these descriptions are, it was the photographs of the lynchings that brought the reality of America's racial hatreds into sharper focus. The *Without Sanctuary* video presents 24 lynching postcards selected from a larger collection published in a book by the same name. What struck me regarding so many of the images was the festival-like

atmosphere that surrounded the mutilation and killing. In some, the faces of a woman or young boys smile back at the camera. In many more, the faces of men universally exude self-satisfaction. Looking at the smiling faces juxtaposed with the horror, I understood something about American society that I'd not fully comprehended previously.

On February 3, 2015, the Islamic State released a twenty-two-minute video in which captured Jordanian F16 pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh is shown being burned alive in a cage. His hideous death occurs amidst the ruins of what's implied to be the brick factory he bombed in the Islamic State capital of Raqa. In the video, Moaz walks toward the cage past a line of masked, Islamic State fighters. A frame later, Moaz is in the cage. His orange jumpsuit and the ground around him have been doused with gasoline. Islamic State fighters stand on the rubble and stare at the man in the cage. One lowers a lit torch to the ground. Fire races along a line in the dirt in the direction of the cage. Soon the flames find Moaz. Every movement and detail of his agonizing death is captured as his body contorts in the blaze. When it ends, a loader lifts up stones, dirt, and debris and dumps them down on the charred body. Vengeance is complete and delivered for all the world to see in a polished, sophisticated, professionally produced video.

On May 15, 1916, the mayor of Waco Texas invited Fred Gildersleeve into his second-floor office for a photo shoot. Gildersleeve was an esteemed citizen of Waco and a pioneering photographer in America. His early innovative use of aerial photography for commercial application and flash photography were well known at the time. Previously, Kodak sent a representative to Waco bearing special photographic paper so Gildersleeve could make a 120-inch panoramic photograph of Waco's Cotton Palace, which was the largest print that had ever been made at the time. From the window of the mayor's office, Gildersleeve was aiming for another pioneering first—to photograph all stages of a black man being lynched for the enjoyment of white Americans.

At the time, lynching photographs were routinely reproduced as postcards. Photographers did a brisk business selling them in shops or door to door. There was nothing subversive about them. Many were printed in the tens of thousands and sold for pennies. Some contained small print stating that you'd receive a discount if you bought them in bulk.⁶⁸ You were just as likely to come across a lynching postcard as you were to

happen upon a postcard of Niagara Falls. They were sent in sufficiently large numbers all across the country that their existence caught the attention of the Postal Service, which banned sending them in 1908.⁶⁹ In response, Americans put them in envelopes.

Standing in the mayor's office, Gildersleeve looked out the window and focused on his object of interest, an illiterate, mentally handicapped seventeen-year-old farmhand named Jesse Washington. The teen had been accused of raping and murdering his employer's wife, a fifty-three-year-old woman named Lucy Fryer. A single week separated her death from Jesse's trial. It lasted less than an hour, and the all-white jury returned a guilty verdict and a death sentence in four minutes. During the trial, the prosecutor focused on Jesse's written confession which he'd signed with an "X." Some, including Lucy Fryer's great-grandson, have noted a potential discrepancy between the detailed confession and a boy whose mental capacity was shown to be quite limited.⁷⁰ When asked whether he'd plead guilty or not guilty, Jesse awkwardly replied "Yes."⁷¹

Although there is uncertainty as to whether Jesse Washington committed the crimes he was accused of, there's no ambiguity regarding what the citizens of Waco did to him. Gildersleeve had been invited in advance to the mayor's office precisely because a gruesome spectacle was planned for Waco's citizens. That morning, a large dry goods box filled with wood and other flammable material was placed under a tree in the town square. It sat undisturbed for hours. Pretty much everyone except Jesse Washington knew what was going to happen after the verdict was announced. White Americans lynched 2812 black men between 1885 and 1915. Jesse would be the thirty-first black victim of 1916.⁷² Almost fifteen thousand men, women, and children—half the city's population—would watch a teenager be publicly tortured in a prosperous American city that considered itself the "Athens of Texas."

Dragged from the overcrowded courtroom, Jesse Washington was stripped, beaten with clubs, slashed with knives, and concussed with a brick as men took him to the tree where he would be slowly burned to death. Waco residents put a chain around his neck, covered him in flammable coal dust, and hoisted him above a freshly built fire. After grabbing for the chain to pull himself up and escape the searing heat, they cut his fingers off so he had nothing to grab with and returned him to the fire. Periodically, they'd raise

him up to delay the moment of death. Lowering him back into the flames elicited lusty cheers from the crowd.

The lynching lasted twice as long as Jesse's trial. When it was over, residents circulated ears, toes, pieces of clothing, teeth, and genitals as souvenirs. What remained of the body was dragged in the street until the head fell off. The torso was then taken to the community where Jesse's family lived and hung from a pole to clarify the message that was the lynching: Yankees may have ended slavery, but a black man better never forget that he's inferior to the white man. The wealthy amongst us used you for economic gain, and we despise your presence in America.

Although people referred to the lynching as the "Waco Horror," I'm mindful that the method of torture employed in Waco was used by whites in communities across the South. What made this atrocity different was the crowd size and the fact that Fred Gildersleeve was there to capture it all on camera for reproduction, dissemination, and profit. After his postcards became available for sale, one Waco resident sent one to his father. On the back, the note read, "This is the barbeque we had last night. Your son Joe."

When the Islamic State released its video showing pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh being burned alive in a cage, Fox News immediately and permanently hosted the full video on its website. It was the only US media company to do so. Fox anchor Bret Baier justified the move by saying, Fox News wanted to "bring you the reality of Islamic terrorism." Fox News vice president John Moody later added, "After careful consideration, we decided that giving readers of FoxNews.com the option to see for themselves the barbarity of ISIS outweighed legitimate concerns about the graphic nature of the video."⁷³ Terrorism experts pointed out that Fox News had effectively become an extension of the Islamic State's media arm. Twitter users known to support the Islamic State shared the video via links to FoxNews.com.⁷⁴

To this day, Fox News continues to host the Islamic State's video yet, unlike many legitimate news organizations (e.g., BBC, National Public Radio, and the Washington Post), Fox has never run an article regarding the significance of lynching in America or James Allen's unusual and sometimes dangerous quest to track down and purchase the lynching postcards he assembled. And you'll not find Fox News reminding

its adherents that not so long ago, it was a relatively mainstream practice amongst white Americans to behave in a manner that exceeded the barbarity of the Islamic State. The Islamic State did not invite its children to applaud their torture sessions, hawk body parts, or take smiling photographs with charred bodies and corpses dangling from chains and nooses. The Islamic State did not take steps to delay the moment of death for a tortured victim to prolong their suffering for the enjoyment of spectators. Large numbers of white Americans did all these things and never gave it a second thought. The practice of publicly torturing black Americans only began to wane after the NAACP and others shamed the white power structure in Southern communities, making it clear how damaging these barbaric sessions were to their collective reputation and economic livelihoods.

I've come to see these lynchings as a form of cultural expression reflecting deeply held values. In some elements of white American society, a thin veneer of civility masked white supremacy, cruelty, degradation, and hatred. In other elements, it was raw and on display for anyone to see.

For me, America's lynching postcards are like the tip of an iceberg, part of something more massive that I can see with my own eyes. As a young person living in Philadelphia, I could feel the weight of the thing. I could feel the trauma that had been brought to cities North and West by the five million black Americans who migrated after 1945. I could feel it but I did not understand it.

**PART III The Endless Production of Bad Human
Habitat**

17. Out of the Mouths of Babes

A few years ago, Christine and I were in France to bring our son and a bunch of other Canadian ninth-graders home after they'd spent twelve weeks living with families and attending school in different parts of the country.⁷⁵ Earlier that school year, kids from those same families had lived with us here in Canada, and in many cases, bonds had been formed.

There was one American in the group from upstate New York, and she sat with Christine and me during breakfast before we headed to the Paris airport. I asked about her exchange, and she described the town she lived in and a bit about her daily routine. Looking at Christine, she then said, with a touch of pain in her voice, "I'll miss the sense of peace that I didn't even know existed." That made me put my fork down and stop eating. I'd never put it into words, but that's how I'd felt thirty years earlier when I'd first experienced Europe's human-scale environment in the relative absence of fear for my safety.

Wanting to push back and confirm she was talking about the same amorphous feeling I had years ago, I asked her about the French soldiers with automatic weapons that we'd all seen in train stations across the country. Islamic terrorism was a real thing, and one didn't know when the next socially-alienated fanatic might seek to murder in the name of Allah. "Surely, that has an impact, right?" I asked. "No, it's not the same thing," she said. "I don't like seeing the soldiers, but it doesn't make me not like living here." "It's different in Rochester." She paused, then said, "I dunno, it's just different."

I was talking to a fifteen-year-old American girl, not a sociologist. She said her suburban neighborhood was "ok." She worked at a mall where she'd been harassed and

made to feel unsafe by a black man in the parking lot. Neither she nor her parents felt any attachment to a decaying, violent city fifteen minutes away by car.⁷⁶ She was coming of age in the socially fractured, alienating American landscape that I well understood and sought relief from. I felt a kinship with this teen in that we had a shared experience of an emotional world that even my own kids would have found foreign.

You can't absorb the totality of a young person's life in twenty minutes over breakfast. Nevertheless, the words she chose to contrast three months in France with her suburban American existence told me she felt she was going to lose something important by returning to upstate New York. In contrast, our son wasn't losing a thing by returning to Halifax. Ironically, in France, he lived in an auto-dependent suburb outside of Lyon and found it isolating at times relative to life at home. The American teen, however, lived in a French town that provided her with the two freedoms I consider key parts of a healthy childhood, namely freedom of mobility using your feet, and freedom from fear and tension. The peace she spoke of was born of these two freedoms—born of good human habitat.

Remember that Nielsen survey that indicated 62 percent of millennials expressed a preference for, “vibrant, creative energy cities offering a mix of housing, shopping, and offices right outside their doorstep”? What those 55 million people want is good human habitat. It's instinctual. It's what the American teen in France wanted. It's what I wanted after first experiencing a European city. And it's what our children experience every day in Halifax.

Behind the millennials are younger Americans who, it's reasonable to assume, would also prefer to live in good human habitat if it was available. But it's not. Millions coming of age as middle-class citizens in their child-rearing years are going to be stuck with a lifestyle they feel little attachment to, shaped by dynamics only partially understood that seem beyond one's control, people trapped and immobilized in the sunlit prison of the American dream. And while the prison may affect black and white differently, it's a prison for all just the same, degrading both our environment and the human experience.

18. Describing Good Human Habitat by Way of Example

To a large degree, my life has been shaped by the desire to walk places. Our ancestors have been walking upright and making tools for over two million years. Yet in the span of a few decades, a new way of living came into being, one that eliminated walking from the daily lives of white Americans. Cities serve as receptacles of trauma built up over centuries for reasons relating to skin color. Taken together, these dynamics make good human habitat hard to find.

I first heard the phrase ‘good human habitat’ when listening to Danish urban designer Jan Gehl recount a conversation he had with the mayor of Bogota in which the mayor asked why was it that we know so much about good habitat for mountain gorillas and Siberian tigers yet know so little about good habitat for homo sapiens? Anyone familiar with Jan Gehl’s pursuit to champion the human scale and clarify its relevance to our psychological well-being understands that he knows a great deal about what good human habitat is and is not. This said, I feel it’s a question many more people could be asking given its centrality to our lives and those who come after us. Tellingly, it was a question I never heard asked once during the two years I spent in a graduate-level urban planning program.

Had I been asked the question in my early twenties, “What is good human habitat, specifically for middle-class families?” I would have given you a blank look. If pressed for an answer, my response might have included phrases like, “big backyard,” “live in a good school district,” or “be close to a shopping mall,” the things mothers and fathers in the subdivision of my youth had achieved in terms of living arrangements. It was the line of thinking I was most familiar with— thinking, I might add, that was influenced to a significant degree by federal housing and lending policies that were, in turn, materially

shaped by our origins as a slaveholding republic. If I could go back and give my younger self an answer, it would be by way of example drawn from my life in Halifax.

Recall that quality of life as defined in this book consists of four elements: human-scale development, direct and convenient access to nature, governance that sustains and enhances the human scale, and a functional middle class whose well-being makes it possible to take advantage of what the human scale can offer. In Halifax, three of the four elements have been—more or less—in place. A large, but shrinking portion of the city is still built at the human scale. I have direct and convenient access to the natural world, and I share my environment with a functional middle class. Taken together, I live in an imperfect, but good human habitat and experience a quality of life that is relatively high.

There's a caveat, however. The public sector in Nova Scotia—at all levels of government—has an established track record of degrading the human scale to a degree that might surprise more competent planning and development professionals who practice in bubbles of affluence such as Arlington, Virginia, or Boulder, Colorado. I don't wish to leave you with the impression that Canada does urban design and development better than the United States. In many respects, the opposite is true. Outside the city proper, the Halifax Regional Municipality only approves auto-dependent development plans that produce the same social, economic, and environmental consequences as seen in the United States. Inside the city, older human-scale development is routinely devalued and replaced by—to use the enthusiastic words of one Canadian journalist writing about Halifax—“soaring towers of glass and steel.”⁷⁷

Moreover, in recent years, the Canadian government under the Liberals has instituted an aggressive immigration policy with a stated goal of tripling Canada's population to 100 million by end of century.⁷⁸ The policy is a product of governing elites in a country that produces more CO₂ per capita than any other industrialized nation on earth at a time of a rapidly unfolding climate catastrophe.⁷⁹ In the last five years, demographic changes in Halifax have been dramatic, as an increasingly large stream of people arrive from the planet's two most populous nations. Most wind up living in new auto-dependent suburbs while others occupy units in said “soaring glass towers,” ensuring profitability for developers. Tellingly, Canada now has the least affordable

housing of any G-7 nation.⁸⁰ The good human habitat for middle-class families that we've experienced here likely won't be available for our children as politicians and planners degrade the very qualities that drew us to Halifax in the first place.

And with this reality check in mind, I'd like to describe what constitutes good habitat by way of example, a slice of our life in this city. It bears repeating that what I'm describing is an urban environment that's provided middle-class children with a level of freedom and physical autonomy that they could not experience in the United States—not in Brooklyn, not in Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, or New Orleans.

The Neighborhood and a Dinner Date

Midweek, late in the afternoon in September, Christine and I decide last minute to go out for dinner. After sorting out logistics with the kids, we walk out onto the front porch. Door closed behind us, we're on our date.

It's four steps down to the sidewalk. Our small front yard is covered in periwinkle and boxwood bushes. Most houses on the street occupy lots that are thirty feet wide by a hundred feet deep, an ideal dimension balancing the need for compactness within the human scale with the desire for one's own space. Little more than a car width separates one house from the next, the absence of side yards enhancing walkability. Single-car garages sit in backyards along rear lot lines just like Nellie's house. We converted ours to a small guest house and art studio for Christine. Backyard size is ideal. Big enough to toss a football around and grow herbs, rhododendrons, ferns, vegetables, and all sorts of flowers. Small enough so as not to require much maintenance. It's our private outdoor space. Public space is in the front and it's there where I'd greet a neighbor. In the back, I'd generally respect their privacy.

On the sidewalk, Christine and I walk beneath towering maples and elms that produce a beautiful canopy that shades homes in the warmer months. Houses lining the street form what's referred to as a street wall in urban design lingo. The consistent setback of the houses eight feet from the sidewalk, spacing between the houses, street trees, and the relatively narrow width of the street all work together to create a sense of enclosure that people find psychologically comforting. If you were to drop into my

neighborhood via google maps and look at say, Garden or Edward Street, you'd see what I'm referring to.

The neighborhood was built between 1905 and 1925. Our circa 1908 house is typical of many—two stories, cedar shingles, bay windows, a covered front porch, and architectural detailing such as cornices, dentils, and generously sized casings around windows and doors. Neighbors include teachers, doctors, university students, a few independent filmmakers, a bus driver, a physical therapist, an editor, some professors, a janitor, a geologist, a Canadian Army officer, a tailor and dry cleaner, and a radio journalist, to name a few.

Most houses are reasonably well-maintained. Those that aren't are typically owned by absentee landlords charging inflated rents to university students. A shelter for troubled youth sits at the end of our street. It's well-run and considered welcome in the neighborhood. One street over lived a woman afflicted by mental illness who was a hoarder. On Monday mornings, older, indigent men go through blue recycling bags set out on trash day, removing bottles and cans to return for cash. For much of its history, Halifax has been a scruffy port city, home to the British and later, Canadian navies. When we first moved here from British Columbia in 2000, one of the first comments Christine made as we were walking through the city's main shopping district was, "Huh... Good place to get a tattoo." Although the backbone of the city has been the middle class, there are those less fortunate and still others living in upscale homes with cash to burn.

Christine and I go out for a dinner date about once a month, and Edna's one of a handful of places run by young, innovative restaurateurs in this city that we like. It opened after the owner's mother, Jane, closed her restaurant, aptly named Jane's on the Common. That restaurant sat across the street facing the Halifax Common, a 29-acre urban park that was originally granted to the inhabitants of Halifax in 1763 by King George III, a few years before his thirteen colonies further south became an independent, slaveholding republic.

Two things stood out about Jane's. First, everything served was either from Nova Scotia, the ocean around it, or nearby Prince Edward Island. Second, the staff remained largely unchanged from year to year. Christine's impression was that cooks and wait staff were sharing an experience with us versus serving us. This was by design, as Jane broke

with convention by paying her staff well above minimum wage, providing benefits, and working with staff to cultivate a welcoming environment.⁸¹

When Jane's daughter opened her restaurant Edna, the philosophy regarding food and people was unchanged but there were differences. For starters, Edna is not the name of Jane's daughter. Jenna—the actual daughter—named her place after the American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, an intelligent, seductive, independent woman who grew up in poverty but went on to receive the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1923. The menu is completely different but equally delicious.

Once inside Edna, Christine, and I are led to a table and handed a menu presenting dishes like duck confit and seared scallops. Although it's after 8:30 on a Thursday, all 60 seats are occupied, and a long communal table bubbles with laughter and animated conversation. The interior is clean, and modern, consisting of white painted cinder block and brick walls, natural wood tabletops, a partial wood slat ceiling, and white tiles that run beneath a beautifully laminated wooden bar top. Durable materials aside, the restaurant exudes a sense of warmth.

Thirty-one-year-old Katherine walks over from behind the bar to say hello. Originally from Ottawa, she came to Halifax to do a master's degree with an eye on the foreign service but gravitated to restaurants. She was with Jane's before Edna and is renovating a 19th-century inn up the street with her husband to create something unique in Halifax regarding a pub experience.

Good human habitat implies human-scale design, but it's also about having destinations that can be integrated into our lives. It's about what happens behind a building façade. You need creative, hard-working people like a Jane, Jenna, or Katherine to provide the destinations that make city living worthwhile. And, you need a middle class to share the experiences with.

Edna is not an inexpensive restaurant, largely because the food is fancy, and Jenna provides staff with a living wage and benefits. Regardless, Edna's not a hot spot for Halifax's nouveau riche. And on this Thursday night, I'm conscious of sharing the place with middle-class Canadians.

Sitting in this crowded, animated restaurant, I'm surrounded by people who don't worry about losing healthcare coverage.^{xx} None of them will fear for their safety after they leave the restaurant. Few would have any idea what it's like to live in a polarized society where one slice loathes the other. They understand the transactional nature of taxes. Firearms are not the leading cause of death for children as they are in America. Taken together, the people around me appear to experience less stress, and more civility relative to much of life south of the border. What I'm not saying is that life is free from hardship, messiness, pain, and dysfunction. But there are differences.

The Lynchpin of Good Human Habitat

Leaving the restaurant to return home after 11 PM, we hear live music pouring out the doors and windows of the Seahorse Tavern next door. A handful of patrons, college-age and up, stand outside vaping and smoking. Across the street, men congregate in front of the Salvation Army men's shelter. A block up the street and around the corner is the community hall of St. George Round Church, where our daughter started Irish dance at age five. King George III funded the church's construction at the behest of his son, Prince Edward, who helped design the building.

We walk up a cross street in the direction of home, past two blocks of some of my favorite houses in the city dating from the mid-nineteenth century that sits in a remnant of one of the older neighborhoods. The night sky is clear and the temperature has dropped slightly. Venus and Mars follow us over the roofline of the shingled houses painted in orange, blue, yellow, and green. The last house in this two-block stretch belongs to our younger son's former violin teacher, who lives in a "kit-house" built in 1865, using pre-cut lumber and ship-building techniques common to the time, including notched timbers, wooden dowels, and square nails.

A block up and over we come to a traffic circle at the edge of the Halifax Common. On the far side of the circle to my right is the skating oval where my daughter

^{xx} They should however, be concerned about receiving adequate care. Canada lags most other OECD nations in delivering a well-functioning healthcare system. Taxpayer funded healthcare is delivered more effectively in Spain, Germany, Japan, Germany, and many others. Canada still ranks above the United States however.

and I go in the winter. Turning left and skirting the circle via a crosswalk brings us to the base of a large hill on which the British spent twenty-eight years building a massive star-shaped fortress. Completed in 1856, the Halifax Citadel's principal purpose at that time was to anchor a defense against a potential American invasion at a time when the two nations still considered each other adversaries. Today, it's a national historic site where we've enjoyed, among other things, listening to members of the 78th Highlanders Pipe Band showcase their talents. Once in a blue moon, we hear someone practicing bagpipes in our neighborhood.

On our right, we pass a grass sports field where our two sons learned to play rugby. Just beyond is a heavily used skate park where they'd go unsupervised when they were younger. And on our left is Citadel High School, from which our oldest recently graduated and where our other son currently attends. It's the kind of urban public high school that you can find in cities elsewhere in Canada, but you won't find in the United States. And it is the lynchpin of good human habitat concerning quality of life.

Citadel High is not a charter school and you don't take an exam to get in. It's the only option in our area for parents sending their kids to a public high school. Three smaller private schools operate in the area, but most families send their kids to Citadel. Tellingly, a small number of students transfer from these schools each year to enroll in Citadel's International Baccalaureate program. I'm not aware of a single case in the United States where an urban, comprehensive public high school draws students away from private schools.

The former private school kids who arrive at the doors of Citadel each year encounter a diverse student body, roughly 60% white and 7% black, with the remaining third consisting of more recent arrivals from East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East.

Most black students at Citadel are descendants of enslaved persons who crossed over to British lines during the American Revolution and the War of 1812 to fight or otherwise provide support in exchange for freedom. Before they arrived in Nova Scotia, the British had established slavery throughout the province in much the same way they did in New England. The enslaved worked as skilled craftsmen, laborers, and servants, comprising a smaller percentage of the population, relative to the American South. The

addition of approximately 4000 black men and women over the course of these two wars did not dramatically change demographics, as many ultimately left for other destinations. For those who remained, they learned that the British definition of freedom meant broken promises, systemic racism, and life as marginalized, second-class citizens.

Little changed after Nova Scotia joined a new country called Canada in 1867. For example, by the 1960s, the black community in Halifax included 400 families living at the northern edge of the city, a place where white city councilors had voted against extending water or sewer, but voted for locating the city dump.⁸² When the councilors decided they wanted their land, they took it and bulldozed the homes. Most ended up in public housing up the street from Edna. So, when I say Canadian cities differ from American cities in that they're not saturated in trauma, I'm not saying that there's no trauma because there most certainly is.

If you're black and attending Citadel, chances are you identify with the urban culture that American systemic racism shaped because that same racism exists in Halifax.

The brand practiced here is insidious, in keeping with the more passive-aggressive nature of Canadian society. Marginalization and discrimination have contributed to a child poverty rate among black Nova Scotians that is 40%, double the percentage of whites.⁸³ Adverse conditions established and reinforced since the eighteenth century have not magically disappeared because a few white Nova Scotian politicians have shown up at black community events in recent years and said "I'm sorry" for past injustices.⁸⁴

I focus on black students at Citadel High because their circumstances are central to why our family can experience good human habitat in this city—circumstances that are distinct enough from the black-American experience to make a difference. Canadian cities are not wholesale receptacles of trauma because a smaller percentage of the population is traumatized, and both the duration and intensity of that trauma are less relative to the United States. There was no forced internal migration of a million Canadians in chains, no routine splitting of Canadian families, or whipping of Canadians who failed to meet quotas at the end of every day. There was no Canadian federal bank that routinely provided prominent Canadian slave traders with loans to buy Canadian bodies. The Nova Scotia legislature never issued bonds to expand the market for enslaved Canadians. Similarly, there were no Canadian slave traders and enslavers who engaged in

the systemic, widespread rape of Canadian women. Canadians never gathered to celebrate the torture, burning, and mutilation of other Canadians. Nor did local and provincial governments arrest and lease Canadians to owners of mines, brick factories, and turpentine operations who, in turn, were guided by the creed, “If one dies, get another.” And critically, the Canadian government never isolated millions impacted directly or indirectly by this array of crimes in its cities.⁸⁵

The absence of these crimes affects what takes place in the classrooms and hallways of Citadel High. Canadians are not hamstrung by the values of the slaveholding republic, and like all other western democracies except the United States, Canada implements policies benefiting young people that are considered highly controversial south of the 49th parallel. Black students at Citadel have access to the same healthcare that my family and I have. And school boards are funded entirely by the province. As a result, the deeply rooted fiscal inequality in American public education (due to differences in local property taxes) is largely non-existent. After the province completed the construction of Citadel a few years ago, black families gained access to the same state-of-the-art facility that also became available to my family and wealthier whites in the city.

The broad-based fear and tension that exists in many American urban high schools are nonexistent at Citadel.⁸⁶ Although the school has a police liaison who checks in a few times a week, there are no metal detectors at the door, nor is there a full-time security guard. The relationship with the police liaison exists in a metro region of over 400,000 people that averages just eight homicides per year.⁸⁷ This is not to say there are no issues in a school like Citadel. A recent survey conducted by the CBC of students across Canada, reveals that student-on-student violence and sexual assault are problems requiring solutions. These issues, however, affect the whole of society and are not problems pushing families out of cities. The same applies to gang activity, drugs, and human trafficking, pathologies that are unfortunate realities in all western democracies.

Overt racial animosity at Citadel is minimal. Whites and blacks share classes without drama and frequently greet each other in hallways. Football players take it a step further and routinely dap each other up. And it’s on the football team where the greatest amount of mixing occurs between whites and blacks. It’s an environment where white

kids routinely and positively interact with their black peers. But there are limits. When school is out, black and white call different parts of the city home, and there's not a great deal of interaction.

Our oldest son was one of the dominant receivers on the football team. Another top-scoring receiver was black, and the two shared a bond and healthy rivalry. One evening, our son hosted a "receivers-only" party at our house. Most black receivers didn't hesitate to accept the invite, but his friend and rival was reluctant, and it took some convincing to get him to come into a white, relatively affluent neighborhood. So, although most students are on good terms, black and white lead lives that are separate in large part because of the city's unresolved issues with racism. If the scale and intensity of this racism rivaled that produced by the slaveholding republic, Christine and I would never have called Halifax home.

Destinations for Monthly Needs

At the edge of the school, we cross a street and come to the city's museum of natural history where our family has learned about deep water canyons off the coast, and watched Gus, a 99-year-old tortoise, amble around and eat an apple. On the other side of the street is the hospital I visited with an inflamed lining of the heart, thinking I was having a heart attack.

Next to the museum are the Wanderers Grounds, where we watched our older son play some exciting football, which is a slightly odd experience for his parents since neither of us follows the sport. The 6200-seat stadium is home to a professional soccer club called the Halifax Wanderers and it's where our younger son and his friends go in the summer to belt out profane songs in support of the home team. When they were sixteen, they'd find some older, 19-year-old they knew to legally buy them beer in advance. Not ideal, but we appreciated his honesty and the fact that he talks with us about his life.^{xi}

^{xi} Parenting style aside, attitudes in Canada differ from our conservative states on key subjects affecting the lives of young people. Take cannabis for example. As recently as 2012,

With the Wanderers Grounds still on our left we come to a street separating it from the Halifax Public Gardens, a 16-acre Victorian-era garden featuring towering old trees, and elaborate flower beds. It's five minutes from the house, and I walk its paths a few times each week. At this point, getting home is a matter of turning right at the Gardens, walking through a wooded cemetery, and walking one block into our neighborhood.

Turning left and walking to the other end of the Gardens takes us to the edge of downtown, where Christine walks to a pub to play traditional Irish music in a weekly "session." By chance, it's also where our younger son and a few players from his soccer team have gone since age thirteen to join others on Saturday mornings to watch the Liverpool Football Club on television. He knows plenty of adults Christine and I have never met.

The Neptune Theater sits across the street, and it's where our family has seen *A Christmas Carol*, and productions by playwrights who tell stories closer to home. Next door is Obladee, a wine bar where Christine and I occasionally go to listen to live music and drink good wine we've never heard of. Within five minutes of the theater, are our dentist, the camping store, our library, movie theaters, the kids' orthodontist, a grocery store, a bookstore, the farmer's market, a beer garden, a slew of restaurants, a folklore music shop where the boys replace broken guitar strings, and a record shop where our boys have been going on their own since about age nine.

Good human habitat provides destinations conveniently reachable by foot that meet our needs over a typical month, and the downtown is a key part of the equation. It's vibrant enough, despite, as mentioned, poor decisions made by politicians, planners, and developers who have collectively disfigured parts of this city in ways not easily repairable. As it is, good human habitat exists in large part due to a city layout established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the absence of social trauma—long ago

the Louisiana Supreme Court sentenced a black man to life in prison for selling \$30 of marijuana. In Halifax, any 19-year-old can walk into the government-run cannabis store six blocks away, talk with staff about the effect of various strains, and make a purchase.

decisions that provide our family with a way of living that would be foreign to my younger, suburban self growing up in a Central-Pennsylvania subdivision.

The Blessings of Convenient Access to Nature

Having arrived at the Public Gardens, we come to a subject relevant to both physical and mental health. Thus far, I've said little about quality of life's second leg, namely our having convenient, direct access to nature. Nevertheless, it's immensely important to Christine and me.

Whereas the Public Gardens is a five-minute walk from the house, ten minutes away by bike, sits a 184-acre forest park that's bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on three sides. Like everything else in this compact environment, these natural areas play an integral part in our lives in ways I couldn't have considered growing up. As a child, the nearest forest park—Pinchot State Park—was thirty minutes away by car and I didn't know that public gardens were even a thing. In Halifax, we use the forest park and gardens regularly.

As is the case for many, work can elicit satisfaction and produce stress. I find it helpful to be able to step away from my home office for thirty minutes and walk through the gardens to clear my mind or think something through. When our daughter was not yet in school, I'd take her with me, and we'd sit and enjoy the sound of water falling from an old Victorian fountain, or get an ice cream at the garden coffee shop. Outside of working hours, I often visit on weekend mornings or late in the day. I appreciate the gardens' beauty, and the communal feel, as it's a regular draw for city residents. This is one place where city governance shines.

In the forest park, blackberry bushes line paths and offer snacks when summer draws to an end. In the fall, I'll kick my feet through mounds of leaves and take in the distinct smell of the air. Winter provides its own beauty in palettes of gray and green as naked birch and maple dance in wind with white pines and balsam fir.⁸⁸

I go to these places because of the way they make me feel. And, as it turns out, the perceived benefits of being surrounded by nature are something more than a figment of my imagination. Research—much of it done in Japan—has established a solid connection

between time spent in forests and improved metabolic and cardiovascular health, a stronger immune system, and a reduction in stress, anxiety, anger, and depression. Studies indicate these benefits are tied to the presence of plant chemicals called phytoncides which themselves are a key part of a plant's defense against insects, fungi, and bacteria. Additional benefits follow such as the higher levels of oxygen present in forests and heavily treed areas.⁸⁹

Like most of what makes Halifax compelling, the existence of the public gardens and forest park predates modern urban planning. This said I'm thankful former colleagues in Halifax's planning office didn't rezone the forest park as low-density residential and blanket it with the kind of suburban-style housing that borders the park on one side. Similarly, they could have rezoned the public gardens as high-density residential and covered it with the "soaring towers of glass and steel" that excite Canadian journalists and developers alike. Where urban planning is concerned, you find comfort where you can.

Returning to our walk home from Edna, at the public garden, Christine and I turn right and cross the street. The downtown is behind us as we enter a heavily wooded cemetery with headstones dating from the 1830s. Leaves are still all on the trees. The sky is clear but there's no moon, and the gravel lane that bisects the cemetery and runs three football fields in length is dark. We pass a monument dedicated to a nineteenth-century Scottish immigrant, brewer, and politician named Alexander Keith. Haligonians will routinely set an empty bottle of Alexander Keith's pale ale on the base of the obelisk, out of affection for the man and his beer. The rest of the graveyard is litter free.

We've walked this route at night many times, and it's near the monument where it happens again. Christine is holding my arm and pulls me closer. I know what's going on in her head because we've spoken about it in the past. After walking through another two hundred yards of darkness, we will have reached the edge of our neighborhood. Old gravestones on either side tilt this way and that. Christine's tug prompts me to become aware of how I feel in my body. After fifteen years of living in this city, we still don't take for granted the fact that we experience little if any fear in our daily lives. Walking through an urban cemetery of this sort late at night without any tension or palpable fear is

not something I could do in an American city of Halifax's size. The intensity of the slaveholding republic's legacy is not felt here.⁹⁰

19. The Advantages of the Human Scale

The lives our three children have led growing up in a human-scale environment bear little resemblance to my life in a Pennsylvania subdivision. Our two sons find the suburbs “weird,” and “foreign” (their words). Recently over lunch, our younger son, Eamon, recalled the first time he and a friend wandered by foot off the Halifax peninsula, and into a suburban area called Fairmount. Drawing from a junior high memory, he remarked, “I don’t think I even knew we had suburbs here.” “So, what did you think?” I asked. Looking up from his sandwich he pauses for a few seconds, then says, “... just fucking boring.”

Several years ago, a couple from Washington DC came up for a visit. The morning of their first full day in town Christine and I had work commitments and couldn’t take them on a tour of Halifax. That bit of hospitality fell to Eamon, who was eleven at the time. Three hours later, our guests returned, amused after having seen Halifax from a boy’s perspective. Grinning, the wife tells us, “We skipped the art museum, and headed directly to Freak Lunchbox for the candy, and Strange Adventures for comics... On the waterfront, some tattooed guy recognized Eamon and had nice things to say about his music making.” At the time, he was still “little boy” cute, and good enough to make plenty of money playing Irish and Cape Breton style fiddle on the waterfront. On one occasion, a semi-homeless woman harassed him and his older brother (who also played) for money, but other tourists stepped in. They were never in any real danger, hence a learning experience.⁹¹ City life delivered good things for our children, but they also understood they weren’t living in a cloistered environment. We didn’t consider it an issue because the occasional complication they’d encounter didn’t approach

some tipping point where we'd fear for their well-being. And as for Eamon, it set him up to, as our guests said, "show us the city as if it was his own."

Over the past few decades, much research has been done assessing the advantages of walkable communities relative to auto-dependent counterparts. Simply summarizing the research requires significant effort. And one excellent summary of findings comes to us by way of urban planning professor Reid Ewing, and epidemiologist Dr. Richard Kreutzer. Their 137-page report titled *Understanding the Relationship Between Public Health and the Built Environment* presents benefits related to cardiovascular and respiratory health, fatal and non-fatal traffic injuries, physical fitness, social capital, mental health, and specific benefits to children, and the elderly. I don't wish to replicate something you can easily find online. I do, however, want to share a just few ways in which our experience aligns with the research.

The elementary school at the center of our neighborhood provides an example of how human-scale design supports the creation of social capital in ways my suburban elementary school did not.⁹² Mornings and afternoons parents drop off and pick up children from school. Most arrive on foot. The front of the school is a park/playground that allows parents and children to gather and socialize. They hang around. They talk. Acquaintances get formed, and on occasion, a friendship solidifies. This wouldn't happen if everyone was driving.⁹³

The idea behind the human scale's relationship to social capital isn't mysterious. I walk down sidewalks and spend time in public space, as do others (e.g., the gardens, waterfront, etc.). As a result, I'm more likely to bump into people I know, which reinforces relationships. I don't mean to oversell this. I'm not suggesting I have a dozen close friends, or that every day my soul gets nourished by meaningful human interaction. But there's more random socializing taking place within the community relative to what I've experienced in suburbia.

What of our health? When I was in high school in 1980, 13.4% of Americans were obese.⁹⁴ By 2022, that figure had risen to 42%.⁹⁵ As mentioned, sprawl isn't the only driver for this, but eliminating walking from American life didn't help. The amount of ambient exercise my family gets relative to what we'd get in a subdivision is

significant. When combined with sports (e.g., Christine walks to a boxing gym on the other side of the public gardens), the cumulative effect is consistent with studies finding that walkable communities and lower rates of obesity and diabetes go hand in hand.⁹⁶

The human scale entails narrower, safer streets. Ours is 24 feet wide, narrower than the typical residential street width of 32 to 36 feet, and we have parking on one side which narrows the street further.⁹⁷ Narrow roads slow traffic, creating safer, quieter places.⁹⁸ A pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling 30 mph is nine times more likely to die than a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling 20 mph. If a vehicle traveling 20 mph strikes a pedestrian, there is a 95 percent survival rate. If a vehicle traveling 30 mph strikes a pedestrian, the survival rate drops to 50 percent. If the vehicle speed increases to 40 mph—a common speed on 36-foot-wide residential streets—the survival rate drops to 15 percent.⁹⁹

The human scale also features narrow lots on which sit a mixture of single-family homes, duplexes, and triplexes. As mentioned earlier, a narrow lot means that our side yard is little more than the width of a car which is ideal as I find side yards to be a waste of space. What I want is a reasonably sized backyard where I can experience outdoor privacy, kick a ball around, and garden.

Aside from making it possible to walk, narrow lots offer advantages regarding the efficient use of public infrastructure: fewer linear feet for water, sewer, and electrical; and fewer miles of road to resurface and plow (i.e., saved fuel and labor). Less money gets spent. Assuming tax revenue is a constant, then more money is available for public amenities such as parks and schools.¹⁰⁰ Narrow lots are also a crucial part of providing the compactness needed to ensure all the local businesses I can walk to remain profitable.

When we purchased our 1580 square foot house (basement excluded) we knew the bedrooms were relatively small. We addressed this by working with carpenters to create attractive, solid wood, built-in bookcases, wardrobes, and dressers. Our daughter is the only person with her own room, and it's the smallest. We enlarged it by building a loft bed overtop a new wardrobe and a dresser which adds additional character to the century-old home. Built-ins leverage space efficiently and turn smaller houses into roomier, unique homes. And I find it an advantage to occupy a modestly-sized but well-constructed home in a walkable community relative to a more cheaply constructed

suburban home that's twice the size, and considerably more to heat or cool. A final benefit offered by the modestly sized home is that our kids don't scurry off to their own wing of a house to live isolated lives surfing the dark corners of the internet. Our house requires that we interact with each other. As parents, we like it that way.

Living at the human scale means we don't use a car every time we get milk, groceries, or see a dentist, which means fewer CO2 emissions. Do we drive? Certainly. Sometimes even when we don't need to because we're not purists. But we do walk or bike more, and importantly, we don't need a second car. No additional insurance, gas, maintenance, or car payments. Nor have we bought cars for our now college-age sons, as there's no pressing need.¹⁰¹ The American Automobile Association notes that the current average cost of vehicle ownership is \$9,282 annually.¹⁰² So, in a practical sense, living at the human scale has allowed us to save roughly \$90K over the past decade.

I appreciate the car and where it gets us, but I like that I'm not tethered to it and love that I'm not wasting large amounts of my life sitting in it. Each year, over the past 40 years, congestion has gotten measurably worse. In 1982, Americans lost on average 20 hours a year sitting in traffic. By 2019, that figure had risen to 54 hours. If you live in one of the 15 most congested areas, that figure is 83 hours.¹⁰³ And, despite the rare, unanticipated dip (e.g., Covid pandemic), the Texas Transportation Institute—which publishes an annual mobility report—has stated that the problem is only going to get worse.¹⁰⁴

Several years ago, a *Washington Post* article reported that “Motorists may be spending more time stuck on the road, but some busy parents say slogging their way through traffic has become the best way to keep in touch with their children.” Having spent hours in stop-and-go traffic in the Washington D.C. suburbs, it's a reality I'm glad to have behind me. Admittedly, it's now slightly more difficult to get our now fourteen-year-old daughter to go on a walk with me, as she sometimes confuses me with chopped liver. Occasionally, I need to offer up a visit to a favored sushi restaurant. But in the end, we walk, she opens back up, and I'm her dad again.

20. Bad Human Habitat's DNA: Single-Use Zoning

With the human scale offering so many advantages over auto-dependent development, it begs the question why America remains locked into producing bad human habit. To better understand the why, it's helpful to first know something of bad human habitat's DNA. That DNA is called single-use zoning.^{xii}

Zoning fundamentals are easy to grasp. Your local government maintains a map of your municipality that's divided into zones. Each zone encompasses one or more pieces of property owned by various landowners. Your municipality assigns each zone on the map a zoning classification that falls under one of a handful of parent classifications. In the U.S., parent classifications are typically residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and agricultural. Zone classifications are described in your local government's zoning regulations. For each zone classification in this document, you'd typically find two sub-sections. The first lists permitted uses for a given zone classification. In a commercial zone, for example, you'd find uses such as convenience stores and restaurants. The second subsection contains information collectively referred to as bulk requirements, which specify, among other things, maximum building dimensions and how far back a building must be from the property line. That's it in a nutshell. There's more to zoning than this, but the fundamentals are all you need to know.^{xiii}

Zoning itself isn't the problem. Nobody wants to buy a home and then watch a factory get built next to it. This is the kind of scenario the Germans wanted to avoid when

^{xii} It's often referred to by planners as Euclidean zoning for reasons I'll touch on shortly.

^{xiii} Municipalities employ urban planners to do different things. Some do long range planning. Others work with communities on localized plans. I worked as a legislative planner responsible for maintaining and updating the zoning ordinance and related development regulations. In practice, these regulations are painfully byzantine.

they invented citywide zoning in the 1870s.¹⁰⁵ And long before that, going back to antiquity, people have been making laws shaping cities. America's problem is that almost all local governments implement a variant of zoning that only allows residential uses in residential zones and commercial uses in commercial zones, hence the name single-use zoning^{xiv}. In Pennsylvania, I grew up in a zone classified as "Residential Suburban" which allowed developers to build single-family homes on quarter-acre lots and a community swimming pool. Every other use was prohibited.^{xv}

It's not like this everywhere. In Germany, for example, all residential zones permit some combination of commercial and residential uses.¹⁰⁶ You want to operate a bakery in a residential zone? No problem. A restaurant? No problem in most residential zones. Germany's residential zones are better understood to be "living zones" and within these zones, you can operate a whole range of businesses considered integral to daily life. Even a relatively restrictive zone called "Exclusively Residential" permits small shops, hotels, and civic buildings. And importantly, single-family zoning doesn't even exist in Germany. And importantly, all residential zones allow townhouses, apartments, condos, and single-family homes.¹⁰⁷

America is a world apart. Seventy-five percent of residential property is zoned exclusively for single-family housing.¹⁰⁸ In the remaining 25%, townhouses go in a townhouse zone, apartments go in an apartment zone, and so on. Furthermore, municipalities routinely create residential zones with different minimum lot sizes to segregate people by income.

The net effect of single-use zoning is to put physical distance between you and everything you'd need to access outside the home over a month. Walking is impractical, so you drive. And when you get to your destination, you park in a lot. The size of that lot is dictated by minimum parking requirements found in your municipality's zoning regulations. These requirements are based upon theoretical worst-case scenarios such as everyone driving to the shopping mall on Black Friday. This is why America has 800

^{xiv} The name "single-use" is somewhat misleading. Within a single-use zone you can have multiple uses, but they all fall under a single top-level category such as commercial or residential. For example, in a single-use commercial zone you might find multiple uses lists such a restaurant, automotive repair, retail shop, etc.

^{xv} It is a world utterly foreign to the 6,000 mostly middle class, kids who live within two miles of my home in Halifax.

million surface parking spaces that collectively consume a land mass larger than Puerto Rico.¹⁰⁹ In many urbanized areas, more than a third of the land area is consumed by parking.¹¹⁰ Summing all this up, single-use zoning produces a built environment that requires an automobile for everything except a walk around the block. And even that's a questionable proposition in many places.

21. Racial Hatred Births the Single-Family Zone

Shortly before starting my job as an urban planner with Baltimore County, Christine and I had purchased a brick townhouse in a 1930s-era neighborhood called Rodgers Forge.^{xvi} When closing on the house, we discovered the deed included a restrictive covenant (a requirement of the sale) which read,

“No persons of any race other than the white race shall use or occupy any building or lot except domestic servants.”

Deed for 33 Murdoch Road, Baltimore, MD

In response to the dumbfounded looks on our faces, the real estate agent assured us the covenant was no longer enforced. Yet, during our two years in the neighborhood, we didn't see a single black resident despite living only a mile from the Baltimore city line at a time (2002) when Blacks made up 64% of the city's population.¹¹¹ Covenant or no covenant, blacks appeared to know their place. And we didn't have to go far from our home to find additional evidence of a past reverberating in the present.

A few days after moving in, we took a walk to a grocery that was part of a strip mall. To get there, we walked five minutes to the edge of Rodgers Forge, then continued on into a circa-1930s, single-family neighborhood. A block in, we turned left onto a narrow lane called Schwartz Avenue, walked 50 yards, then came to a boulder standing three feet tall that had been sunk into the ground to serve as a barrier.

^{xvi} Rodgers Forge is the childhood home to Michael Phelps (most decorated Olympian of all time), and Hillary Hahn (one of the most fabulous violinists on the planet).

A line of trees reinforced the barrier on either side of the boulder. Passing to the left of the boulder on a dirt path, we were again back on a paved road. Continuing down to a commercial street, we saw older duplexes and single-family homes built around 1915, and it quickly became apparent that we were looking at an isolated black community. Everyone on one side of the boulder was white. Everyone on the other side was black. Christine remarked, “Well remember now...Maryland *was* a slave state.” In hindsight, neither the racial covenant nor the boulder’s presence boded well for my prospects with the Baltimore County Department of Planning.

All of this can be better understood in context. A 1961 U.S. Civil Rights Commission report describes how Baltimore County served as a “white noose” around the neck of Baltimore City.¹¹² Between 1955 and 1965, Baltimore lost 338 manufacturing firms, with most going to the county that surrounded it on three sides.¹¹³ Urban planners who did the bidding of county politicians made it difficult for blacks to follow those jobs. They created exclusionary single-family zones to ensure that the only housing built would be unaffordable to most of the city’s black residents. If a black real estate agent had a black client who could afford a home, they’d phone a white agent who controlled the county’s listings. The white agent would routinely claim that either the property was under contract, or they couldn’t reach the seller.¹¹⁴ For a time, the county even instructed real estate agents to inform the police chief if they sold a house to a black buyer.¹¹⁵ The county also pushed black residents out by rezoning the land on which their homes sat as either industrial or commercial.¹¹⁶ Rezoning encouraged white landlords to sell their property for more profitable uses and home demolition would follow.

How Baltimore County’s politicians and planners operated was hardly unique. The Civil Rights report describes a national problem and presents examples from across the nation noting that these practices had “a very substantial and far-reaching effect on black residents.”¹¹⁷ At the time I joined the county’s planning department twenty-eight years later, little had changed. Despite having recently elected a Democrat to Congress, Baltimore County’s inherently conservative white majority remained tacitly committed to using single-family zoning to enforce racial exclusion and, segregating one socioeconomic group from the next. It’s a mindset that has been with us for a long time.

There's a key difference between the origins of German and American zoning. Germans conceived of zoning to separate noxious industrial uses from human habitation. Americans conceived of zoning to separate people considered desirable from those considered undesirable. This practice began in Berkeley in 1916, long before California leaned left. That year, an influential developer named Duncan McDuffie led Berkeley's efforts to create the nation's first municipal ordinance to feature the exclusionary single-family residential zone classification.

McDuffie had a problem to solve. His real estate and development company—the largest in northern California—had developed three high-end residential neighborhoods in Berkeley.¹¹⁸ He wanted to ensure only upper-income Caucasians could purchase those homes, so he added a restrictive covenant to all deeds which read, "...if prior to the first day of January 1930 any person of African or Mongolian descent shall be allowed to purchase or lease said property or any part thereof, then this conveyance shall be and become void..."¹¹⁹

McDuffie, however, understood racial covenants had their limitations. People considered them legally enforceable for a finite number of years, after which time the properties would be unprotected. Another issue of particular concern to McDuffie was that his company had no control over land adjacent to his neighborhoods. He couldn't slap racial covenants on property he didn't own. Anyone could come along and build housing or commercial property of a sort that could draw precisely the kind of people McDuffie sought to exclude from his neighborhoods.

He needed a mechanism to restrict who could occupy land he didn't own. Six years earlier in 1910, Baltimore enacted the nation's first racial zoning ordinance, which outright banned blacks from living where whites didn't want them. Racial zoning was the logical choice for McDuffie, as cities like Atlanta and St. Louis had adopted the practice, but in 1915, the NAACP challenged the practice.

And by the time McDuffie was aiming to "protect" his neighborhoods, the Supreme Court was weighing arguments regarding whether or not racial zoning violated the due process clause in the U.S. Constitution.^{xvii} McDuffie, who was active in

^{xvii} Our right to due process is enshrined in the in the Fourteenth Amendment, and it's what prevents the government - in theory - from violating our fundamental rights to "life, liberty, or property" without following the "due process" of law.

California state and local politics, was certainly aware of this case. The following year, the Supreme Court ruled that racial zoning was unconstitutional.¹²⁰ So, he came up with an alternate solution which proved to be far more durable.

In March 1916, under McDuffie's direction, Berkeley City Council passed Ordinance No. 452, which defined an exclusionary single-use zone classification for the first time in history. Few seemingly mundane words committed to paper have done more to shape American life than these:

Whereas the public interest and convenience of the City of Berkeley and the proper preservation of its public peace, health, and safety require the classification of said City into districts within some of which it shall be lawful and in others unlawful to erect, construct, or maintain certain buildings to carry on certain trades, or callings and... Now be it Ordained by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

SECTION I. Districts of Class 1 shall be that portion or those portions of the City of Berkeley in which no buildings or structure shall be erected, constructed or maintained which shall be used for or designed or intended to be used for any purpose other than that of a single-family dwelling.¹²¹

The ordinance defines other kinds of districts, such as the manufacturing district of the sort that Baltimore County later used to expel blacks from the county, but the Berkeley ordinance's significance lies within the single-family zone. Berkeley City Council subsequently designated its Elmwood Park neighborhood to be a Class 1 district, giving it the distinction of being the first single-family zone in the country.

Like racial zoning, single-use zoning was challenged in court. Unlike racial zoning, the Supreme Court deemed single-zoning to be a valid use of what's referred to as a local government's "police powers." This landmark court case considered the town of Euclid, Ohio's use of single-use zoning to prevent a real estate company called Ambler Realty from selling off land for industrial use.^{xviii} Ambler sued Euclid and lost in the Supreme Court, legitimizing single-use zoning as the law of the land in 1926.

As mass black migration entered its second decade, municipalities across the country routinely used single-family zoning to "protect" high-end residential neighborhoods. Full protection was a two-step process. First, apply the single-family zone designation, then add restrictive covenants to the deeds before the sale of individual

^{xviii} At that time, neighboring Cleveland annexing land to expand its industrial capacity. Euclid neither wanted its land annexed nor used for industrial use.

homes. Even as early as 1931, people well understood that single-use zoning was rooted in “racial hatred.” That year, a lawyer with the California Real Estate Association named W.L. Pollard wrote,

It may sound foreign to our general ideas of the background of zoning, yet racial hatred played no small part in bringing to the front lines some of the early districting ordinances which were sustained by the United States Supreme Court, thus giving us our first important zoning decisions.¹²²

Early and widespread adoption of single-use zoning took place in a context that simply didn’t exist in Germany or anywhere else for that matter. Berkeley passed Ordinance 452 a year after the Great Migration began. Southern states were engaged in a multi-decade campaign of systematic terror, cementing in place the racial order that civil war and emancipation had threatened. Recall that whites lynched blacks with some regularity and purchased lynching postcards. And Berkeley’s ordinance passed just two months before Jesse Washington—as described earlier—was tortured before a crowd of 15,000 as a photographer affiliated with Kodak enthusiastically captured the spectacle. In some parts of the country, children played lynching games.^{xix} Newly constructed Confederate monuments dominated public spaces, broadcasting racial contempt. Courts and businesses colluded to enslave men to meet the needs of business cycles.^{xx} Perverse laws and violence excluded blacks from mainstream life and stripped them of the right to vote.

Outside the South, thousands of towns were purging blacks from their midst to function as “sundown towns” (i.e., no blacks allowed after sundown), reflecting the hardening of attitudes in a nation that had jettisoned the promise of racial justice and embraced unfettered white supremacy.¹²³ Lest there be any question regarding the dominant mindset accompanying single-use zoning’s origins in 1916, that same year we Americans were flocking to movie theaters to watch D.W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation*. This blockbuster film tells the story of how the Ku Klux Klan saved white civilization after our civil war and depicts blacks as morally corrupt, predatory, sex-starved beasts.

^{xix} Susan Wells describes the origins of one such game in her book, *A Game Called Salisbury*, which describes a popular game whose name was taken from a series of lynchings in Salisbury, NC.

^{xx} This is a subject I return to in Part IV.

It's in this milieu that local governments across the country considered exclusionary single-family zoning to be the right tool for keeping the undesirables at bay.

22. How and Why the Federal Government Declared War on Walking

It's been said that urban sprawl was inevitable because we have so much land. There's also the claim that sprawl is a function of market forces.¹²⁴ Neither statement is accurate. Our federal government locked auto-dependent development patterns into place between 1934 and 1939. In doing so, the government shut out Americans from experiencing the quality of life my children have taken for granted. This raises the question, how and why the government declared war on walking.

The story of "how" begins in 1934 with Congress passing the *National Housing Act*, which established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to restructure a private mortgage industry that had collapsed during the Great Depression. Recall that the FHA accomplished this aim by insuring lenders who agreed to offer up a new kind of mortgage, one which enabled a qualified buyer to purchase a house with a small down payment and pay it off over a long period.^{xxi} If the buyer defaulted on the loan, it was the federal government rather than the private-sector lender who picked up the tab. Given that the federal government was assuming all the risk, lenders considered it a deal too good to ignore at a time when a tidal wave of foreclosures and bank failures was hammering the country.¹²⁵ By the end of 1934, some 4000 lending institutions representing over 70% of the country's financial industry had FHA insurance plans.¹²⁶

This put the FHA in a powerful position to shape development at a time when residential construction was in desperate need of a jumpstart. FHA mortgages targeted the middle and working class. If a developer wanted these potential homebuyers to purchase

^{xxi} Recall, from Chapter 15, that this period started off as 15 years in 1934, then got extended to 25 years in 1939. It was extended again to 30 years in 1948. This kind of mortgage—which most of us take for granted today—did not exist prior to 1934.

the new houses he built, then those houses needed to abide by FHA standards. Otherwise, an FHA underwriter evaluating a loan application would deem it too risky to approve. In this way, the FHA effectively established control over development.

The standards in question are specified in an FHA publication aptly named, *Subdivision Standards: For the Insurance of Mortgages on Properties Located in Undeveloped Subdivisions*, a bureaucratic title obscuring a profoundly destructive influence.^{xxii} In government-speak, the publication is referred to as *Circular No. 5*. And as is the case for all circulars published by the federal government it's a formal expression of United States government policy (i.e., it has teeth).^{xxiii} Clarifying the scope of the publication's impact on America's built environment, *Subdivision Standards* states, "The minimum requirements [specified in the publication] define fundamental principles and *apply generally throughout the country.*" [emphasis added].¹²⁷ These "fundamental principles," in turn, build on pathologies introduced sixteen years earlier by Berkeley's exclusionary zoning ordinance. The standards established a framework to produce bad human habitat, a framework that remains intact today.

My desire to walk (or bike) from my house to various destinations is a function of distance and design. Distances are reasonable, and the design—completed over a century ago—is pedestrian-oriented. In contrast, *Subdivision Standards* instruct developers to build the polar opposite and embody an entirely different set of values and ideas. The federal government effectively banned narrow lots, alleys, a mixture of housing types, garages sitting on rear lot lines, short block lengths and interconnected street networks (which enable me to walk/bike in any direction), corner stores, and housing adjacent to commercial activity that relates to my monthly needs. In short, everything around me that I value violates FHA standards.

Subdivision Standards require (or deem "desirable") wide lots, long block lengths, and disconnected hierarchical residential street systems featuring "local" streets dumping cars onto "collector" roads which, in turn, dumps cars at one location onto a busier

^{xxii} *Subdivision Standards* refers readers to a second publication called *Technical Bulletin No. 5* which contains more detailed information about certain standards. When describing how the federal government mandated urban sprawl, I treat these as a single document and refer only to *Subdivision Standards*.

^{xxiii} Recall that Justice Department Circular 3591 was profoundly influential in that it directed the Justice Department to finally prosecute all known cases of slavery on the books in 1941.

“arterial” street.¹²⁸ With a hierarchical street system, neighborhoods are isolated from the larger whole of the built environment. They exist as isolated residential pods that discourage through traffic to minimize the risk of collision^{xxiv}. Cul-de-sacs are considered the holy grail for young families as the chance of toddlers being struck by a car is minimized. Wherever possible “parks, playgrounds, and community gardens” should be developed in the “interior of wide blocks,” rather than adjacent to public streets as seen throughout Europe and in traditional American cities and towns.

“Universal automobile ownership,” implies that it’s no longer necessary to build homes within walking distance of shopping.¹²⁹ “Facilities for collecting children by school buses,” consigns walking to school to the ages. And it’s expected that as the “circumference” of a city expands, lot sizes grow larger, as “decentralization” is the natural trajectory.¹³⁰ Mindful that larger lots come with larger “initial installation and subsequent maintenance” costs, the solution is to build “lighter” roads and eliminate sidewalks altogether.¹³¹ Taken together the standards shape a built environment where the simple act of walking someplace is nonsensical.

To ensure the standards would be met, the FHA established a Technical and Land Planning division which encouraged developers to submit to free reviews of their project plans. The reviews were intended to “raise the subdivision to a higher standard” and “result in higher ratings and a more favorable valuation by this Administration.”¹³² It was an offer that could not be refused.¹³³ Thus the FHA laid the groundwork for mass suburbanization.

All of this raises the question why did the federal government establish auto-dependent development patterns? My neighborhood, and what surrounds it didn’t require rare talents to design, build, or replicate for that matter. Given the many benefits of human-scale design, why didn’t the federal government require pedestrian-oriented development patterns?^{xxv}

^{xxiv} With an interconnected street system, you can get from one neighborhood to the next taking one of several different relatively direct paths. In a hierarchical system, there is typically only direct path, namely from your local street to your collector, and onto your arterial. The route is inevitably longer in a hierarchical system.

^{xxv} And, ideally, require there be direct and convenient access to large tracts of natural areas.

First, consider who conceived of and initially led the FHA. A notable contributor to the *National Housing Act* was the president of the General Motors Holding Corporation, a man named Albert Deane.^{xxvi} Deane became the FHA's first Deputy Administrator. The first person to lead the FHA was a man named John Moffett. Before his appointment, Moffett had been a vice president at Standard Oil (present-day Exxon).¹³⁴ He'd later leave the FHA to run the corporation we know today as Chevron Oil.¹³⁵ And a special assistant to Moffett named Steward McDonald headed up car manufacturing operations in the Midwest.¹³⁶ All this is to say that, at the outset, some prominent people in the oil and automotive sectors played a role in both shaping legislation and running an agency that oversaw a nationwide shift towards auto-dependent development patterns that would maximize oil consumption. Other key FHA appointments drew from leadership positions in the banking and real estate industries. And in the years ahead, these two industries would dominate FHA leadership.¹³⁷

The FHA's oilmen, car manufacturers, financiers, and real estate executives were not the people who conceived of the regulations laid out in *Subdivision Standards*. For those, the FHA turned to the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). Created in 1923, disbanded in 1933, and funded by a real estate mogul, the RPAA's roughly two-dozen NYC-based members included urban planners, architects, a professional forester, and one prolific public intellectual. For our purposes, their names don't matter. Our focus is on their concerns and the impact of their ideas.

Concerns were twofold. The first was the dramatic growth in the number of automobiles. Between 1915 and 1920, the number of cars in America increased from 2 million to 10 million.¹³⁸ City streets had become overrun by noisy, dangerous, exhaust-belching motor cars. Their second concern was with the industrial city itself. Cities had grown rapidly for decades and by 1920, America had become a highly industrialized, urban nation. Baltimore and Boston had populations exceeding three-quarters of a million people. Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York were home to millions more. RPAA members generally considered cities to be overcrowded, polluted, hopeless places where neighborhoods inevitably fell into decline because of the encroachment of commercial

^{xxvi} GM created the holding company in 1929 to invest in dealerships that needed cash to expand. See Arthur Pound's book, *The Turning of the Wheel* (Garden City NY, Doubleday, 1934)

and industrial activity. In response to these concerns, the RPAA advocated for what's referred to as *decentralization* and formulated both a theoretical approach and a practical implementation. Our concern is with the practical as it's what provided the FHA with most of their standards.

In 1927, three RPAA members purchased 1,000 acres of New Jersey farmland 14 miles outside New York City. They then proceeded to design and build a place called Radburn, which they called, "A town for the motor age." The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 brought the project to a halt, but not before they completed one of three planned neighborhoods, a school, and a small commercial center where you could run errands. In terms of shaping FHA standards, what makes Radburn important is that it's the first place in the United States where large block sizes and a hierarchical street system were created to eliminate through traffic in a residential setting. It's in Radburn where we find America's first cul-de-sacs.

RPAA members who designed Radburn weren't out to eliminate walking from American life. Quite the opposite. The interior of Radburn's three residential blocks includes a total of 23 acres of parkland. Dedicated pedestrian pathways traverse the parks and extend to each house. Houses are oriented so that the front faces the pathways which lead to common green space and the rear faces cul-de-sacs on which the houses sit. Children walk out their front door onto the pathways and walk through a park to school without encountering cars. These same paths provide access to a pool and sports facilities.

Radburn's designers had effectively created a prototype for a vast pedestrian network in suburbia, but the idea never got put into production. FHA standards didn't require that developers provide for open space to facilitate the separation of pedestrians and cars. Instead, what America got in the years ahead were the many undesirable elements of Radburn's suburban makeup: streets without sidewalks, streets lined with garage doors, large block sizes, and cul-de-sacs. These are building blocks of an environment rooted in the flawed idea that we should reject a way of living that stretches back to the dawn of human civilization.

I have a forty-year-old memory of me in a hardscrabble Philadelphia neighborhood called Kensington. I'm in college and I have a date with a classmate named Beth. She lives with her parents in the two-story, working-class, red brick rowhome she grew up in. I park across the street from her house, next to a factory building that's one story higher than the rowhomes opposite. A few blocks down I see a street tree, but on her block, there are none. I knock on the door and my friend answers. Mother and sister are sitting on the couch in the living room. They greet me, and their smiles feel warm. I no longer remember where Beth and I went that evening, but I can still recall my feeling of surprise that she'd grown up in the shadow of that factory. It was a part of the treeless, stark, working-class, industrial environment my mother grew up in. It felt both familiar and heavy.

I'm well acquainted with the ills of the industrial city. Nevertheless, I find the anti-urban movement of the 1920s that birthed mass suburbia to be deeply misguided. During the Progressive Era (1897-1917), Americans targeted urban problems with urban solutions. Unfortunately, political coalitions fueling a national will for problem-solving fractured with the onset of World War I. The war produced social divisions relating to civil liberties, isolationism, and more. In the decades that followed, we never recaptured that relatively unified spirit driving the improvement of cities. Two reasons among many stand out. First, is the reaction to black migration as reflected in those brightly colored government maps I described earlier. Second, is that there was simply too much money to be made selling Americans on the idea that automobiles should displace all other forms of transportation.¹³⁹

Our house was built the year William Durant founded General Motors in 1908. The automobile industry was little more than a decade old, and horse-drawn vehicles were still dominant on streets.^{xxvii} At the time our neighborhood was built out, something very special was happening in Halifax. Developers and home builders were creating neighborhoods that *accommodated* the automobile rather than creating places *built for* the automobile. They were still building places for pedestrians. And what they built

^{xxvii} All cities still struggled with keeping streets clean. The average horse produces around 25 pounds of poop per day. So, you can imagine the work required to keep cities clean. Before the advent of the car, NYC 500 tons of horse manure was collected from the streets every day.

contradicts loud, prominent voices equating urbanism as a whole with the worst, oppressive qualities of the industrial city.

To make this less abstract, if you were to open up a browser and key in “map garden street Halifax,” you’d see a map showing building footprints that are close to one another, leaving just the width of a car between them. Clicking on that map and dropping the little man onto the street, you’d see how the houses are close to the street and create the “street wall” I referred to earlier which provides the comforting feeling of containment. This same feeling is part of what draws roughly two million American tourists to European cities each year. On your screen, you’d see street trees towering overhead, and small gardens in the fronts of houses. The street is narrow. All this combines to create a compact, urban environment that’s exceptionally comfortable for pedestrians. The crucial part of this experience is the lot dimensions that are relatively narrow and deep (i.e., approximately 30’x100’), providing ample private space for families in the rear.

Radburn’s design reflects a concern for the safety of children. In our neighborhood, nearly 600 kids attend school three blocks away (preschool thru grade 6).¹⁴⁰ A majority walk to school. Two junior high schools are a ten-minute walk from us, as is the high school. Throughout the school year, there are hundreds of kids walking on sidewalks within an expansive interconnected street system that the FHA banned with their standards. And in the more than fifteen years we’ve lived in this neighborhood, not a single child has been injured by a car. Urban problems require urban solutions. Parents accompany children until they reach grade 4 or 5. Crossing guards await children at specific intersections. And recently, the municipality has finally begun to follow the Dutch who have long understood how to calm traffic and create safer (narrower) streets that are the backbone of the human-scale environment. In short, our experience as parents contradicts everything contained in the federal government’s proclamation of better living through auto-dependency.

23. Speak of Design Not Density

By 1941 most states had passed laws providing municipalities with the legal justification to adopt zoning ordinances based on FHA standards. This set the stage for the era of mass suburbanization that began at war's end.¹⁴¹ Related problems have been understood for decades. In 1961, urban scholar Lewis Mumford wrote:

Under the present dispensation, we have sold our urban birthright for a sorry mess of motor cars...If we are concerned with human values, we can no longer afford either sprawling Suburbia or the congested Metropolis: still less can we afford a congested suburbia, whose visual openness depends upon the cellular isolation and regimentation of its component families...

By the time I started grad school in 2000, suburbia's pathologies had attracted the attention of private and non-profit organizations, state and federal policy makers, and the public at large. Sprawl brought steadily increasing traffic congestion and CO2 emissions, rising taxes for infrastructure, disinvestment in older suburban communities, and the ongoing loss of forests, wetlands, farms, and scenic landscapes. Shared concerns led to the formation of diverse coalitions made up of organizations such as the Sierra Club, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the National Association of Home Builders.

Countless pages have been written about the concept of "smart growth." All we need understand is that it's a broad-based movement that advocates for land development that mixes uses, preserves open space, and directs growth toward areas where

infrastructure such as water and sewer already exists. As a newly minted urban planner in 2002, this all sounded promising. Everything I'd researched up to that point suggested there was momentum regarding changing development patterns. Yet, more than twenty years later, if I go to realtor.com, and search for newly constructed houses in any randomly selected municipality across the country I find listings for suburban houses with their obligatory attached two-car garage. Results will look the same in another twenty years.^{xxviii}

Despite pronouncements regarding the pursuit of smart growth, or the often-used term “sustainable development,” urban sprawl prevails. The vast majority of municipal governments operate as sprawl machines. Experience with Baltimore County taught me that to be an urban planner was to be a cog in that machine.^{xxix}

A planning office is responsible for managing a municipality's zoning map and associated zoning ordinance. The blueprint for the sprawl machine is the ordinance. In 1916, Berkeley's first single-use ordinance had eleven-pages. Since then, variants of this ordinance—infused with FHA standards—have ballooned in size over time. On my first day at Baltimore County, I was handed a zoning ordinance that filled a large three-ring binder. Working as a legislative planner, I was responsible for amending and augmenting an ordinance that had grown to meet the evolving demands of auto dependency.

At the outset, I had reason to hope I'd be able to work with the county to revise that ordinance and incentivize the creation of good human habitat. Experience, however, told me otherwise. Leaving municipal government in 2004, I understood that most developers, municipal politicians, and planners would continue to produce bad human habitat for mainstream America in the years ahead. Contrasting an exception to the rule of perpetual sprawl helps clarify.

Gaithersburg, Maryland is a qualified exception.^{xxx} The two municipalities in which I've worked as a planner represent the rule. Comparing what happened (and happens) in Gaithersburg to my own experience illuminates the gap between municipal

^{xxviii} I'd love to be proven wrong on this point.

^{xxix} It's no different in Canada, where in many places the quality of suburban development is notably lower than middle and upper-middle class American suburbs. Many Canadian planners and academics believe outcomes are superior because residential densities are slightly higher than American counterparts. What is overlooked is the fact that the result is still auto-dependency with all its accompanying pathologies.

^{xxx} I say “qualified” because Gaithersburg still has issues which I address in the next chapter.

rhetoric and reality. Wanting to avoid engaging in hyperbole, I'll support my points by comparing the "walk scores" for recent development in Gaithersburg with development where I've worked.^{xxxix}

The Walk Score algorithm takes into account aspects of urban form such as street connectivity, block length, and distances to amenities. Scores range from 0 (car dependent) to 100 (walker's paradise). The algorithm has flaws that I won't get into here and in some cases their data sets are incomplete, but it's the best publicly available measurement of walkability we have.

In 1990, I happened to live in Gaithersburg for a few months. At the time it was a partially built out, nine-square-mile, suburban municipality 15 miles north of Washington DC.^{l42} It's bisected by both a state and federal highway. The address of the townhouse where I lived has a walk score of 36 (auto-dependent).^{xxxii} Aside from a small, tired-looking historic center, everything around me at the time was conventional suburbia, indistinguishable from a thousand other places. I had no reason to assume Gaithersburg's future would look different. Yet, when working on my thesis a decade later, Maryland state planners pointed me toward Gaithersburg after I asked what they knew about municipalities that were successfully overcoming barriers to mixed-use development.^{xxxiii} And this past year, Fortune deemed Gaithersburg the 7th best place in America for families, reflecting the fact that they operate as an exception to the rule of perpetual sprawl.

Seeds of change came in the form of a collaboration in the late 1980s between a developer, two urban designers, and a mayor who shared a vision. Working with planning staff, they built Kentlands, a large pedestrian-oriented mixed-use neighborhood of a sort the FHA banned in the 1930s. In the mid-1990s, a second developer stepped forward and built a comparable neighborhood called Lakelands adjacent to Kentlands.

By the late-1990s, Gaithersburg had itself the makings of a sizeable human-scale town covering some 700 acres that would become home to over 6,000 people. The mix includes single-family homes targeting different price points, apartments, condos, an

^{xxxix} Visit www.walkscore.com and check out scores for addresses relevant to you.

^{l42} 860 Baybridge Drive

^{xxxiii} Most states do not have planning departments. In the 1990's however Maryland's governor spearheaded an agenda that attempts to mitigate the ill effects of urban sprawl.

elementary school, a middle school, parks, and a large commercial component. Results met high expectations, the caveat being that the developer built most of the commercial piece (shared by the two neighborhoods) along conventional suburban lines due to an economic downturn.

Today, that property is being redeveloped as a mixed-use project called Kentlands Market Square, in line with the original vision of creating a vast environment in which the simple act of walking to a variety of destinations is a pleasant, compelling human experience. Walk scores for Kentlands and Lakelands are 84 and 71 respectively and fall within the “very walkable” range. It’s not the “walker’s paradise” that I live in (i.e., my Halifax address scores above 90), but it’s a world apart from the Gaithersburg built out over the previous forty years.

In 2001, I spoke with Gaithersburg’s planning director Jennifer Russel about the progress made and she said something I’ll never forget. Two years earlier, Gaithersburg’s municipal council had adopted a “Smart Growth” policy establishing a strategic vision to explicitly pursue quality, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development. Russel told me that this policy sent a message to the development community which said, “When developing in Gaithersburg, you either do it our way or we don’t want you.” I consider this mindset remarkable given the influence developers typically exert over municipal politicians. Gaithersburg’s “our way or the highway” attitude has been central to their success and it aligns with Russel’s thoughts regarding talking about development in terms of design rather than density. “Speaking in terms of density,” she said, “interferes with good design.” Density is a byproduct of good human scale design, not an end unto itself. Pursuing density for density’s sake undermines good urbanism.

Gaithersburg’s focus on design originates with its use of design charrettes. It’s the only form of public engagement that sets up a municipality to consistently overcome barriers preventing mixed-use development from getting built.^{xxxiv} Given the charrette’s centrality to creating better human habitat, I’d like to provide you with an understanding of how they work.

^{xxxiv} As mentioned earlier, those barriers include both regulatory and financial barriers as well as NIMBYism.

In terms of outcomes, a design charrette leads to municipal approval of either (1) a buildable plan for a specific mixed-use project, or (2) design standards that enable developers to come in later and pursue as-of-right development.^{xxxv} Gaithersburg has used charrettes for both purposes. Their first charrette, conducted in 1988, produced a buildable plan for Kentlands. They then used Kentland’s design standards as the basis of a new mixed-use zone that’s since been widely applied elsewhere in the municipality. Gaithersburg later conducted charrettes to create two variants of their mixed-use zone. Their *Corridor Development* zone is used when redeveloping conventional strip development in commercial corridors, and their *Central Business District* zone is used for redevelopment in and around their historic town center. All three of Gaithersburg’s mixed-use zone classifications share a common purpose in promoting good urbanism.

The typical charrette runs over five consecutive days and is preceded by stakeholder identification and engagement. If you don’t get the stakeholders right, the charrette will fail. Community members, heads of municipal agencies, the fire chief, elected officials, bankers, affordable housing advocates, and anyone else who can kill the project or make it better need to be involved. Charrette organizers engage people weeks if not months in advance.

In our five-day scenario, assume we’re producing a buildable plan for a mixed-use project. Stakeholders attend three public meetings held in the evening. Monday and Wednesday’s meetings are design sessions, and Friday’s meeting is where charrette facilitators present the final “charrette plan.” In Monday’s session, facilitators present a draft plan consisting of a site layout and drawings of buildings illustrating what’s being proposed. Facilitators then capture stakeholder feedback by sketching out ideas on paper pinned on walls for all to see, the motto being, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Throughout the session, stakeholders hear, see, and absorb the perspectives of others. On Tuesday, facilitators go into semi-isolation, revising the plan and drawings in response to feedback. On Wednesday evening, facilitators and stakeholders reconvene to review the refined plan. Feedback is again captured as sketches pinned to walls. Not everyone is getting everything they want, but consensus begins to emerge. On Thursday, facilitators

^{xxxv} “As of right” simply means that if a developer’s plans abide by the design guidelines, he’s got legal authority to begin development without the need for additional public meetings and costly plan reviews.

again spend the day refining the plan and illustrations. Friday evening, everyone gathers again to review the “final draft” charrette plan.^{xxxvi} Assuming the charrette has done its job and produced a consensus, municipal council approves the plan a short time later giving the developer authorization to proceed with the project.

When a charrette is used to produce design standards that allow “as of right development,” the process looks much the same. The difference is that in this scenario council is voting into existence a new mix-use zone classification that contains design standards produced by the charrette. This zone classification would then be applied to appropriate parcels in the municipality.

Typically, a municipality would partner with a qualified urban design firm to facilitate a charrette, and that costs money. In Gaithersburg, the developer paid for the Kentlands charrette, and the municipality paid for the two charrettes that produced design standards for commercial corridors and their historic business district. In a sense, charrettes are long-term investments in a community not unlike infrastructure.

Although I’ve not covered every nuance, or variation regarding how charrettes work, you hopefully now have a general idea of what they entail. Their effectiveness lies with three principles, namely stakeholder involvement, a focus on human scale design, and compressed timeframe decision-making. Stakeholders understand their time is not being wasted as they’re focused on what’s important, namely design and decision-making. This is not how municipalities propagating auto dependency operate. Typically, planners schedule public meetings relating to proposed development over the course of weeks or longer. The process is reactionary and adversarial. Planners focus on density. Meeting attendees get upset. Different people attend different meetings and hear different things. Others don’t bother attending because they believe opposition is futile. Decisions are made then unmade. And in the end, a new subdivision or big box retail store gets approved, and amorphous, suburban expansion continues apace.

^{xxxvi} Minor revisions might made to this “final draft” plan before being voted on by council.

24. Why Local Governments Still Create Bad Human Habitat

In 2002, I began my job in Baltimore County, Maryland with optimism. Two years earlier, Harvard had given their Innovations in American Government award to Maryland's "Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative."¹⁴³ My job came through Maryland state planners involved with that initiative. Baltimore County had started a project called Rethinking Residential Regulations which was intended to revitalize older, inner-ring suburbs with mixed-use development. My background and interests seemed a fit.

After a few months at Baltimore County, however, it was clear the municipality wasn't rethinking much at all. They'd ostensibly planned to revitalize inner-ring suburbs with an approach I understood to be ineffective, the details of which we can skip.^{xxxvii} I advocated for a policy centered on incentivizing the use of design charrettes to get mixed-used development on the ground. After delivering an in-house presentation on charrettes to staff in early 2003, I was asked to write a proposal based on my ideas for the county executive (mayoral equivalent). It was accepted and I was then asked to draft the redevelopment legislation. I subsequently witnessed organizational dysfunction of a sort that only an unaccountable government bureaucracy can produce.

Shortly after leaving Baltimore County in 2004, the county council passed legislation promoting the use of charrettes for residential redevelopment.¹⁴⁴ There was no meaningful emphasis on mixed-used. The county used the legislation once to produce a

^{xxxvii} The County Executive (mayoral equivalent) and planning director anticipated having municipal staff (i.e., me and another legislative planner) create a new mixed-use zone in the absence of any public input and provide it as an option use by developers. The initiative was to provide the illusion of doing something to satisfy state level expectations of taking steps to curb urban sprawl.

buildable plan that replaced a drug-infested, 18-acre apartment complex with a new neighborhood called Renaissance Square.¹⁴⁵ The walk score for that project is a misleadingly high 62 (“somewhat walkable”).¹⁴⁶ The few commercial properties within walking distance are in strip malls on busy arterial roads. Few would ever walk there thus illustrating the limitation of accepting walk scores at face value.

Notably, the redevelopment legislation was never used again. After my departure, almost two decades would pass before a design charrette was used for the first time in Baltimore County to produce a mixed-use plan (on land occupied by a dying mall). And to this day, auto-dependent, single-use residential development remains the norm.

Over the past twenty years in Gaithersburg, something different has happened. Most (but not all) projects are mixed-use and produce high walk scores that stand up to scrutiny. Spectrum Town Center (231 Spectrum Ave) consists of apartments, shops, and restaurants. Its walk score is 72 (“very walkable”). Downtown Crown (Fields Rd) covers 180 acres and consists of four distinct neighborhoods and a sizable downtown. Its walk score is 80 (“very walkable”). Watkins Mill Town Center occupies 130 acres. When complete, it will include 1100 residential units of various types and 1.2 million square feet of retail and office space.¹⁴⁷ Walk scores for homes here will also fall within the “very walkable” range. Importantly, Gaithersburg’s larger projects include a mix of single-family homes, townhouses, condos, and apartments.

In October 2022, I traveled to Gaithersburg to see this development for myself. Kentlands, which I visited years earlier, had aged well. Newer projects generally followed best practices for creating places that prioritize pedestrians over cars. Place garages in the back of homes.^{xxxviii} Narrow streets. Plant street trees that provide a canopy. Use quality exterior building materials. Pull buildings close to the street and build up two to six stories. Mix uses. In sum, make being on the sidewalk an inviting, compelling human experience. Gaithersburg does not do these consistently, but they do them far more often (and better) than most.

Walk scores produced by development in the two municipalities in which I’ve worked reflect the status quo, and contradict municipal claims regarding the pursuit of

^{xxxviii} I found some unfortunate exceptions to this rule, but in general the pedestrian experience from the sidewalk was mercifully devoid of front-facing garage doors, which destroy the pedestrian experience.

“sustainability.” A sample of fifty newly built houses in Baltimore County listed on realtor.com in January 2023 produced an average walk score of 18 (“car-dependent”). A fifty-house sample within the Halifax Regional Municipality (i.e., outside the city proper) produced an average walk score of just 12. In both municipalities, single-use residential development reigns supreme, and future development will not increase these scores.

I include Halifax scores for a reason. I worked in their planning department between my first and second year of graduate school and have observed Canadian planning practices for years. They’re a slightly more bureaucratic, less accountable variant of U.S. planning practices.^{xxxix} Canadian municipalities tend to produce less attractive suburban pods with higher residential densities. Outcomes regarding auto dependency are identical to the Americans to which Canadians smugly compare themselves favorably.^{xl}

Previously, I said Gaithersburg is a qualified exception to the rule of auto-dependency. This is because the municipality has made four accomplishments that haven’t been realized in most other places. They are *critical mass*, *strategic vision*, *clarity of entitlement*, and *design competence*. I’ll briefly take each in turn.

Critical mass refers to the ability to assemble the right mix of people that gets a municipality to the point where its first high-quality, mixed-use project can be built. Recall my reference to four people who shared a vision that became Kentlands. The developer, Joe Alfandre knew he didn’t want to cover his 340 acres of farmland with yet more urban sprawl. He was put in touch with urban designers Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Andres Duany who had long championed the urbanism the FHA effectively banned with the publication of *Subdivision Standards*. The three of them approached Gaithersburg mayor Edward Bohrer who immediately grasped the significance of their

^{xxxix} Recall that in 1934, Congress passed the National Housing Act which ushered in the FHA’s car-centric standards. In 1935, the Canadian Parliament passed the Dominion Housing Act, which was based on the National Housing Act. For more, See Hulchanski, J. David (1986). “The 1935 Dominion Housing Act: Setting the Stage for a Permanent Federal Presence in Canada’s Housing Sector.” *Urban History Review*. 15 (1): 19–39. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43559633>

^{xl} The social context in which my two former employers operate are certainly different. For example, Baltimore County sits next to a major receptacle of trauma in the form of Baltimore City. Regardless there are important similarities in terms of how they operate.

ideas. With business and political interests aligned, Gaithersburg had the critical mass required to point a nondescript suburban municipality in a very different direction.

Strategic Vision, refers to a municipality stating in clear terms that it's pursuing pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development at the expense of auto-dependent, single-use development. Gaithersburg's 1999 Smart Growth Policy is that vision. It speaks directly to the goal of "halting suburban sprawl" and establishes six "principals for development" that have been followed (for the most part) for over twenty years. The first principle is representative of the policy's clarity and reads, "*All planning should be done in an effort to provide complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents...*" Succinct, and to the point, the policy provides "clear and specific guidance" in shaping decision making relating to "development proposals, funding priorities, master plan amendments, zoning map amendments, and in developing the City's Strategic Plan." This again is the policy that sent developers a message saying, "When developing in Gaithersburg, you either do it our way or we don't want you." The quality of recent development and associated walk scores indicates developers have, for the most part, delivered.

Clarity of entitlement refers to a municipality's ability to move a developer through a transparent approval process culminating in the completion of a mixed-use project.^{xli} In Gaithersburg, clarity is a function of how their master plan and three mixed-use zoning ordinances work together. The master plan identifies specific parcels (i.e., individual properties) that the municipality considers opportunities for development/redevelopment under one of its three mixed-use zones. For each opportunity, the master plan includes recommendations, special conditions, and requirements.^{xlii} This information essentially annotates the zoning map, clarifying development context at the most granular level (i.e., parcels). I'm not familiar with another municipality that provides this level of specificity, and it's an extremely effective way of communicating intent to developers and residents alike openly and transparently.

^{xli} Land entitlement is the legal process by which a developer obtains the set of approvals required to get something built.

^{xlii} Gaithersburg is essentially using its master plan to augment its zoning map with additional information to clarify development context at a very granular level (i.e., individual pieces of property)

A developer subsequently applies to proceed with development associated with a mixed-use opportunity, and works through the approval process to obtain “entitlement.” Gaithersburg’s approval process is baked into the zone definition itself along with other key information such as the zone’s purpose, design standards, and specific questions the council must have answered satisfactorily before considering approval. For example, to build on a parcel in a “corridor development” zone, the developer must show how the plan is “externally compatible and harmonious” with adjacent properties. A key requirement for each of the three mixed-use zones is that the developer’s application must show how the plan is “in accord” with all recommendations in the master plan. I’m not aware of another zoning ordinance anywhere that references back to a master plan. In my experience, master plans were largely ignored in practice.

The most important thing about Gaithersburg’s mix-use zone definitions is that they are written and structured in a manner that is as elegant as they are clear. They were principally authored by Gaithersburg’s long-serving city attorney, Mr. Stanley Abrams.^{xliii} Abrams and the others in Gaithersburg who conceived of these zone definitions understood that clarity benefits everyone involved—developer, decision maker, and citizen alike. Expectations are relatively unambiguous which leads to a less convoluted process and better outcomes.

The fourth accomplishment, *Design Competence*, refers to a municipality’s ability to consistently make the right decisions regarding human-scale design. If you can’t do this, vision and process are irrelevant. I describe Gaithersburg as a “qualified” exception to the rule of perpetual sprawl for a reason. Despite successes, they’ve also approved a few ill-conceived residential projects in their mixed-use zones that are essentially denser suburban enclaves. With this caveat in mind, I want to highlight why Gaithersburg generally gets it right regarding design.

Recall that a design charrette can either produce a buildable plan for a specific project or design standards for “as of right” development (where actual approval is dependent on satisfying requirements laid out in the zone definition). Standards, in turn, can either be prescriptive, requiring little interpretation, or more general, which provides

^{xliii} Prior to his retirement, Abrams was considered to be one the most pre-eminent land use zoning attorneys in Maryland.

for more flexibility but requires knowledge and judgment on the part of a municipality's decision-making bodies. Gaithersburg uses this second approach and relies on its planning commission to assess development proposals.^{xliv} In Gaithersburg, there is a longstanding culture of competence within the planning commission regarding assessing and improving upon proposed designs. Additionally, Gaithersburg has repeatedly used design charrettes to flesh out details relating to not only their larger mixed-use projects that have produced high walk scores but also important redevelopment initiatives.¹⁴⁸ And finally, there has been a growing list of successful projects that planners, planning commissioners, local politicians, and citizens can point to and say, "we want more of that." All of this contributes to a culture of design competence.

When working at Baltimore County and the Halifax Regional Municipality, I'd regularly attend weekly development review meetings. What I experienced in both offices was identical. Planners would sit around a long table and critique the latest plans submitted by developers. A manager would lead the meeting, and someone would provide background on the plans we were dutifully studying. Questions would follow. "Were the buildings set back far enough from the property line? Was there ample parking around the building? Was there sufficient buffering between the proposed office building and the nearby pod of townhouses?" After a few of these meetings, it dawned on me that no one was bothered by the fact that the process was propagating urban sprawl and destruction on multiple levels. It eventually sank in that, in a literal sense, planners were little more than cogs in the sprawl machine. Over time, I found these meetings to be increasingly depressing.

Neither municipality was successful in realizing the four accomplishments associated with altering development patterns. *Critical mass* was nonexistent. No developer teamed up with designers to build a place that's fundamentally urban and human scale in nature. There was no mayor (or equivalent municipal executive) who had the insight, ability, and desire to provide the necessary leadership. There was no clear, succinct *strategic vision* that established a goal of "halting suburban sprawl" (to use

^{xliv} Most municipalities have planning (a.k.a., planning boards) which provide recommendations to elected officials regarding a issues related to land use such as development approval and master planning.

Gaithersburg's words) and making mixed-use the dominant form of development. Without the vision, there was no context in which the work of establishing *clarity of entitlement* could take place. No design charrettes were driving the creation of well-crafted, design-focused, mixed-use zones for both redevelopment and greenfield development. And there was never any attempt to do the analysis necessary to identify specific parcels on which various incarnations of mixed-use made sense. As a result of all of this, there was never an opportunity to develop design competence among staff, decision-making bodies, and residents. And twenty years on, the production of bad human habitat remains the norm.

25. Rhetoric Versus Reality

In July 1974 the Commission on Civil Rights spoke of the “lip service” municipalities, builders, and real estate agents gave to ending the exclusion of minorities and low-income families from white suburbs. The problem of exclusionary zoning had been well-understood for more than a decade. Thousands of words had been spoken, many more written, and legislation enacted. Yet inadequate enforcement of laws, and circumvention persisted. Lip service carried the day. Precisely the same thing is happening now regarding urban sprawl. There’s an absurd gap between rhetoric and reality. An example from each of the two municipalities in which I’ve worked illustrates the point.

In 2010, six years after I left Baltimore County, they adopted a new master plan. At the front of this document is a letter from the county executive and council stating that their plan is “based on the concept of sustainability.” Two pages later we find the first goal for the master plan which reads, “*Goal One: Continue the Success of Growth Management,*” which is to say county politicians consider the previous sixty years of propagating urban sprawl to not be a problem.^{xlv} In essence, their master plan purports to promote sustainability yet implies that decades of auto-dependency that maximizes the use of oil is laudable.

This same master plan refers to “mixed-use” 92 times, “sustainability” 56 times, “sustainable” 146 times, “compact” 43 times (i.e., as in compact development), “walkable” 56 times, and “complete streets” 7 times. The plan is saturated with enticing

^{xlv} Regarding growth management, Baltimore County officials speak often of the success of their “Urban Rural Demarcation Line” which, in theory, prevents development from encroaching into rural areas. In practice, they’ve allowed sprawl to creep into these lands, and everything on the “urban” side of the boundary is car-dependent development. Essentially, the municipality has spent decades sprawling within defined borders.

phrases. Yet recall, more than a decade later, my sample of fifty newly constructed houses—which again, produces an average walk score of 18—consists of single-family homes with attached two-car garages, and “garage townhouses” whose front façade at ground level is a large garage door. They are the antithesis of human scale design and all sit in single-use zones.

The master plan refers to “charrettes” 16 times yet, as noted, nearly two decades elapsed before a design charrette was run to develop a mixed-use plan. Tellingly, a design charrette was not used to shape the county’s first new-urbanist-inspired development called Greenleigh at Crossroads.¹⁴⁹ Conceived of 30 years after Gaithersburg’s Kentlands, the 250-acre site includes entire streets where single-family houses with attached two-car garage doors dominate the street. Walk scores in the neighborhood range from 26 to 29 (i.e., auto-dependent).¹⁵⁰ It is a suburban neighborhood built in an isolated part of the county that somewhat resembles good human habitat, but it’s something different.

Halifax’s gap between rhetoric and reality is larger and serves as a cautionary tale for Americans. On January 29, 2019, Halifax Regional Council declared a “climate emergency,” emphasizing that climate change is an urgent threat.¹⁵¹ They subsequently adopted a climate change plan called *HalifACT 2050* which commits the municipality to be carbon neutral by 2050.¹⁵² Council then increased our property tax by 3% to pay for its implementation.¹⁵³

Given that Nova Scotia’s transportation sector is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases (i.e., 30% after electricity generation at 43%), and that private vehicles account for half of these emissions, you’d naturally expect auto-dependency to be a principal focus of any discussion.¹⁵⁴ Yet, the municipality’s 54-page plan, *HalifACT—Acting on Climate Together*, contains only one vague reference to land use planning, which reads, “*Integrate climate into land use planning policies and processes.*” In none of the public meetings, council meetings, or promotional videos relating to HalifACT has the subject of auto-dependent development even come up.¹⁵⁵ HalifACT’s \$10M budget for the current year focuses on activities such as building retrofits, electric vehicles for municipal employees, and purchasing an “electric ice-resurfacer” for a hockey rink.¹⁵⁶

Electric ice-resurfacers (i.e., Zambonis) have not been a focus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC has however called attention to the relationship between urban sprawl and a rapidly warming planet.¹⁵⁷ And they're hardly alone.¹⁵⁸ A recent report published by the Brookings Institution emphasizes that "Car-dependent neighborhoods restrict multiple climate goals, including GHG targets."¹⁵⁹ Given that new construction in the municipality's many car-dependent neighborhoods produces walk scores in the 0 to 20 range, it begs the question what are municipal decision-makers thinking? To help answer this question, I'll shed light on what can happen to a city and its surroundings when governed by people indifferent to the benefits of human-scale development.^{xlvi}

The Halifax Regional Municipality is twice the size of Rhode Island with half the population of Baltimore County (i.e., 440K versus 850K). Roughly half the population lives in the city. The rest live in the suburbs and beyond.^{xlvii} In 2013, the municipality hired a consulting firm to produce a report quantifying the costs and benefits of different regional growth scenarios. At the time, most of the metro area's growth was suburban. The report recommended the municipality slow suburban growth and "intensify" development in the city to save on infrastructure costs. A recommended scenario directed 50% of all growth to the urban core. The powers that be responded favorably and instructed planning staff to proceed with public consultation at a time when the decision to "intensify" the city was a foregone conclusion. Council subsequently adopted an urban intensification plan that is being executed at the time of this writing.¹⁶⁰

Per the plan, over 40 century-old homes on the edge of my neighborhood either have been or will be destroyed, as developers methodically purchase properties and evict people.¹⁶¹ Demolitions have contributed significantly to an affordable housing crisis. Land will sit vacant for years as developers wait out people who refuse to sell.

My experience of the city is increasingly one of impermanence. Two blocks from my home, developers will soon erect four 30-story towers where there are currently 24

^{xlvi} Recall from Chapter 3, that the degree a city or town offers a high quality of life includes the degree to which such a place is governed by people who understand the human scale and make decisions that sustain and enhance it.

^{xlvii} There are actually 2 adjacent cities, Halifax, and a smaller city across the harbor called Dartmouth. In an effort to not overexplain, I'm just speaking in terms of a single city called Halifax.

historic mixed-use buildings, including the oldest apartment building in the city.¹⁶² The towers will sit across the street from 120-year-old, two-story homes in my neighborhood.

Municipal planners have identified high-intensity “corridors” throughout the city where parcels (properties) will be combined so that larger concrete, glass, and steel buildings can replace yet more historic wooden structures. I live one block from one of these corridors, hence the aforementioned loss of 40 homes. In this same corridor, developers will destroy another 93 century-old structures, all of which are in reasonable to good condition—will be destroyed. This is a fraction of what’s to be done. When Christine and I moved to Halifax in 2000, it still bore some resemblance to Bergen, Norway, one of my favorite European cities.^{xlviii} Halifax’s future is more in keeping with Dubai or Shanghai.

Nova Scotia’s provincial government created the Halifax Regional Municipality in 1996, effectively doing away with any meaningful form of democratic representation. Of the sixteen regional councilors, just two live in the city. It’s surreal to have fourteen remote politicians, some of whom live 50 miles or more away from my neighborhood, play a role in its partial destruction. The human scale is neither valued nor understood, and the architectural heritage that made this place interesting is disappearing.^{xlix}

Unlike Gaithersburg, there’s never been a meaningful discussion in Halifax regarding either human-scale design or ending auto-dependent development.¹ Rather than seriously attempt to pursue good urbanism everywhere, the regional municipality’s plan includes building horizontal sprawl outside the city, and a good deal of vertical sprawl inside. My use of the phrase “vertical sprawl” refers to buildings that rise above six stories. In the human-scale environment that Christine and I have raised our children in, vertical sprawl is problematic for specific reasons.

Our experience as parents has been that the human-scaled city is an ideal environment for children, particularly as they enter their pre-teen years. As mentioned,

^{xlviii} We have friends in Bergen and know the city relatively well.

^{xlix} Europe, in contrast incentivizes the preservation of its older structures.

¹ During the four months I worked with the municipality in 2001 (between 1st and 2nd years of grad school), I was invited to speak twice to the Nova Scotia planning director’s association about my research, but nothing came of it.

my perspective is that children should have a right to experience the of level freedom and physical mobility that our children and their peers have enjoyed.

Children should be able to live in an environment where buildings don't block the sky. They shouldn't need to crane their necks or navigate their city in shadow. Similarly, they shouldn't be subjected to the wind tunnels that tall buildings generate, despite developer claims otherwise.^{li} Good urbanism views families as the lifeblood of a city. And what is good for children is good for the rest of us. We all appreciate the sun and sky.

The human-scale city in which we've raised children is rooted in the relationship between the life of the street and life in the buildings themselves. It's psychological but not abstract. When out walking, I sense the potential for life behind a window, on a porch, or on the other side of a front door. When I'm in our house, I'm aware of periodic activity on the sidewalk and street which sits a few feet from the front door. It's not that I'm constantly disrupted, but I know the public realm is a short distance away.

The strength of this relationship between building and public realm (i.e., street/sidewalk) weakens with distance. A person on the 7th, 15th, or 20th story of a high rise, has a diminished connection to the street below. When I stand in front of a high rise, my sense of life on the 7th floor and above is non-existent. They're too far away. Each floor contributes to the heightened sense of something looming over top of me.^{lii}

Proponents of skyscrapers—of which there are many—have many justifications for skyscrapers such as land constraints. For me, vertical and horizontal sprawl are equally objectionable extremes. I prefer the sense of freedom and mobility I experience at the human scale where a variety of housing types are mixed in close proximity.

When construction cranes started going up en mass in Halifax back in 2015, Christine and I wondered who'd be renting or purchasing what we assumed would be a glut of apartments and condos. Nova Scotia's population had been stable over the previous

^{li} I know the location of every wind tunnel in Halifax.

^{lii} It is fashionable these days for municipalities to have developers set back the upper floors (i.e., stories 7 and above) from the edge of the "pedestal" that forms the first 6 stories. The intent is to hide the upper stories from the pedestrian on the sidewalk, but from most vantage points on the ground – including across the street and a block a way- the looming tower is plenty visible. These so-called "skinny towers" are rarely skinny. They claim this is "human scale" development. It is not.

fifteen years and it wasn't obvious where they'd get all the people. What we didn't know at the time was that four years earlier a lobbying organization called *The Century Initiative* had been created to press for an aggressive Canadian immigration policy that aims to triple the population to “grow the economy.”

The *Century Initiative's* co-founder is a former senior executive at BlackRock, the largest asset holder in the world that has \$72 billion invested in Canada's tar (oil) sands which, in turn, is one of the most environmentally destructive projects on earth.^{liii} Financially well-heeled elites in Canada loudly making the case for mass immigration hold different views on what quality of life means than what I've described on these pages.

This “growth at all costs” mindset is accompanied by questionable justifications, dubious benefits, and cynical reasons for optimism. Economic viability in Canada is not so much dependent on ingenuity and creativity as it is on endless population growth and selling extracted resources to the Chinese and Americans. To be clear, all Western nations benefit from some level of immigration and must address the needs of refugees. No other Western nation, however, is in the process of tripling its population to grow its economy for the benefit of economic elites at a time when there's overwhelming scientific consensus that a total climate breakdown is inevitable.

All this brings us back to HalifACT, described by the regional municipality as “one of the most ambitious climate action movements in Canada.” Whereas the Century Initiative says little of substance regarding the unfolding climate disaster, HalifACT, says nothing about the implications of tripling the population of a country whose per-person carbon footprint is the highest in the Western world and double the European Union average.¹⁶³

A 2021 report co-sponsored by the Institute for European Environmental Policy included Canada in a selective analysis of 10 countries specifically because “Canada has a higher footprint compared to other countries, due to a notably higher intensity for consumer goods and leisure-related services.”¹⁶⁴ Continuing, the report states that

^{liii} The Canadian oil sector cuts down boreal forests and extracts petroleum from the sandy soil in which they grow. National Geographic describes the tar sands—which is bigger than Connecticut and growing—as the “world's most destructive oil operation.”

“emissions from mobility have increased in all countries, driven by the expansion of the use of private cars due to suburban sprawl.”¹⁶⁵

These millions of “new Canadians” will live in what the Century Initiative calls “mega-regions.” The Toronto region, for example, will grow from 8 to 35 million people. All this is taking place in a country whose single-use zoning practices were taken from the pages of American FHA development standards.^{liv} There’s a technocratic quality to the Century Initiative’s vision regarding how mega-regions will grow, producing “nodes of economic activity and opportunity.” Notably, their vision speaks of development in terms of density, the death knell of hope for better human habitat.

As cranes continue to rise, the Canadian press celebrates this vision becoming reality with headlines like, “*Halifax, becoming boom town as it welcomes population, economic growth.*” Another reads, “*As more Chinese newcomers call Halifax home, a Chinatown starts to take shape.*” Still another reads, “*Why Chinese house hunters are increasingly drawn to Halifax.*” Even U.S. journalists have taken note, with Forbes running an article under the headline, “*Indians Immigrating to Canada at An Astonishing Rate.*”

Nova Scotia has created an Office of Immigration and Population Growth which runs a taxpayer-funded, multi-million-dollar ad campaign to bring immigrants in through a provincial pipeline of a sort that doesn’t exist in state governments.¹⁶⁶ The provincial minister overseeing population growth said recently, “We’re on track for a record-breaking year, after a record-breaking year.”¹⁶⁷

Currently, the population of Nova Scotia is roughly equivalent to that of Maine (i.e., 1.0 million versus 1.3 million). Nova Scotia’s politicians seek to add another million people in little more than 35 years with more to follow.¹⁶⁸ The vast majority are coming to Halifax.

Portland, Maine sits two hundred miles southwest of Nova Scotia, across the Gulf of Maine, one of the fastest warming bodies of water on earth. Unlike Halifax, time has already run out for Portland in the sense their downtown has recently begun to experience regular flooding produced by sea level rise. Sea levels in Portland will increase between

^{liv} This occurred when, in 1935, the Canadian parliament passed the Dominion Housing Act which was inspired by the National Housing Act passed the year before. Suburban development practices are, more or less, the same in both countries for a reason.

10 and 17 inches by 2030 compared to where they were in 2000.¹⁶⁹ The Maine Climate Council—an assemblage of scientists and other interests established by the governor and legislature—has forecasted that coastal building damage alone could exceed \$17.5 billion and valuable coastal ecosystems may well be permanently destroyed before 2050.¹⁷⁰

Back on the other side of the gulf, the Halifax Regional Municipality—assuming one accepts HalifACT messaging at face value—will do its part to avoid this grim future. Rhetoric and reality, however, are misaligned.^{lv}

Despite posturing by politicians, despite their computer modeling, despite 118 energy efficiency upgrades on municipal buildings, and despite their new Zamboni – it’s inconceivable that the regional municipality will have anything other than a significantly larger carbon footprint in the years ahead. Canada’s climate-concerned politicians are producing an outcome not so different from Florida, where rapid population growth drives sprawl, and a Republican governor routinely dismisses efforts to mitigate carbon emissions as “left-wing stuff.”¹⁷¹

Mass immigration in Canada, fueled by parallel provincial/federal programs has, along with widespread demolition of existing property, created the aforementioned housing shortage. In response, the provincial government has created nine separate “special planning areas” in the suburbs in which development for 26,000 housing units will be “fast-tracked” and approved by a provincial minister (politician) with a farming background.^{lvi}

The largest of these “special” areas is 545 acres, which is 60% larger than Kentlands. The concept plan for the site is poorly designed and reflects a Radburn influence. Houses will sit on cul-de-sacs. Large block sizes will discourage walking. The experience in the public realm will be one of walking past front yards dominated by concrete driveways leading to blank garage doors that occupy most of the ground level.^{lvii} Fragments of green space appear behind houses, inaccessible from the public realm, and too small to provide anything of value. The jam-packed single-family homes in

^{lv} Computer modeling shaping the messaging ignores mass immigration and consequences like increasing peak time congestion, and lengthening of time coal gets burned to satisfy an insatiable demand for electricity.

^{lvi} Yes, the neighboring country to the north is more dysfunctional than you might have thought.

^{lvii} This kind of development is widely practiced in places like suburban Portland and Toronto where density is pursued in the absence of design.

combination with nearby mid-rise and high-rise residences provide the density of the sort called for by the Century Initiative. And the walk scores produced by this development will look nothing like those in Gaithersburg. Good human habitat it is not.

26. Toledo's Potential

Some municipalities excel with rhetoric. Most, however, don't even try. Currently, about 1000 people move to Florida every day. Same thing in Texas. Drones are moving into new suburban homes blanketing the landscape in municipalities like Sugar Land, TX, and Winter Haven, FL.¹⁷² Each state sees more arrivals in three weeks than Nova Scotia got last year. The scale is entirely different. Few if any of these kinds of warm-weather municipalities prattle on about sustainability, walkability, or the need to reduce CO2 emissions. They don't care, but at least you can respect their honesty.

So, in the end, where does this leave middle-class American families seeking a quality of life as defined in this book? Sprawl is predominant, and desirable urban neighborhoods scattered across the country are limited in supply and prohibitively expensive. Gaithersburg is the rare suburban municipality that's made a strategic decision to pursue design-driven urban development. As laudable as this is, the best they can do is produce walkable enclaves in a sea of auto-dependency. Although I respect what they've accomplished, the result is not what I seek.^{lviii} New England offers smaller affordable cities but most are limited in terms of housing stock, vibrancy, design, and walkability. By and large, they are slow-growth municipalities governed by people devoted to the task of subdividing wooded lots to provide aspiring suburban homeowners with their privacy. None of this bodes well for Americans seeking the kind of safe, expansive, walkable urban environment Christine and I are raising children in today.^{lix}

^{lviii} This said, I think it's a fantastic option for people. It's just not going to work for someone like myself who wants to live in a city.

^{lix} Here again this has nothing to do with the competence of present-day governance and everything to do with historic circumstance and talents of municipal officials and developers long since deceased. And, importantly, the neighborhood in which we live is prohibitively expensive with the advent of mass immigration.

At the outset I asked the question, “What is home?” and said that for me it’s the psychological state established when quality of life’s four conditions exist together. As you may have picked up, my sense of home in Halifax is ephemeral, as all levels of government demonstrate a level of ineptitude on issues impacting quality of life. Christine and I arrived here at a time when the city was affordable and largely built at the human scale. Today, our children would struggle to purchase a house here, the historic fabric is disappearing, and plans to bring another million people to the region will push housing costs ever higher.^{lx} Irrespective, however, of any sense of impermanence in Halifax, two decades of city life with children has taught me something invaluable from the perspective of someone raised in suburbia. The human-scale environments we seek but cannot easily find offer huge benefits. Living as we have in a city has allowed me to take measure of what we Americans have lost due to our unique domestic history and widespread belief in better living through auto-dependency. With our children in mind, an urban birthright is something worth fighting for.

If there is a future that provides a majority of middle-class families with the quality of life our family has experienced in Halifax, it might just be the post-industrial American city. Given the chapter title, you know where I’m headed.

Recall the significance of Toledo’s 1938 residential security map and accompanying area descriptions. Powers that be deemed 65% of Toledo to be “hazardous” or “definitely declining” decades before deindustrialization. Influential government documents guiding investment in America considered large swaths of cities to be throwaway places filled with undesirables who “encroached” on adjacent neighborhoods. Toledo’s fate was shaped by a collective mindset rooted in values that trace back to our slaveholding republic. The question is whether a different set of values and a different kind of leadership can emerge to reshape a city like Toledo into a place that middle-class families of all races can call home.

It’s not unreasonable to assume that our home may well eventually sell to a wealthy Chinese buyer as has happened in other major markets.

^{lx} Although Canada’s Deputy Prime Minister, has described “out of control housing prices” as an “intergenerational injustice,” this same government remains committed to mass immigration for reasons that are outside the scope of our story. Suffice to say, you’d need to follow the money.

I asked earlier, why do the Germans have eminently livable industrial cities like Wolfsburg and Stuttgart, and we have hollowed-out cities like Toledo? A key part of Wolfsburg's success relates to the public/private partnership created decades ago. This partnership fosters stakeholder involvement and shared decision-making targeting initiatives focused on economic vitality and the city's quality of life. And it's produced results.

In 2015, Toledo took a page from the German playbook when business and community leaders formed the 22nd Century Committee. The organization has provided leadership and direction to bear upon the task of bringing about a renaissance in Toledo's urban core. They've executed a master planning process involving a diverse set of interests including educators, bankers, cultural organizations, city employees, non-profits, small businesses, and the general public. After getting their *Downtown Toledo Master Plan* adopted by city council, the committee evolved into a 501(c)3 organization called *ConnecToledo* to support the plan's implementation. The master plan's many maps focus on cultural assets, unrealized residential potential, and—critically—the goal of creating a vibrant, walkable city. These maps reflect values and beliefs that are the opposite of those associated with the residential security map for Toledo created eight decades earlier.

This downtown plan influenced a subsequent municipal planning effort called *Forward Toledo* which focuses on the whole of Toledo's future. To date, *Forward Toledo* has drafted an exploratory assessment that sets the stage for the creation of a new comprehensive plan aiming to transform the city. Its content is visionary and includes the following:

Toledo will emerge from the current climate of uncertainty stronger and more resilient than before. Toledo will inculcate principles of resilience, sustainability, and regenerative economics alongside a radical intolerance for inequality. With the Exploratory Assessment as the foundation, Toledo can move forward together with a sense of hope and confidence that turns this dream into a reality.

...

Today, walkable neighborhoods, character defining open spaces, and shared amenities are once again defining the characteristics of quality of life. Here, the essence of the interconnecting social systems, relationships and cultures creates richer lives for all. Recognizing the larger, more existential challenges we face, many are also seeing the ways in which urban living can drive social, economic, and ecological sustainability.

These thoughts reflect aspirations experienced in the face of grim realities. Toledo's half-empty downtown is surrounded by underutilized historic structures, vacant lots, and semi-abandoned neighborhoods. Yet, still people want to make Toledo home.

People thinking about the city's future know what they want to do. Knit the urban fabric back together. Repurpose underutilized historic structures. Pursue infill development that's consistent with neighborhood authenticity and artistic character. Where appropriate, build townhomes and human-scale mixed-use buildings to comprise an "urban village." Transform wide streets built for cars and barren sidewalks into a tree-lined public realm welcoming of pedestrians and cyclists. Dramatically expand the amount of parkland, and connect the nearby river with the city. In sum, Toledoans aim to establish quality of life's first two conditions—a vast human-scale environment and direct, convenient access to nature.

It's not enough, however, for Toledo to know *what* to do. They must also know *how* to do it, implying quality of life's third condition need become a reality. Toledo's government must understand what the human scale entails, how to create it, and how to sustain it. To get there, Toledo will need to attain the same four accomplishments seen in Gaithersburg.

They'll need *critical mass* in the form of political leadership aligned with key developers and designers to show the city how to build quality infill that respects and enhances Toledo's historic built environment. In Gaithersburg, a single large project served its purpose. Toledo would need multiple projects targeting different contexts.

They'd need a *strategic vision*, that aims to reshape the city's urban fabric into a vast pedestrian-oriented environment. The vision's principles for development must consider Toledo's development challenges and opportunities. For example, infill that includes affordable housing may be more modestly sized and outfitted but must have an exterior build quality that contributes to the public realm.^{lxi} Building lousy places to warehouse the poor works against the vision. To be successful, Toledo's vision will need to send its own message to developers saying in effect, "do it our way or we don't want you." The vision underpins civic self-respect and a steady eye toward the future.

^{lxi} Boston has done a good job at this in their South Boston neighborhood.

Toledo would need to do the work necessary to provide *clarity of entitlement* for developers. Toledo has an obligation—if its vision is to be realized—to maximize the likelihood that the entrepreneurial energies of developers who share the vision are profitable. This starts with charrette-based planning—involving residents, bankers, city decision-makers, and others—to create a set of mixed-use zones applicable to different contexts within Toledo’s borders. Zone definitions should be elegant in their design and operation, and clear for all to understand—developer, resident, and decision maker alike. The entitlement (approval) process must recognize when a developer’s proposal is in line with the vision. When it is, approvals should be fast-tracked as time is money in real estate development. Once approved, verification throughout the construction phases underpins the city’s success.

And finally, Toledo must develop *design competence* within planning staff, as well as on its planning board and city council. A functional entitlement process is wholly dependent upon such competence regardless of whether Toledo uses form base codes to shape development (e.g., as done in Arlington, VA) or relies more heavily on its planning board to assess how a development proposal meets a more generally stated set of design principals (e.g., as done in Gaithersburg).

Knowing *what* to do and *how* to do it doesn’t guarantee success. The question for Toledo, or any post-industrial city, is whether it *can* be done. Within America’s bubbles of affluence, you find high levels of education, money, relatively transparent government, and better-than-average planning and development decisions. Arlington, VA, Boulder, CO, and Rockville, MD are three examples. Toledo, however, is a receptacle of trauma. It has high levels of poverty and lackluster public education. Recently, three Toledo council members were convicted of accepting bribes in exchange for votes. Although committed people are thinking creatively about the city’s future, much is required of municipal government to avoid the pitfall of rhetoric-infused messaging of the sort produced by the municipalities in which I’ve worked.

To ensure well-crafted words in planning documents produce results, Toledo will need to adopt best practices, improve upon them, and make them their own. They’ll also want to know what to avoid. Consider that, in 2021, Toledo council passed a resolution to

reduce CO2 emissions by 30% by 2030. To reach this goal, Toledo can look at Halifax to see *what not to do*. The tragic lesson of Halifax applies to all post-industrial cities given how many historic buildings remain in these places. Halifax, as we've seen, is in the process of destroying large numbers of historic buildings and replacing them with structures made of concrete, glass, and steel.^{lxii} If Toledo's objective were to maximize CO2 emissions and destabilize our climate as soon as humanly possible, then they should follow Halifax's lead.

Data compiled and analyzed by the globally reputed Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors shows that of all the CO2 released into the atmosphere over the lifetime of a typical concrete and steel multifamily residential building, over 50% of CO2 emissions are generated during construction before the building is even occupied. For commercial buildings, this figure exceeds 35%.¹⁷³ These up-front emissions are what's called embodied carbon. To grasp the enormity of the impact, consider that aviation is 2-3% of global emissions. Embodied carbon, much of which is from concrete and steel production, accounts for 8-10%.¹⁷⁴

More than a decade ago, an architect named Carl Elefante noted that "the greenest building is the one already built."¹⁷⁵ This is why France and the Netherlands have established mandatory whole-life carbon assessments for their built environment, factoring in all those tons of CO2 spewed into the environment during a building's construction. Policymakers in the UK are following suit, spurred on by a prominent architect-led initiative called RetroFirst. And the European Union has already instituted a program called Renovation Wave, which they see as an "essential instrument for Europe to become climate neutral by 2050." I'm scratching the surface here, but hopefully what's coming through is that there's an enormous cost in destroying rather than renovating our built environment.

On YouTube, I watched with dismay as members of Halifax's regional council either ignored or belittled well-intentioned people who accurately describe the implications of destroying large numbers of historic structures and replacing them with high-rise towers. The mentality behind this indifference reflects a council distracted and dazed by fictions regarding the benefits of "intensifying cities," the "efficient use of

^{lxii} This is a situation Christine and I are living through in real-time and it's difficult to stomach.

infrastructure,” and developer profitability. It’s not only in America that people forget how to think, or how to govern.

Toledoans have, to date, looked at best practices among midwestern peer cities. Any city that’s serious about offering residents a high quality of life would also want to look at lessons and ideas found within America’s bubbles of affluence, and beyond our borders.

New York-based Mercer is the world’s largest resources consulting firm. Every year, they rank cities worldwide according to a set of criteria to determine how livable these places are. The principal purpose of providing these rankings is to enable companies to construct expat compensation packages using a reliable benchmark called the Mercer Quality of Living Index.

City rankings are based upon metrics relating to public services and transportation, schools, and education, medical and health considerations, consumer goods, housing, natural environment, and recreation. Even without knowing the metrics you get a sense of what’s valued based on how cities stack up against each other. The top twenty slots in the rankings are consistently dominated by cities in Europe. The first American city to appear in a recent Mercer ranking was San Francisco—in 29th place. Tellingly, there were over 100 American cities the size of Rochester, NY, or larger that were eligible to be ranked. Outside of a handful of well-regarded places such as Honolulu and Boston, American cities didn’t even warrant a ranking in the top fifty. Looking at a countdown of the current top ten we find Sydney, Basel, Copenhagen, Geneva, Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, Vancouver, Munich, Auckland, Zurich, and finally Vienna.^{lxiii}

Not coincidentally, top-ranked cities pursue the objective of prioritizing pedestrians over automobiles. Munich, for example, incentivizes walking in every project they can and is led by politicians who share a goal of being a carbon-free city in the near term. Copenhagen dramatically reduced vehicular traffic by starting to restructure the city around pedestrians back in the 1970s.

Some of these cities have a history that stretches back to the Middle Ages. Others are younger than many American cities you’d find on the East Coast. What’s common to all is that they’re considered desirable places to live. A four thousand square foot home in

^{lxiii}Add endnote referencing most recent Mercer index.

a Houston suburb with access to big-box shopping, chain restaurants, a selection of mega-churches, and traffic congestion thrown in for good measure isn't considered desirable by Mercer's standard.

As I write this, I'm traveling on a high-speed train through the middle of France. Earlier in the day, Christine and I were in Nice, a coastal city near the Italian border where urban planners transformed a polluted, car-congested thoroughfare into an incredibly lively pedestrian-oriented street served by trams packed to the gills with people. Elsewhere, they've introduced bike lanes and lush green planting strips with trees, mint, rosemary, and other plants suitable to the climate. Post-industrial cities like Toledo—with their alienatingly wide barren streets—are optimally poised to be transformed into spaces just as welcoming.

I don't mention this because France represents the epitome of city-building, but rather to point out that variants of good ideas—executed in both the recent and distant past—are found in both our country and western Europe, with whom we share a great deal in terms of individualism and intellectual history. Just as happens with software development, we can study, steal, and improve upon ideas executed elsewhere in the western world. Similarly, our best ideas in city-building—including public participation—should be stolen and improved upon by Europeans as well, to the benefit of residents elsewhere.

It's ok to dream. By end of century, I see a Toledo that has led other post-industrial cities into a new era, offering residents human-scale environments that rival what's experienced on the streets of Vienna or Munich. I'm talking about creating American places celebrating American architecture with an American vibe in all the best sense of the phrase, places that deliver on human aspirations rooted in human freedom that is valued in all western nations. So many of us are drawn to places offering a beautiful, healthy, vibrant, safe, extensive public realm in which we can walk all day. Toledo and other cities are waiting to be reclaimed.

In this chapter, I've purposefully said little of quality of life's fourth condition, namely living amidst a functional middle class. Re-reading the selected text above from Toledo's exploratory assessment you see that, like so many of us, the people thinking about

Toledo's future are plenty aware of the challenges that we face both as a nation and as a species. What I wish for will never come to pass if we don't begin to come to terms with our past and heal in eminently pragmatic ways. If we aspire to produce good human habitat—where middle-class kids can safely wander around human-scale cities on their feet—we need understand the roots of our polarization and how it has evolved to fuel the extremes, violence and fear that permeates American life. As I stress in the final part of this book, this has nothing to do with guilt and everything to do with self-interest. The best way to stay stuck in the past is to willfully ignore the past.

PART IV Polarized as If It's 1854

27. When a Family Buries the Truth

Occasionally, memories of Nellie still come back to me. If she could visit with us, she'd see a backyard garden that resembles her own. She'd meet our daughter, who's received the same smackeros I relished as a child. They'd talk with one another, smiling for hours.

As much as anything, I'd want to ask Nellie about a jarring inconsistency in our family history. Written by my great-grandmother a few years before Nellie's birth in 1882, it says that three of Nellie's uncles fought in our civil war, when in fact there were four. Lewis Robert Barnard Cass was three months shy of his fifteenth birthday when he joined the Thirteenth Ohio Volunteer Infantry on August 21, 1861. He served a three-year enlistment, fought in numerous campaigns, and clashed with A.P. Hill's division at Antietam on the single bloodiest day in American history. Yet the family narrative claims he remained on the farm.

Lewis was named in honor of his father's cousin at a time when Senator Cass was planning his presidential run. With young Lewis's father in mind, a practical problem arises when a farmer loses the labor of four sons to the Union army. And that's exactly what happened. When the Cass brothers enlisted in 1861, their father lost four able bodies, age twenty-one, twenty, nineteen, and fourteen. The next brother in line was Nellie's father, twelve-year-old Chester, who would eventually become a doctor and deliver my father, his grandson, into this world.^{lxiv}

^{lxiv} Admittedly a bit of an unusual situation, but at the time there were few doctors available in a part of present-day Toledo that was then a farming community.

Our family history speaks of Chester and Lewis's work on the farm during the war, when in fact Lewis was fighting in the Second Battle of Manassas, the Siege of Vicksburg, and a lengthy campaign that culminated in Atlanta's destruction. Military records, a family monument to the brothers, and a regimental history published in 1863 tell me what my family history does not. He fought with his regiment for three continuous years and "mustered out in the field" in Georgia on August 29, 1864, four days before Atlanta's capitulation, and the beginning of the final phase of the war.

I know when Lewis fought in major battles, and when he skirmished. I know when and where he marched, and when he made camp. I know that he dealt with the stench of death, an experience that in and of itself could overwhelm the living. A lieutenant in his regiment at Antietam writes of forming burial details, noting that "the mutilations of these poor unfortunate men were in many instances, of the most revolting character; and the swollen and disfigured countenances of the dead, filled us with horror." Over the course of his three years with the Thirtieth Ohio Infantry, he experienced many things that don't leave you.

Lewis was one of four soldiers in his company who was fourteen years old at the time of enlistment. This was not unusual. Fully one-third of all soldiers in his regiment was under the age of 18 when they enlisted in 1861. Given his young age, it's reasonable to assume his father vehemently opposed his enlistment. Familial bonds aside, his father would have badly needed Lewis's labor, given the departure of his older siblings.

Whether young Lewis's erasure from the family history reflects a sense of shame, grief, or something else entirely is a subject whose significance I clarify later. What I can say now is that the civil war that the political polarization triggered in 1854 produced had a devastating impact on my family. Lewis's brother William fought at Gettysburg and died of disease during the war. His brother Milton was maimed fighting Stonewall Jackson's army in the Shenandoah Valley and died of related complications after the war. Lewis himself died in 1869 at the age of twenty-two. Only their older brother Samuel, who also fought at Gettysburg, lived to old age, dying two years before his younger brother, a doctor, delivered my father into this world.

In our family history, my great-grandmother writes adoringly about her father-in-law (i.e., Nellie's grandfather, who is Senator Lewis Cass's first cousin), picnics, and

carriage rides. A full page devoted to Senator Lewis Cass presents family anecdotes that supposedly shed light on his upstanding moral character. Nothing is said of his racial policy's central role in polarization or the more than 620,000 deaths that war produced. Three brief sentences—one for each of Lewis's older brothers—refer to young lives led between 1861 and 1865. Nothing more. Stories families tell themselves can obscure the truth. The same can hold for a nation.

28. Lincoln's Unfinished Work

Nellie's uncles didn't enlist in the Union army to end slavery. They enlisted to stop a rebellion. Eleven Southern states didn't secede because of grievances over tariffs or taxes. They seceded because their attempt to expand slavery into Kansas failed and because the election of 1860 produced a Republican president named Lincoln. And the sole, unifying purpose of the Republican party going into that election was to resist the Democrats' stated aim—courtesy of the Cass Doctrine—to expand slavery westward and into Cuba.

At the outset of civil war, both sides expected a quick, decisive victory. A year into the internecine bloodletting, those expectations had been dashed. And by the summer of 1862, Lincoln understood the conflict was about more than suppressing a rebellion.

Union commanders in the field were seeing tens of thousands of fugitives from slavery streaming to their lines every few months. The military called them “contrabands,” and decided to employ men as teamsters, laborers, and servants. In time, 190,000 would serve in the Union army. As this was unfolding, what had long been clear to abolitionists, was becoming clearer to Lincoln—there was no going back to being a slaveholding republic.

Then there were the casualties. New technology such as the rifled gun barrel produced large-scale carnage on the battlefield. Before Antietam in September 1862, the dead and wounded from eight major battles alone totaled more than 90,000 men.¹⁷⁶ Add to this, the casualties that smaller engagements produced, such as the Battle of Cross Keys, where my great-granduncle, Charles Milton Cass, was one of the 829 who was either killed or wounded.¹⁷⁷ For Lincoln, who both possessed a moral compass and had

knowledge of how quickly the numbers were adding up, the enormity of the human toll would have weighed heavily.

Recent research has fueled a debate over whether the number of war dead has been undercounted. The conventional figure has long been 620,000. Analysis of census data from 1860 and 1870 suggests the actual number may be closer to 750,000. This implies that between 2 and 2.5 percent of the American population lost their lives during the war. Consider that in 1863—the midpoint of the war—31 million people lived in the United States. Applying those same percentages to the current population of 331 million translates into somewhere between 6.6 and 8.3 million people killed.

I mention this to convey the scale of death confronting not only Lincoln but also hundreds of thousands of families like mine. Everyone knew someone who had died. Here, I'm mindful that these figures must be considered in the context of their time. In 1860, the average American died at the age of 39. People were more accustomed to death at an early age relative to today when most of us live to see our 78th birthday. Regardless, losing your sons or your brothers to war would ravage the hearts of families just as would happen today.

Five days after fifteen-year-old Lewis fought at Antietam, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. The battle had thwarted Lee's aim to invade Central Pennsylvania and was considered a major Union victory. It was the outcome Lincoln had been waiting for, as issuing the Proclamation amidst the string of military setbacks that preceded Antietam could have been viewed as a sign of desperation.

Despite its lofty title, the Emancipation Proclamation reads like the dry legal document that it is, clarifying who would and would not be freed. Its essence was this: If you were enslaved in one of the four border slave states that had not seceded, you weren't free. If you were enslaved in a state that was in rebellion, then you were to be freed. If you were an enslaver in a state that would agree to rejoin the Union and have elected officials in Washington before January 1, 1863, you could continue to enslave human beings.

I think the Proclamation serves multiple purposes. It could be viewed as a hail mary pass, a last-ditch attempt to reassemble North and South back into a slaveholding republic. It was most certainly a weapon of war designed to destabilize the South. It also reflected a realization that enslaved Americans were taking their earliest opportunity to free themselves. And finally, and most importantly, it set Lincoln up to redefine the war's purpose.

This redefinition was presented to the world in a speech on November 19, 1863, on Cemetery Hill, just outside the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Cemetery Hill had been heavily contested terrain during the three-day battle at Gettysburg in which 51,000 men were killed or wounded. It was the deadliest battle of a war which, at the time, had already produced more than 300,000 casualties.

I grew up thirty minutes north of Gettysburg, and first visited the battlefield park with my mother at age eight. Over the years, I returned with my school, and on a few other occasions. My focus was largely on the fighting: Confederate sharpshooters at Devils Den, Pickett's ill-fated charge into the center of the Union line, and hand-to-hand combat on Cemetery Ridge in defense of Union artillery. I knew Gettysburg to be the turning point of the war, but never quite understood that Lee invaded Central Pennsylvania to secure victories in the North and pressure the Union to end the war. And there were other things about the campaign I'd only learn much later.

Lincoln had come to dedicate a cemetery for Union soldiers killed in the battle. Reports indicated that the stench of decay still hung in the air as hastily dug temporary graves insufficiently covered the dead, and corpses were being moved to their final resting places. Three and a half months earlier, my two great-granduncles, Samuel and William, were fighting on Cemetery Hill with Battery H, 1st Ohio Artillery, 500 feet from where Lincoln stood to address the crowd.

His 272-word speech speaks clearly of what the war is about without ever mentioning the word "slavery." When I read it now, I feel something approaching grief, mindful that the same underlying pathologies ripping apart society in 1863 have created a present-day social and environmental catastrophe. The "unfinished work" Lincoln speaks of asks me to see the formerly enslaved as equals. My inability to do so would help precipitate the nation's spiritual death. Constructing a government that works for the

betterment of mankind hinges on a “new birth of freedom” made possible by confronting entrenched patterns of thought preventing me from recognizing the inherent humanity in others who might look different than me. They’re my neighbors whether they live on the same block or some distance away. I traumatize and degrade them at my own peril. This is what Lincoln says to me, but my interpretation is not the dominant one amongst my white peers.

29. Fundamental Dynamics Remain Unchanged

On January 6, 2021, Donald Trump inflamed the grievances of his supporters, triggering an outcome that lay beyond Robert E. Lee's grasp in the summer of 1863. For the first time in American history, the Confederate battle flag was unfurled inside the U.S. Capitol building.

The story is well known. Thousands assembled in Washington D.C. to absorb Trump's lies, and lay siege to the Capitol building, demanding Congress overturn the election result. They raged over perceived infringements of liberties and the threat of one-party, Venezuelan-style rule. Off-duty police and ex-military personnel had flown in from different parts of the country to participate.¹⁷⁸ QAnon followers figured prominently, dressed in t-shirts, and carrying banners bearing the cult's logo. These people were the vanguard of the 50% of Republicans who believed Satan-worshipping pedophiles—that included Democratic Party leaders—operated a global sex-trafficking ring and routinely sought to undermine Trump with the aid of the deep state bureaucracy.¹⁷⁹

Two newly elected female QAnon adherents waited inside the House chamber for their opportunity to deliver a speech in support of invalidating election results. One ran a campaign ad featuring the headline, "Never Accept Socialism," then released a video pledging to carry her Glock into the halls of Congress.¹⁸⁰ The other distinguished herself in the campaign by shooting a high-power rifle at targets representing perceived Democratic priorities, the last of which was a sign that reads "SOCIALISM."¹⁸¹

In the leadup to the siege, Trump called thousands of his supporters to action, proclaiming, "If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." Devotees—including many white nationalists—assaulted journalists, and destroyed their

equipment.¹⁸² A mob of fifteen thousand people closed on the Capitol, passing by a noose hanging from mock gallows. With Rudi Giuliani's words "trial by combat" ringing in their ears, they attacked uniformed officers, dragging one by his stomach down the capitol steps and beating him with poles.¹⁸³

After breaching the Capitol, crowds chanted "Stop the steal!" Others repeatedly screamed out, "This is our country. This is our house!" in the direction of anyone they thought might listen. Unable to break down the main doors to the House chamber, several opted to swarm onto the floor of a Senate chamber. Two men carried flex cuffs, looking for senators, who minutes earlier, had been defending election results. One of the two, an Air Force Academy graduate from Texas, had recently retired as a lieutenant colonel after a career flying fighters. His family indicated that his white supremacist beliefs and devotion to Donald Trump had intensified in recent years.¹⁸⁴ Other bands of men trashed offices, stole laptops, smashed windows, broke light fixtures, and splintered historic pieces of furniture. They left behind Trump flags, water bottles, pieces of body armor, abandoned clothing, car keys, and cigarette butts.¹⁸⁵

The mob paraded through the Capitol's Statuary Hall, the main exhibition space for a collection of 100 statues honoring persons of importance to each state's history. The collection includes statues of Sam Adams, George Washington, and Ronald Reagan. Michigan provided statues of President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Lewis Cass. I want the latter replaced by a more worthy likeness.

An unresolved past and the legacy of the slaveholding republic were on display for all to see. Of the dozen or so key arrests related to Trump's insurrection, a disproportionate number involved individuals from the former slaveholding states.¹⁸⁶ A month before the siege, seventeen state attorneys general signed on to a Texas lawsuit asking the Supreme Court to invalidate legitimate election results to keep Trump in office. Eight of eleven former Confederate states participated in the lawsuit.¹⁸⁷ Relative to the Midwest, Great Lakes, or Mountain regions, the former slaveholding states provided Trump with the largest block of votes. It's also where Trump derived the most congressional support. In his last year in office, 102 congressmen came from these same states. The next most bountiful regions were the Great Lakes and Midwest, providing 36, and 21 congressmen

respectively. In the Senate, 25 senators came from the former slaveholding states. The next two most bountiful regions were the Midwest and Mountain states, providing 11 and 10 senators respectively.

There's a reason the South operates as it does today. White men leveraged chattel slavery (through 1866), convict leasing (through 1928), and peonage (through 1942) to establish and reinforce a racial caste system over three centuries. Ways of thinking and seeing the world were shaped and constrained by a small number of wealthy whites lording over considerably poorer whites and disenfranchised blacks. Although slavery's implementation varied over time, fundamental characteristics of daily life remained unchanged. In 1854, for example, it was illegal for an enslaved teenager to obtain an education. Although no longer illegal in, say, 1934, the typical black teen was no more likely to have access to education than they might have been eighty years earlier. In the present day public schools remain largely separate and unequal seventy years after the federal government ruled school segregation illegal.¹⁸⁸ Cultural continuity plays out in different ways and the political realm is hardly an exception.

Considering that slavery has been practiced inside the present-day borders of the United States for 80% of the time American culture has been forming, it'd be disingenuous to claim the country is not deeply affected by this history. We still operate in key respects as we did when a slaveholding republic.

Consider South Carolina. By 1850, South Carolina Senator John Calhoun had established himself as the intellectual architect of secession.^{lxv} His state was the first to break from the Union in support of slavery's continued expansion. Folksy, friendly, twenty-first-century South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham emerged as Trump's most vocal defender in Congress. Publicly making much of their political journey together, a genial Graham accompanied Trump on his last official trip as president to Alamo, Texas. The topic of discussion? To discuss Graham's lead role in gathering support to oppose a conviction in the Senate after the House impeached Trump for inciting an insurrection.

^{lxv} Calhoun and Lewis Cass established a close personal relationship in the 1820s when both played major roles in continuing to clear native populations off lands of the sort my family settled on in Ohio. In a political cartoon titled "Cass and his Cabinet in 1849", Calhoun is assumed to play a cabinet role if the Democratic nominee (Cass) won the presidency. As mentioned earlier, he narrowly lost the election of 1848 to Zachary Taylor.

Senators Calhoun and Graham come from different times, yet embody essentially the same worldview in terms of an embrace of authoritarianism, and a push to advance forces solidifying positions of wealth and hoarding for the few at the expense of America's sizable underclass.

On the other side of the divide, consider Massachusetts, which sent Charles Sumner to the Senate in the 1850s. Sumner served as a leading champion of human rights and civil liberties for enslaved black Americans, playing central roles in passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution.¹⁸⁹ Early in his Senate tenure, Sumner was physically beaten within an inch of his life by slaveowner Preston Brooks, a South Carolina congressman who took issue with a particularly incisive Senate speech Sumner gave regarding enslavers. Brooks approached Sumner from behind then began smashing a metal-topped cane into his head. The beating left Sumner an invalid. Southern newspapers reported that Lewis Cass denounced Sumner's speech as the "most un-American speech he had ever heard."¹⁹⁰ In the end, conservative Democratic lawmakers prevented the House from even censuring Brooks.

In the twenty-first-century Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren prominently advocated for social-democratic policies widely supported in all other western, capitalist nations. In response, Fox News and conservative politicians maligned her and labeled a "socialist".¹⁹¹ Although never physically assaulted, a Republican-controlled Senate silenced her in the Senate chamber using an obscure rule to prevent her from raising concerns regarding a Trump cabinet nominee's racist past. Voicing his approval, Lindsey Graham indicated that silencing her was "long overdue." Charles Sumner would be no more loved by conservative America if he were alive today. Cultural descendants of the slaveholding republic express themselves differently, but in key respects, fundamental dynamics remain in place which kill the prospect of progressive governance that supports and sustains quality of life.

30. Convergence at Sporting Hill

A day after the Capitol siege, I learned that elements of Lee's army fought Union troops thirty miles north of Gettysburg at a place called Sporting Hill, named on account of the abundance of rabbit, squirrel, and waterfowl one could hunt as you made your way to a wide, shallow creek at the bottom of the hill.

It wasn't Lee's intention to fight at Gettysburg. His objective was to capture Harrisburg due to its importance as a northern state capital and transportation hub. In prosecuting the war in Pennsylvania, Lee sought to turn public opinion in the North against the war and bring it to an end before a numerically and materially superior foe overwhelmed the Confederacy.

The skirmish at Sporting Hill was the northernmost engagement of the Civil War, six miles west of Harrisburg. A combined army of 12,000 Confederates had been poised to attack Harrisburg when Lee ordered them to abandon those plans and get to Gettysburg as quickly as possible. A communication breakdown resulted in General Albert Jenkins and his 1,200 cavalymen not receiving those orders. As a result, 300 of Jenkins's men had to fight a delaying, rear-guard action as he scrambled to reassemble cavalymen who were looting area farms, leaving worthless Confederate currency as payment.

The focal point of the skirmish was a large wooden barn set on a stone foundation in which cavalymen set themselves up to slow the advance of inexperienced union

militia on the afternoon of June 30, 1863.¹⁹² A combination of sharpshooters in the barn, Confederate artillery, and dismounted cavalymen, held off the Union militia for over an hour, giving Jenkins time to muster his unit. Eventually, the gun crew of a newly arrived Union artillery piece put a shell into the barn, triggering a Confederate withdrawal.¹⁹³

Jenkins and his 1,200 men had been the vanguard of a Confederate invasion force that crossed into south-central Pennsylvania two weeks earlier. Among other things, they performed reconnaissance and stole from farmers to supplement insufficient supplies.¹⁹⁴ They also executed slave hunts, capturing approximately 1,000 humans during the entire Gettysburg campaign.¹⁹⁵ Free black men, women, and children became contraband, to be rounded up by wagon and swiftly removed and re-enslaved. One could argue that a parallel objective was to make a mockery of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Many of Jenkins's men would have previously served on slave patrols in the South, as they were often compulsory duties for slaveholder and non-slaveholder alike.¹⁹⁶ For the previous 150 years, groups of men, armed with whips and guns routinely combed the countryside in the slaveholding states tracking runaways and challenging the enslaved to produce passes justifying their whereabouts. After the war, slave patrols morphed into the patrols of the White League, Ku Klux Klan, and the Red Shirts, paramilitary organizations that terrorized blacks and their white allies, suppressing voting and overturning election results that had been favorable to liberal Republicans.

As a boy of age 8 in 1971, I'd play in patches of remnant forest and the cornfields that surrounded our Central Pennsylvania subdivision that began getting built out in the mid-1960s. Occasionally my friends and I would traipse through a field over to an abandoned house built in the 1850s. It stunk inside as old, moldy, rotting buildings tend to do. And in time, it would be renovated by the builder who replaced the farm fields around us with tract housing over a little more than a decade.

At age 10, I ventured a bit further out as we boys started playing army, crawling through the dirt, and wading into the wide, shallow creek that wound around our subdivision. Shortly after, I made my first uncomfortable trip by foot up to the convenience store a mile away. I'd walk across a bridge spanning the creek and up a hill. At the top, I'd come to the Carlisle Pike, which connects the town of Carlisle to

Harrisburg. Six hundred yards to my right, out of my line of sight sat a large wooden barn built on a stone foundation.

At the top of the hill, I'd wait for a green light, scurry across the pike not wishing to get hit, then head over to the convenience store where I'd buy a Hershey's bar or the "wacky packages" that took my elementary school by storm that year. As I grew older, I became more accustomed to the trip but my discomfort never disappeared. No sidewalks or people. Just cars. Even as a kid, everything built on the pike alienated me. I'd return the way I came, standing on the side of the road waiting for the lights to change, unleaded gas fumes wafting all around. Completely unaware of the history of the place, I'd cross the road and pass beneath a street sign that read, Sporting Hill Road.

31. The Birth of Alternate Reality and Its Unifying Properties

In the second decade of the 21st century, much of the world looked on in disgust as an American president made more than 25,000 factually incorrect statements during a single four-year term. This breach of the public trust culminated in an attempt by that president and his supporters to invalidate millions of legally cast votes and overturn an election. Many who voted for him believed his every utterance and donated over \$200 million to support an unprecedented effort to steal a national election. Fearing a backlash from Trump's base, politicians in his party tacitly approved of what amounted to a frontal assault on democratic values and the embrace of authoritarianism. As insane as all of this was, as you'll see, the widespread belief in a nation-shaping lie is not without precedent.

My father is buried in Section 28 in Arlington National Cemetery.¹⁹⁷ Its 639 acres are considered hallowed ground for those who fought in defense of the country. Headstones have a uniform appearance, a 13" x 24" x 4" white marble slab that gently curves at the top. Step off the grass and onto the road, and you're on Lincoln Drive, which turns into Sherman Drive as you head in the direction of Section 18 a half mile away. Approaching Section 18, an image of a woman in classical Roman attire comes into view. She faces South and stands on a three-story tall, bronze pedestal. At thirty-two feet, she's the tallest monument in Arlington and dominates the area. Around her are 267 headstones, organized in concentric circles. They too are white marble, but the tops don't gently slope. They rise to create a point in the middle.

Beneath the pedestal, life-size figures of soldiers and a sailor ring the memorial, all following the figure of Minerva, the Roman goddess of war and wisdom. Amidst the

fighting men is a loyal black slave, marching with his master to war. Further around is a tearful black mammy who holds a white toddler up to make possible the embrace of an officer, whose scabbard hangs from his side. The base of the memorial reads, “To Our Dead Heroes – By – The United Daughters of the Confederacy.” I find the Confederate Memorial’s unaltered presence near my father’s grave offensive.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy began erecting Confederate memorials across the South in the 1890s, at the same time Southern whites began lynching black Americans in their largest numbers, and tens of thousands were being re-enslaved in the convict lease system.¹⁹⁸ In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that whites could keep blacks out of their schools, restaurants, barbershops, and anywhere else they so desired. Monuments going up across the South served as a visible reminder that the re-establishment of the pre-war social order was complete. The tale of how this social order reasserted itself is embodied in a collective lie called the Lost Cause. It’s a myth embraced across the South that represents the birth of alternate reality in America.

Before our civil war, there was no compelling reason for Americans to overtly lie to themselves regarding fundamental aspects of their nation’s history. True, a few slaveholding founding fathers had been elevated to near-godlike status, but there was no nation-shaping lie. Citizens of the slaveholding republic spoke candidly either for or against white supremacy, the virtues of enslavement, and the potential for disunion. This being said everyone understood slavery for what it was, an effective means to generate sustained economic growth, not only for the South but in the North’s emerging financial and industrial centers as well. As polarization was taking root between 1850 and 1860, cotton production rose from 2 million to 4 million bales. World cotton consumption—most of it in Europe—rose from 3.3 million to 5.6 million bales over the same period. When the eleven states seceded, America’s enslaved were picking over two-thirds of the cotton consumed by world markets.¹⁹⁹

Lewis Cass’s overriding desire to keep southern Senate colleagues like Jefferson Davis happy reflected the political and economic dominance of America’s enslavers. At the outbreak of the war, the eight wealthiest states as measured by the wealth of white residents were, South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Connecticut, Alabama,

Florida, and Texas.²⁰⁰ And recall, behind this wealth, was widespread, systemic torture and debasement. Enslaver's ledgers tallied missed quotas and lashes received. Documents show how tools such as irons for branding, nails, pokers, and tongs were used to facilitate mutilation, sexual humiliation, and confinement in stress positions.²⁰¹ This was but a means to an end, summarized in the opening sentence of the introduction to the Census Bureau's 1860 publication titled, *Manufactures of the United States in 1860*. The top of page one reads, "The growth of the culture and manufacture of cotton in the United States constitutes the most striking feature of the industrial history of the past fifty years."²⁰² Stated differently, America's expanding slave-based racial caste system was abiding by the American creed of making the right people tremendous sums of money regardless of the cost to others. The existential threat to this sordid cash cow—both real and imagined—was the only dynamic that could drive the country toward civil war. And it did.

At war's end, prominent Southerners immediately began constructing the Lost Cause myth, which runs counter to every known fact regarding why the war was fought. Over the next three decades, that myth would expand to include the tale of how noble defenders of virtue and honor thwarted misguided attempts to elevate the status of a hopelessly inferior race.²⁰³ Even the most enlightened enslaver understood—as explained in a 1909 Johns Hopkins journal article regarding Jefferson Davis's views on race—that "Slavery took idle, immoral, barbarous blacks and gradually rooted out their savage traits, giving to them instead the white man's superior civilization – his religion, his language, his customs, his industry. The negro was a child race and slavery was its training school."²⁰⁴

The phrase, *The Lost Cause*, refers to the idea that a noble South was doomed from the outset, fighting against a numerically and materially superior enemy. Ignore the fact that Southern leaders were students of history keenly aware they were far stronger than other smaller nations that had successfully defended themselves against more powerful foes.²⁰⁵ The myth claims the Civil War was not about slavery but rather states' rights. Ignore the fact that Southern secession papers refer almost exclusively to the North's interference with slavery. The myth claims slavery was foisted upon the South and slavery was receding in importance. Ignore figures regarding wealth creation, and the

South's use of mortgage-backed securities and other financial instruments to expand slavery with the expectation of pushing it ever further west and into Cuba. The myth claims the enslaved embraced their circumstances. Ignore the hundreds of thousands of black Americans that streamed toward Union lines to free themselves.

With the creation of the Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) in 1894, a group of well-connected Southern women took on the role of preserving and propagating the myth.²⁰⁶ Political strength enabled them not only to put up monuments, but also indoctrinate school-age children throughout the South using UDC-approved textbooks infused with the truth, and a curriculum guaranteed to deliver results.²⁰⁷

Eight decades before a horse-drawn caisson brought my father's flag-draped casket to Section 28, the UDC authored a booklet titled, *The History of the Arlington Confederate Memorial*, to explain the memorial's existence in Section 18. It was published in October 1914, three months after the memorial's unveiling. Reading it, you find an answer to a vexing problem facing the country after our civil war, namely, how do you take two adversaries engaged in an internecine bloodbath, and bind them into a unified nation? What would it take to bring an end to the political polarization Kansas-Nebraska sparked in 1854?

Coming out of the war, Americans possessed one of three mindsets regarding the country's future.²⁰⁸ Some considered the Civil War to be a second American revolution, remedying the republic's deep flaws by securing civil liberties for the formerly enslaved. Then, there were the white supremacists, for whom military defeat did little to alter beliefs. Finally, there were the reconciliationists who wanted to move beyond the animosities of the past and get on with the business of reunifying the country and making money. The polarization triggered in 1854 would persist after war's end for as long as political forces for racial justice were competitive with those who embraced white supremacy. For a decade, between 1865 and 1876, that was precisely the case.

Southern white supremacists were large in number, but could only rebuild political clout incrementally as their states were readmitted to the Union, and they terrorized and murdered their way back to political dominance. Paramilitary groups (e.g., KKK, the White League, and Red Shirts) suppressed Republican voter turnout,

overturning election results to restore all levels of government to conservative Democratic rule. During this same period, socially progressive Republicans in Congress took advantage of a limited window of opportunity, ratifying two constitutional amendments, enacting civil rights legislation, and more. Historians refer to this collective effort as “Congressional Reconstruction,” a term we’ll see again shortly. Collectively, these accomplishments extended citizenship to black Americans, provided them with the right to vote, protected them from political violence, and offered equal protection under the law. At least in theory.

In practice, the waning influence of progressives in Congress combined with the steady political gains of white supremacists turned Republican accomplishments into paper victories. By 1876, the country was in the early stage of industrialization that was producing socio-economic upheaval. Key progressives Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner were no longer alive, and Republicans had split into factions preoccupied with political corruption and a catastrophic financial meltdown. Most Republicans considered paper victories sufficient and had their eyes on the spoils of the gilded age that was unfolding before them. All this led to the event that formally ended America’s first phase of polarization, namely the Compromise of 1877.

The presidential election in November 1876 pitted Republican Rutherford Hayes against Democrat Samuel Tilden and produced a deadlocked result focused on a small number of contested electoral college votes.²⁰⁹ The compromise—made 72 hours before one of the two candidates was due to be sworn into office—was to give the Republicans the White House in exchange for removing all Federal troops from the three remaining southern states they still occupied. This effectively completed a process already in progress, namely the abandonment of black Americans and the erasure of their civil liberties. Going into the election of 1876, the accomplishments of progressives had been on life support. The Compromise of 1877 pulled the plug.

Over the next twenty years, between 1876 and 1896, a conservative Supreme Court reaffirmed the nation’s status as a full-out white supremacist nation, issuing key rulings that codified support for the dismemberment of civil rights and affirmed a tolerance for terrorism on American soil. During this period, white supremacists and

reconciliationists locked arms in agreement regarding an alternate reality that the former told themselves and the latter agreed to buy into.²¹⁰ Polarization in America was no more.

Reading the UDC's 1914 Arlington Confederate Memorial booklet, I find the expression of this alternate reality in full bloom. In referring to successful paramilitary and political campaigns to eliminate black civil liberties and reassert conservative, white supremacist dominance, the Daughters of the Confederacy wrote, "In 1867, the seceding States were subject to the horrors of Congressional Reconstruction, but in a few years American manhood triumphed. Anglo-Saxon civilization had been restored. Ex-Confederates were serving in the National Government, and true patriots, North and South were addressing themselves to the noble task of restoring fraternal feeling between the sections."²¹¹ In other words, racial hatred and terrorism won the day as whites, North and South, remembered their conflict as a noble contest between two valiant peoples. The atrocity of slavery and how it impacted the mental health of victim and perpetrator alike were never examined, setting the stage for traumatic variants of these crimes that reverberates and degrade our lives in the present day.

When visiting my parents' grave, I set foot in Section 18 just once, in 1991 at age twenty-eight. Looking at the Confederate Monument, I understood nothing of its significance at the time. I'd recently watched Ken Burn's Civil War documentary series that ran on PBS and listened to the narrator tell me with comforting authority, "What began as a bitter dispute over union and states' rights ended as a struggle over the meaning of freedom in America."²¹² After embracing the comforting lilt of Ashokan Farewell, I learned the Civil War defined us as a country, turning disparate states into a unified nation.

The undisputed star was Shelby Foote, a Mississippi-born great-grandson of a slave owner with no formal background in history. His Lost Cause talking points seeped into my mind like melting butter on warm toast. The war, Foote told me, was not about slavery but rather our inability to do what Americans do best, namely compromise. I trusted PBS, so I inherently trusted Foote. Looking at the Confederate Memorial that day, I was unaware of and unconcerned with the degree to which I'd bought into his homespun, triumphant, narrative. America may have had some problems in the past, but we (white people) fought a war and became a better version of our noble selves.

There was another interviewee who appeared less frequently—a black woman—who conveyed a different message. She told me the Civil War was not over. History is in the present. William Faulkner, she pointed out, said, history is not “was” it’s “is.” Years would pass before I understood her words. Columbia University’s Barbara Fields was the only interviewee in the documentary who had earned a doctorate in history. Over the ten hours that the series ran, she appeared for 8 minutes and 25 seconds. Shelby Foote the storyteller, was given 45 minutes and 56 seconds.²¹³

32.A Responsibility for Understanding Our Past

Our national lie (i.e., the Lost Cause) denies the existence of trauma. The myth implies the internal forced migration of nearly one million people never happened. The splitting of families, systemic rape, whipping, and mutilation never happened. A thousand variants of violence and degradation never happened or did not matter.

As a nation, we have never taken responsibility for understanding our past. There's tremendous opposition to doing so as evidenced by Trump's speech directed to half the nation on January 6, 2021, in which he said, "We will never allow an angry mob to tear down our statues or erase our history." Here he speaks directly to the cultural descendants of the slaveholding republic, millions of whites living in places as different as Lexington, Kentucky's suburbs, Michigan's upper peninsula, and Wyoming's rangelands. They are the millions of adherents to an alternate reality that originated with the Lost Cause and metastasized into a belief system out of step with the rest of western civilization (which itself has plenty of pathologies).

There's a difference between assuming guilt for the past and taking responsibility for understanding the past. I feel no guilt because I'm white, or because I was named in honor of a man who played a central role in formulating a racial policy to keep an expanding slaveholding republic intact. As said previously, my motivations are rooted in self-interest. Steps to meaningfully improve quality of life and mitigate the impacts of the environmental catastrophe bearing down on us hinges on a meaningful, comprehensive national conversation regarding our past and cultural continuity with the present.

There is tremendous benefit in taking collective responsibility for understanding national crimes in the way Germany has come to terms with Nazism. And yes, I am

comparing twelve years of Nazism with more than three hundred years of enslavement in all its variations and everything that came after. In her 2013 essay titled “Dare we compare American slavery to the Holocaust,” moral philosopher Susan Neiman—who lost family in the holocaust— poignantly writes, “Nazism should not be used to end discussions about evil but to begin them and American crimes deserve a hard look as any other.”

Buying into the Lost Cause narrative requires me to turn a discussion about national crimes on its head. In the Confederate Memorial booklet, for example, I’m told most Americans considered the attempt to extend civil liberties to black Americans to be a “crime against civilization.” The Lost Cause’s victorious message boldly announces that America’s racial caste system is immutable. Newspaper articles across the South illustrate how this unfolded in daily life for decades. A summary of articles published in just the months before and after the UDC dedicated the Confederate Memorial hints at the enormity of trauma in the lives of many Black Americans that migrated to cities North and West.²¹⁴ What follows is brief, and difficult to read, but relevant to the question regarding what American crimes entail.

In Monroe, LA, a black man was hung from a telegraph pole for allegedly insulting a white woman. In Marshall, TX, a black youth was alleged to have hugged and kissed a farmer’s daughter. A mob subsequently “sheared off the youth’s ears, slit his lips, and mutilated him in other ways below the belt.” In Clovis, NM, two white men walked into a home and raped a “young colored girl.” Her younger brother shot and wounded one of the men as they escaped. Authorities failed to find the brother and arrested the sister. A mob pulled her out of jail at 4:00 AM and lynched her as her brother, who was hiding nearby listened to her screams. In Spartanburg, SC, a “young negro” was lynched by a mob for the “crime of crawling underneath the house of a white citizen, with the intention of stealing chickens.” In Shreveport, LA, a young man accused of murdering a postmaster and stealing a “large sum of money” was surrounded by a crowd of 200 men, bound to a tree with “coils of wire,” and burned alive. He repeatedly screamed, “I didn’t do it” as his body was consumed by the flames. In Columbus, MS, a middle-aged mother was raped and hung naked in a tree near the tracks of the Mobile and Ohio RR, in view of “thousands of passengers” for a full day. The woman and her

husband were “regarded as hardworking people”, but their son was considered “shiftless” and had been accused of burning a barn. In Hartwell, GA, three “negroes” in a buggy passed a white girl. One made a remark that offended her, and she told a group of white men who subsequently caught up with the trio, lynched the two men, beat the woman, and ordered her out of the state. Authorities noted there was a disagreement over the “insulting remark.” The white woman claimed the man said “Hello sweetheart.” The “negro woman asserted” all they said was “hello.” As evidenced by almost 300 pages of newspaper articles compiled in *100 Years of Lynching in America*, these kinds of atrocities took place throughout the South week after week for decades.

These crimes were the consequences of a racial order that the genteel woman of the UDC had a prominent role in solidifying. At the same time, they were penning their Arlington monument booklet, the son of a Confederate officer named D.W. Griffith was putting the finishing touches on a masterpiece film that advanced the cause of evil as effectively as anything produced by Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels. *Birth of a Nation* is the epic Lost Cause narrative, clarifying for Americans how gallant men in white hoods successfully defended white civilization against lustful, predatorial negroes attempting to control the South after the Civil War ended. The film is nothing less than a masterclass in how to express racial hatred. Millions of white Americans enthusiastically flocked to see it, and it remained the country’s highest growing film for fourteen years, until Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer released *Gone with the Wind*. The NAACP unsuccessfully tried to get it banned even as it fueled a rise in hate crimes across the country. Within a decade of the film’s release, Klan membership had risen to over 4 million, on account of the homage paid to the men in hoods.

Having recently watched this silent, three-hour film online, I get why white crowds across America cheered on the Klan. Released in 1915, it still packs a punch today. Three minutes into the film, a man curiously dressed in Puritan garb stands over deferential slaves, implying slavery originated in Massachusetts. Later, pliable negroes cheerfully pick cotton before the war, and gleefully dance for the entertainment of whites. The war ruins these happy relations. After a noble Lee surrenders to a disheveled, cigar-chomping Grant, power-hungry negroes in federal uniforms abuse whites stripped of their

place in society. Corrupt northern carpetbaggers instruct negroes to stop working and start rigging elections. Incompetent negro politicians grab political power, take over a legislative chamber, put their feet up on desks, and eat chicken. Negro juries let negro criminals go free. And male negroes and mulattoes of all kinds leer at women. Two in particular, aggressively pursue young virginal white women. A heroine jumps to her death from a cliff rather than be ravaged by the negro hunting her down.

Then comes the turning point. Men shrouded in the cloth of the Ku Klux Klan emerge to vanquish their foes. Critically, at this same time, two ex-union soldiers provide refuge to a beloved southern white father pursued by negro soldiers for his support of the Klan. It's at this point we read on screen, "The former enemies of North and South are united again in common defense of their Aryan birthright." A decade after the movie's release, Adolf Hitler used similar language in *Mein Kampf*, letting us know that human culture is "the creative product of the Aryan."

As Americans, we deplore Nazi horrors executed to purify a master race. At the same time, millions deny or minimize a past that does not square with the narrative of a freedom-loving people committed to justice. Hitler executed a plan to exterminate those he believed inferior. In the United States, we enslaved our inferior race to make the right people large sums of money. After chattel slavery became a casualty of civil war, we spent decades terrorizing and lynching them, re-enslaving to produce profits in industry and agriculture, and chaining them together to build public roads. We created a separate and unequal world in which we could loathe and demean them. We forced those who fled that perverse system to live in the most decrepit parts of cities and denied them access to loans we took for granted. We removed well-paying jobs from these cities, bulldozed the communities they created, and replaced them with concrete public housing projects and highways. We did all this and more, as we created our sunlit prison of the American Dream. A culture steeped in unresolved trauma, dysfunction, violence, and disinformation.

Any viable home that replaces this sunlit prison, would need to be built on the foundation of historical truths. After our civil war, generations of racist historians constructed a national narrative inconsistent with the historical record. In my lifetime, however, historians have done the work to reveal what that record tells us. The question

is how long it will take American society to catch up with the truth. Until that happens, polarization remains locked in place. And realistically, there are monied interests who would prefer the wait be an indefinite one, as the American creed cares little about trauma's impact on communities.

33. Life in a Receptacle of Trauma

At the time we moved to 11th Street in early 2004, Christine and I had been away from the Washington area for eight years. The city was in the midst of a transformation, benefitting from the billions being spent after 9-11 on anti-terrorism measures and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Construction cranes were everywhere, and the population was growing for the first time since the 1950s. We'd purchased a brick townhouse built in 1907 from friends of a friend in a neighborhood called Columbia Heights.

In recent years, development in and around the neighborhood has intensified after the completion of a subway line connecting it to the rest of the city. Columbia Heights remained one of many neighborhoods plagued by violent crime, but the influx of new housing, businesses, and residents held out hope for a brighter future.

I'd known the neighborhood when it was still in the shadow of the destructive riots that followed Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968. For five years, between 1989 and 1994, I tutored at a nearby school on Saturday mornings and experienced the area at its worst during the crack epidemic. The city's mayor, Marion Barry, was arrested in 1990 during an FBI sting operation for smoking crack. After serving a brief jail term, voters reelected him to office. During Barry's sixteen-year tenure, the city's government agencies were known for inefficiency and corruption, a mode of operation I'd later learn would linger long after his departure.

I was under no illusions regarding the challenges of living in Columbia Heights. But the city was changing, and we were amenable to living in a diverse community. By this point, I'd already worked in planning and well understood my problems with suburbia. We'd left Northern Virginia's traffic-choked suburbs years earlier, and the idea

of returning there, after having lived in Vancouver and Halifax—two eminently walkable Canadian cities—was a non-starter. There was one other factor. After nearly five years spent in university and a poorly-paying urban planning job, Columbia Heights—itsself quite expensive—was what we could afford.

We'd not intended to return to the D.C. area, but circumstances change. When working with the Baltimore County planning office, I felt an almost desperate need to get myself back into high tech which, I found, required more professionalism, demanded more accountability, and paid far better. We'd planned to return to Canada, but an opportunity to work with some good people came to me by way of a friend in Washington weeks before I received an invitation to relocate to British Columbia. Turning down the Canadian offer, while difficult to do, was never a question as I'd made a commitment, I needed to honor people I respected. Although we'd eventually get back to Canada, the future was not clear as we packed the truck to move from Baltimore to Washington.

The couple we'd purchased the townhouse from hadn't disclosed a list of major problems, not so much with the townhouse itself, but rather what was around it. Given the mutual connection with a friend, we'd naively taken down our guard, trusted their portrayal of life in the house, and never entertained the possibility their realtor just might be a liar. We were sorely mistaken. In Columbia Heights, the block on which you lived mattered. Some were better than others, and the townhouse we'd bought sat on one of the worst.

On 11th Street, we learned to live with violence. A double homicide at the end of our block, and the death of a nine-year-old caught in a crossfire were introductions to a different way of life. Gunfire in the alley brought violence closer to home, prompting Christine to grab our boys, then ages 2 and 5, and pull them to the floor in the dining room. When a bullet went through a neighbor's front window two doors down, we rethought having our boys playing in the front room. And after shots were fired from the drug corner across from our bedroom, and police raided a neighbor's house for weapons and drugs, we became reasonably astute at making our case to various levels of law enforcement to apply pressure on particular individuals.

Our expectations regarding certain aspects of life rubbed some the wrong way. A university student renting next door kept a large dog in a small, fenced-in backyard, day and night, rain or shine. It barked constantly at night, lived in its own feces, and contributed to a rat infestation in our adjacent backyards. After a series of awkwardly polite conversations over several weeks, it became clear nothing was going to change unless we took steps on our end.

The owner of that rental, a sixty-year-old college professor, ignored our request to repair the sunken roof that created flood conditions that brought liquified rat and dog feces into our finished basement. He smiled and told me it was an “act of God.” Weeks later, his wife stopped by the property in her Mercedes for an unrelated reason, denied the problem existed, and accused me of racism. After sending the city a written complaint with supporting photos, they notified us we’d be fined \$2,500 if we didn’t fix hairline cracks in our rear retaining wall. We never heard back, however, on the flooding. Although it wasn’t possible to precisely determine where mismanagement ended and racial animosity began, we had our opinions. In the end, we needed to rely on our white city councilor to intervene on this issue, and a separate nightmare scenario involving an illegal business in the alley behind our house. Everything had a racial dimension.

Then there were the kids. I’d watch a dozen boys walk down the sidewalk eating Lay’s potato chips and drinking red punch. Moments later, I’d see a dozen chip bags and barrel-shaped plastic bottles on the sidewalk. In the alley behind our house, several boys were milling about an illegally parked Mazda minivan. One had the skill to get inside and start the engine. Another did the same with a car parked on the street. Soon they were off, with the others running beside the vehicles laughing and shouting. Another day on a nearby block, a mother and her pre-teen son caught my attention as she began to scream at him. Soon, she was slapping and punching, all the while continuing to berate him. In return, he stood there looking straight ahead.

In our final year, I had an encounter with four thirteen-year-old boys in a crumbling high school football stadium that culminated in me and my five-year-old son being pelted with chunks of concrete. As I scrambled to get my five-year-old through a slit in the chain-link fence, a piece narrowly missed his head. Another, tore into my thigh,

deep into the muscle. With my son safe with witnesses, and Christine and police on their way, adrenaline-fueled rage drove me to take off to find them, which I did.

Not long after, I entered the courtyard of a 1920s-era apartment building with two black police officers. On my right, I saw a middle-aged woman standing next to the teen who instigated the attack. If he was befuddled by my unexpected appearance in the courtyard, he didn't show it. He watched us approach and didn't move. A half a pace ahead of the police and imagining concrete smashing into my son's face, I grabbed the teen's shirt and felt a hand pull me away. As he's arrested, the woman starts yelling at the cops, "Why are you always coming in here and arresting our young people!?" She glanced down at my thigh, bleeding through a hastily applied bandage, and said nothing.

After being brought back to the scene of the attack, Christine and a witness said I should get to a hospital. A moment later, I was approached by an older officer who told me he knew the teen's father. "He comes from a good family. Both the mother and father work." Then he offered up the father's proposition. "He'll bring his boy down and give him an ass-whooping in front of you if you don't press charges." I looked at Christine to confirm what I'd just heard. Holding our son in her arms, she remained silent. The look in her eyes mirrored the thoughts in my head. He might as well have proposed to have him tied to a post and whipped. So much around us was broken beyond repair. Neither trickle-down economics nor another million-man march was going to fix it. I decided against the arrest as I had no desire to familiarize myself with the juvenile court system. I just wanted to be done with this last attempt to find home in America.

The attack and other experiences played out against the backdrop of a poorly understood, tortured racial past. This said, there were moments when I experienced optimism. Most occurred at Capitol City Charter School, where our firstborn attended pre-K and kindergarten. Capital City was started by a group of capable, disgruntled, upper-middle-class white parents whose kids had gone to a public elementary school located across the street from Sidwell Friends School, where high-profile families like the Obamas sent their children.

During the time our son attended Capitol City, the student body was split roughly even between Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics. Staff, white and black, embodied

excellence and innovation. The only thing more important than the academic curriculum was the social curriculum. Staff understood the challenges beyond the school's walls, and sought to promote goodwill and social intelligence within.

Wednesday mornings began with an "All School Meeting" that was open to parents but focused on kids. It was my favorite time to be in the school. All 150 or so students from pre-kindergarten through grade eight would assemble. Typically music based, the children would sing in these meetings. The eighth graders were in charge of managing the younger kids. What struck me was the kindness on display. In this setting, people accepted each other as part of a community. It was not an everyday sight in America to see thirteen-year-old black and Latino kids providing guidance to groups of five and six-year-olds that included many white kids. This was not some kumbaya moment. There was conscious thought and work behind everything I was witnessing, involving many committed people.²¹⁵

Whenever I'd walk our son home from school, I was mindful of what changed when you exited the building. One day, we passed a house playing Latin music that reminded him of an animated movie called *Happy Feet*, in which a penguin played by Robin Williams sings the Spanish version of "My Way." My son made mention of the movie as we approached a flyer taped to a street light featuring the photograph of a boy who'd been recently murdered. Without missing a beat, he calmly asked, "Why don't they put up a photograph of the man who killed him to help the police?" This was not the kind of question I wanted normalized in the mind of our child. Minutes later, we passed by the drug crew sitting on the corner near our house. They'd arrived early on account of good weather, and I knew it was going to be another long night.

We returned to Halifax in July 2007. A few months later, Christine received a phone call from the man who ran that drug crew. His name was Louis Beamon II, but on the street, he was known as Pluck. Christine and I referred to him as "the friendly guy" on account of the smile he gave me and the boys and the straight-up charm he displayed in Christine's presence. We had no illusions about him, as he was entrenched in a violent business, and had threatened our new gay Vietnamese neighbor. Yet he did have a likable side.²¹⁶

He called on a Sunday and started talking with Christine, just as if it was still any ordinary day on the block when she'd routinely see him in front of the house with the boys. "Hey, Christine, this is Pluck. How you doing?" It was an unexpected voice to hear, but she went with it, exchanging niceties briefly before he came to the point. "Hey listen, I got your number from Mrs. Brooks. She told me she got a letter from you, then tried to get a hold of you but you haven't called her back. Can you do that? Can you call her soon? She'd like to hear from you." Christine assured Pluck she'd call her back, chatted a bit about the boys, and with that her five-minute conversation with a mid-level, Washington D.C. drug dealer came to a close.

Bringing her amused disbelief into the kitchen, she said to me, "You'll never guess who just called." When she told me, I shook my head in approval, as she explained that he'd essentially phoned to remind her of her manners. There was something oddly affirming about being tactfully but bluntly told to be polite by a drug dealer.

Mrs. Brooks was born in South Carolina in 1929 and came to Washington after the war. She had two sons. One was a security guard who lived with her along with his own two children. We'd regularly see her son leave the house early each day in uniform. His children, a boy, and a girl were just about college age and carried themselves with an air of dignity. They seemed to have the kind of class devoid of arrogance that money couldn't buy. The admirable traits of her son and grandchildren told us something about Mrs. Brooks, and it was just one of many reasons we liked and admired her.

Pluck's relationship with her went back to childhood. His grandmother and Mrs. Brooks were friends. And he'd grown up with his grandmother a half block away on Girard, which intersected with 11th Street to form the drug corner. And here's where communal life embodied contradiction. Pluck cared about Mrs. Brooks, yet his drug trafficking brought violence to her block. Recall the bullet had gone through a neighbor's window. That neighbor was Mrs. Brooks. I don't know if that shooting was tied to Pluck's corner, but another shooting was. I saw the immediate aftermath from our windows as people scattered off the corner with no apparent injuries.

Mrs. Brooks's other son was a homicide detective, yet she felt somewhat trapped by the dysfunction and violence. Speaking candidly with us one day, she said, "I'm glad you white people are moving in. Y'all aren't afraid to call the police." In response, we

could only silently speculate about her fears and the dynamics preventing her son from pulling strings within the police department to clean up his childhood block. It's possible he tried and failed. There were things we simply didn't know, and although we had a rapport with Mrs. Brooks, there were lines we felt we could not cross regarding these kinds of questions.

This is not to say Mrs. Brooks didn't speak her mind. Earlier in life, she'd worked for a handful of wealthy families in Georgetown and didn't much like what she saw. Turning to Christine she said, "I used to nanny for those white ladies up in Georgetown and those people didn't have time for their children, but you—I see you with your kids all the time. I call you Super Momma!" Mrs. Brooks saw something of herself in Christine. She knew what it was like to hold a paying job, and still pour everything you had into your children.²¹⁷ Over the years, I'd hear Mrs. Brooks refer again to Christine as "super momma," always accompanied by a smile.

Nine months after Pluck spoke with Christine, Mrs. Brooks called to tell us Pluck had been murdered. It happened on our block in the middle of 11th Street and was a killing intended to make a statement—three bullets to the back of the head, and six more into the back. When I later visited Mrs. Brooks during a business trip to Washington, she said, "It's not right. The police just let him lie out there in the street half the night. Patrick, it was disrespectful how long they left him out there. It wasn't right..."

At the time of my visit, it had been two years since we returned to Halifax. Christine was in the routine of walking our boys to the local public French immersion school, pushing their new baby sister in a stroller. Traveling the three blocks from our house to the school, they'd enter a schoolyard filled with hundreds of kids and dozens of parents milling about, socializing after "drop off." Violence was the last thing on anybody's mind. Sitting in Mrs. Brooks's parlor—the same room that had received gunfire when we lived there—I was aware of the chasm between the urban life we inhabited in Halifax, and what we left behind in Columbia Heights.

34. The Personal Responsibility Myth vs. Trauma's Reality

I was seventeen when two well-meaning adults I'd never met attempted to prevent me from entering a chilled room to see my mother. Legally, however, they couldn't stop me. A stranger opened a small square door, pulled out her body, then left. With the destruction of her liver, she'd accomplished what suicide attempts had not.

Her father planted seeds of destruction early in life. She rarely saw him as an adult. As a child, I visited his house in Philadelphia with my mother at age eight. I instinctually disliked him. The son of German immigrants, he was a pipefitter who worked in the factories, smoked Camel cigarettes, and drank Schmidt beer. His son, who died of cirrhosis at age 38, had served time for rape. His sister, who I saw once at his funeral, was obese long before obesity became an epidemic. An analysis of 57,000 women found that girls who are sexually abused as children were twice as likely to be addicted to food.²¹⁸ A separate, nationwide study conducted over four decades, revealed that sexual violence runs in families.²¹⁹ I believe that my mother's father was not the first in his family to do what he did.

My mother's mom died of cancer at the age of 55 a few weeks after I was born. She'd grown up in a small Philadelphia neighborhood called the Devil's Pocket. Her father, a police lieutenant, abandoned the family when she was five. In her mid-twenties, she worked as a nurse and lived in a rooming house before marrying in 1933. My mother was born a year later, primed to absorb what previous generations collectively had to offer. And in the end, I learned from her that life falls apart when the trauma of the past remains poorly understood and unresolved.

She died ten days after Reagan was sworn into office in January 1981. In the months leading up to his inauguration, I listened to messages from the campaign trail regarding personal responsibility that would become standard talking points throughout my adult life and underpin the neoliberal agenda. To embody personal responsibility is to embrace societal standards regarding individual behavior, and to make determined efforts to live by such standards. When we fail to meet expected standards, we cannot blame economic circumstances, society at large, or even our own family.²²⁰

My mother's downfall, then, was not her trauma, but rather a lack of personal responsibility. If a father does unspeakable things to the child, personal responsibility sets the child free. By the same measure, the array of pathologies we confronted on 11th Street had nothing to do with a traumatic history. Like my mother, the people we lived around lacked personal responsibility.²²¹

In this vein, the solution for my black neighbors was to assume greater responsibility for their education, work, and sexual choices. They needed to study hard, learn as much as they could, and prepare themselves for college. This, in turn, should have set them up for rewarding, well-paying work. Personal responsibility as it applies to sex implies my neighbors should have abstained until after high school if not longer. And pregnancy should occur within a loving marriage, where two individuals who have sufficiently educated themselves can adequately provide for children. Neighbors who might have fallen short of these standards had only themselves to blame.

This Personal Responsibility myth is an extension of the Lost Cause myth, packaged for the modern age in which none of us are racist. Both myths are insidious explanations used to frame black life in America for whites. Whereas the Lost Cause myth is a misrepresentation of the historical record through the late 19th century, the Personal Responsibility myth does two things in combination. First, the myth omits cultural continuity as expressed through the variants of racial hatred that came after Reconstruction such as Islamic-state style lynchings, the widespread sale of macabre postcards, neo-slavery through 1941, racist federal policies shaping cities, and an economic transformation in which middle-class jobs went to the suburbs. The list of indignities that reminded a black American they're despised is a long one, and the Personal Responsibility myth implies none of this ever happened.

Second, the myth denies the impact of this history on the human mind. The myth ignores everything known about the relationship between trauma, mental health, and brain function as informed by the fields of neuroscience, psychiatry, and psychology. The myth demands that we believe our brains are coated in Teflon. What happens around us doesn't stick. We are masters of our own destiny, and those who acquire the riches in America simply have more character than the rest of us.

The Personal Responsibility myth is pervasive in America, even though it was proven completely and utterly false in the late 1990s by the most important public health study that you may have never heard of.²²²

The Adverse Childhood Event (ACE) Study looked at 17,000 medical patients and found a direct relationship between childhood adversity and behavioral pathologies and illness as an adult.²²³ The study, led by epidemiologists and physicians from the CDC and Kaiser-Permanente, was built around ten *Yes* or *No* questions relevant to the patient's first 18 years of life. As a child, did a parent or some other adult in the house frequently verbally abuse or humiliate you? Were you sexually abused? Were you beaten, punched, or slapped? Did you feel unloved, unimportant, or unsupported? Physically neglected? (e.g., dirty clothes, not fed properly, etc.) Did your parents separate or divorce? Did you see your mother beaten? Did you live with an alcoholic or someone on street drugs? Was anyone in your home mentally ill, or did anyone attempt suicide? Was anyone in your household imprisoned?²²⁴ Calculating a patient's ACE score was a matter of totaling up the number of questions to which you answered "yes."

With ACE scores compiled, researchers examined corresponding medical records, and what they learned shocked them. Patients with a score of 4 or more had a 390 percent greater chance of having chronic obstructive pulmonary disease relative to someone with a score of zero. Similarly, they were 12 times more likely to have attempted suicide, 10 times more likely to have injected street drugs, 7 times more likely to be an alcoholic, and twice as likely to smoke. The higher the ACE score, the more frequently patients experienced depression, workplace absences, sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis, broken bones, auto-immune disorders, use of prescription drugs, broken marriages, and incidences of violence.²²⁵ The degree to which early childhood experiences affected

health outcomes later in life exceeded anything the researchers anticipated. The study focused on a population in San Diego that was largely white, middle, and upper-middle class. Later studies confirmed that the relationship between childhood trauma and adult pathologies is universal.

The largest and most comprehensive study, completed in 2018, revealed that black Americans have significantly higher ACE scores than whites.²²⁶ Twelve percent of whites have experienced two or more ACEs. For blacks, that figure is thirty-three percent.²²⁷ Narrow the scope to black Americans living in cities and the results are even worse. In Philadelphia for example, researchers looked at patients served by the 11th Street Family Health Services Center and found that 49 percent had ACE scores of 4 or more.²²⁸

I've said, the Great Migration turned American cities into receptacles of trauma. This is neither hyperbole nor exaggeration. The three centuries of historical trauma that migrants brought with them from the South are but early chapters in an ongoing story. And the accumulation of historical trauma didn't end when the federal government and their private-sector friends began funneling black Americans into sections of cities deemed "Hazardous" on Residential Security Maps. Those who the government labeled as "undesirables" were confronted with adversity in the form of racism, joblessness, substandard education, poverty, pollution, discrimination, stigma, ill-conceived urban renewal, and more. In other words, the ten ACEs used in the original study are not the only adverse childhood experiences impacting black children. They just happened to be questions of most relevance to white, middle-class Americans.

With the American city in mind, ACEs produce chronic, toxic stress that degrades public health, community stability, and ultimately, quality of life. American cities are not populated by a functional middle-class society whose well-being, on balance, makes it possible to live comfortably and safely in the human-scale environment. Stripped to its bare essence, it's about the dysfunction that stems from the damage done to the human brain.

Since the original ACE study was completed in 1998, advances in brain imaging technology have enabled neuroscientists and psychiatric researchers to obtain an increasingly clear understanding of what happens to the developing brain subjected to

chronic trauma or neglect. Problems in the past that were described in behavioral, or emotional terms, are the result of altered brain structure and function. Toxic stress produced by adverse childhood events reduces the volume of the hippocampus, which is the part of our brain that consolidates short-term memory into long-term memory.²²⁹ Toxic stress reduces the volume of the prefrontal cortex, which plays a key role in cognition and self-control.²³⁰ And toxic stress produces an overactive amygdala, the part of our brain that tells us when we're in danger.²³¹ In each of these cases, damage at the cellular level occurs when the body's autonomic nervous system responds to chronic stress by releasing a hormone called cortisol.

The science is extensive, and rapidly evolving. Only recently, for example, did researchers learn that a neural cell called microglia, which accounts for fifteen percent of our brain, serves as its immune system and plays an important role in brain development.²³² Future research seeks to understand how childhood trauma causes these normally beneficial cells to produce brain abnormalities.²³³ This, and many other questions regarding trauma's impact on the developing brain, will certainly be answered in the years ahead.

ACEs are about what happens to the child. What about earlier generations? Is there a biological component of trauma passed from one generation to the next?

In 2013, researchers exposed male mice to the scent of cherry blossoms at regular intervals for three days.²³⁴ When the scent was released into their cage, they'd receive a mild shock to the foot for ten seconds. Two weeks later, researchers extracted their sperm and impregnated females using *in vitro* fertilization. Neither the mothers nor their pups had any contact with the fathers, yet exposing the next generation to the scent of cherry blossoms produced a "startle response," similar to our reaction in a dark room if someone unexpectedly were to clap loudly nearby.²³⁵

This study is one of a growing number to demonstrate something called epigenetic inheritance. Epigenetics is central to life. We start off as a single cell with genes contributed by our parents. This cell divides, then divides again. Each new cell contains a complete copy of our genes. Epigenetics is the process that turns on or off these genes within a new cell so that it functions as a nerve cell, a muscle cell, or

something else. The prefix “epi” is Greek for “on top of.” Conceptually, epigenetics involve placing biochemical tags on top of a gene to control its expression.²³⁶ Life experiences, environment, and diet do not affect your genes, but they do affect your epigenome, which is to say, the sum total of these chemical tags. Heavy smokers, for example, are more likely to experience cancer because smoking turns off specific tumor-suppressing genes. And as the cherry blossom experiment illustrates, epigenetic inheritance is how traumatic experiences as adults are likely passed from one generation to the next.²³⁷

Studies looking at the children of Dutch famine victims, holocaust survivors, and Union prisoners of Andersonville, reveal that like mice in a lab, trauma’s impact is indeed passed from one generation to the next in humans. Researchers, however, are aware of the challenges in conducting methodologically sound intergenerational studies that make it possible to attribute the effects of trauma on people as precisely as has been done using controlled experiments with animals.²³⁸ I think it’s reasonable to assume that, in time, science will clarify how historical trauma permeates our biology today. It’s a piece of a broader dynamic shaping disadvantaged communities and undermining quality of life.

Experiences on 11th Street followed us back to Canada. Little things could elicit stress. It might be the noon cannon fired at the Halifax Citadel, a drunk college student at 2 AM, or the sound of heavy rain on the roof. Years passed before we weren’t reminded of nearby gunfire, a disruptive drug crew, floodwater produced by a delinquent property, or any number of uncomfortably routine events.

With our move to 11th Street, we stepped into a world shaped by a trauma-saturated history neither of us understood. Three and a half years later we departed. That was the difference between us and them. We could remove ourselves from what the American creed, racial hatred, and human frailty produced.²³⁹ Others could not.

America is littered with throw-away communities shaped by dynamics that degrade mental health.²⁴⁰ In a recent listing of the top 100 most dangerous cities in America, Washington DC ranked only 74th, implying there was nothing unusual about

what Christine and I lived through. Our tenure was relatively brief. For others, the duration lasts a lifetime.

In addition to historical trauma, our black neighbors and millions like them were (and are) dealing with chronic conditions of stress produced by urban poverty, and the adverse childhood experiences of the sort that shaped my mother's life. Few have the financial resources to get professional help of the sort taken for granted in affluent communities. And the traumatic experiences pile up, shaping the chaotic, disorganized lives of people who struggle with self-worth, and regulating emotions. Educational attainment suffers. And family life descends into a cycle of chaos and violence, as pathologies get passed from one generation to the next.

35.Prelude to Polarization

A political platform lays out a party's governing principles, and every four years, Democrats and Republicans publish one to tell voters what their party stands for. In 1848, Lewis Cass's Democratic Platform stated that the federal government had no right to "interfere" with the institution of slavery, and any attempt to do so would "diminish the happiness of people, and endanger the stability and permanence of the Union." In the years immediately after our civil war, the Democratic platform emphasized loyalty to the nation but remained silent on the issue of civil rights.²⁴¹ That silence persisted until 1948 when the Democratic Party—the party that emerged as the sole champion of slavery in 1854—adopted a platform that advocated for civil rights.

It's not as if the Democratic Party changed overnight. The shift from a racist, conservative, laissez-faire orientation to a more liberally-minded party was already underway by the 1890s, as evidenced by support for financial policies providing relief to debt-burdened farmers struggling in a nation where power had shifted to the industrialists.^{lxvi} Franklin Roosevelt's activist government was, in a sense, an extension of earlier movements that advocated for shorter workweeks and directly elected senators, even as most Democrats retained deeply ingrained racist beliefs.

World War II's massive mobilization set in motion societal changes that laid the groundwork for the modern civil rights movement. When the Justice Department moved to prosecute all outstanding forms of slavery in 1941, the Roosevelt Administration was not only seeking to avoid being embarrassed by German and Japanese propagandists.

^{lxvi} Industrialists and Republican politicians became well acquainted during the Civil War as federal spending and wartime technological innovation figuratively exploded.

They also needed the support of black Americans to work in wartime industries and serve in uniform. That support materialized, but it inflamed white racial animosity in the cities blacks moved to for jobs, and in the military in which they served. The experience of black soldiers in wartime England and postwar Germany reveals why the flame of resistance to white supremacy grew when it did.

About 130,000 blacks spent time in England during the war. Evidence from England in the form of public surveys, editorials, letters written to newspapers, and government reports, reveals an English public taken aback by what amounted to be a transference of the Jim Crow South to English soil. Discrimination and violence, routinely meted out by white soldiers, generated sympathy, and support amongst the English for black troops.²⁴² Once beyond the reach of their white countrymen, black soldiers experienced a form of equality they'd not experienced in America. And the experiences of black soldiers in post-war Germany only amplified calls for change. White Americans condemned Nazi racism, yet black soldiers found a form of equality and democracy amidst the rubble that was denied them at home.²⁴³

President Truman desegregated the military the same month Democrats published their civil-rights-infused party platform in July 1948. The catalyst for desegregation occurred two years earlier, when police in Batesburg, South Carolina took Army sergeant Isaac Woodward off a bus, and viciously beat him, blinding him in both eyes. Still in uniform, Woodward had just been honorably discharged after having served in the battle for New Guinea in the Pacific. During a previously scheduled stop, he had a verbal, non-violent, disagreement with the driver over whether he could get off to use a bathroom. In Batesburg, the driver summoned the police and accused Woodward of drunk and disorderly conduct. Soldiers on the bus, black and white, later contradicted this claim under sworn testimony.²⁴⁴

South Carolina authorities refused to prosecute the police for their brutality. In response, Truman stepped in at the behest of the NAACP, and the case went to federal court. After an all-white jury acquitted police chief Linwood Shull— who had repeatedly pounded his nightstick into Woodward's eye sockets— an outraged Truman responded by desegregating the military. The presiding judge, Julius Waring was similarly motivated and went on to provide key legal arguments for school desegregation in the

1954 Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*.²⁴⁵ Violence directed towards returning black veterans was common after the war, but Isaac Woodward's maiming captured the attention of people in a way that other incidents had not. And an impactful civil rights movement was born.

By 1956, both the Democratic and Republican parties had an entire section in their party platforms dedicated to civil rights. Republicans went so far as to detail recent gains such as eliminating segregation in the District of Columbia and laying out plans for further progress. In 1960, Republicans augmented their civil rights section further to include more granular information regarding voting rights, desegregation, and equal opportunity employment. And it's at this point, in 1960, that the American political establishment reached its high-water mark regarding a collective, bipartisan effort to recognize and address a tragic past. Never again would both party platforms reflect an equal commitment to civil rights. Meaningful advances in civil rights were in our future, but they'd be made despite the strengthening headwinds of polarization that would, in time, produce a president dedicated to making America great again.

The single most important, divisive principle laid out in Lewis Cass's Democratic platform in 1848 was the aforementioned statement regarding Congress having no right to interfere with the domestic institution of slavery. Identical language regarding governmental interference was carried forward in the 1852 and 1856 platforms. This is the only principle in the platform that, if violated, would result in breaking up the Union.

In the history of American political party platforms, when the words "interfere" or "interference" are used concerning governmental interference they take on a specific meaning, namely federal interference with white supremacy in the South. We see this language in party platforms in the 1840s and 1850s, and we see it again after World War II.

Desegregating the military and adding civil rights to the Democratic platform in 1948 posed the first serious threat to white supremacy since Reconstruction. In response, large numbers of southern Democrats split with their party in 1948 and formed the States Rights Party. The party nominee was North Carolina Senator (and longtime Democrat) Strom Thurmond. Their new platform spoke forcefully of opposing "governmental

interference” in relation to eliminating segregation and repealing miscegenation statutes.²⁴⁶ In that November’s presidential election, the States Right Party, won four southern states in the Deep South, the first Democratic losses in those states since Kansas-Nebraska’s passage in 1854.

Regardless of fissures in the Democratic party, the process of national polarization had not yet solidified. Conservative Southerners didn’t have a better option than the Democratic party in the 1950s. When the Union Army invaded the South ninety years earlier, they did so under the direction of a Republican president. After that war, liberal elements of the Republican party attempted to impose their values on the South in the form of civil rights for newly freed blacks. None of this was forgotten. And eighty-five years later in the 1950s, a Republican politician’s career in the South often lasted as long as a block of ice in the Mississippi sun. During the 1950s, Republican candidates did begin to receive more votes, but there were limits to these gains, as the Republican Party had also embraced liberal origins as they pertained to civil rights.²⁴⁷ The States Rights Party’s objective was never to compete with the two major parties, but rather siphon off enough electoral college votes to force one of them to jettison civil rights from their platform.

Suffice it to say, people who long considered themselves conservative Democrats were open to relocating to a new political home in the years preceding 1964. But they weren’t finding one. The 1954 Supreme Court ruling declaring school segregation unconstitutional had been decided unanimously by a court whose Chief Justice was Republican, and other members Democrats. Eisenhower, a Republican, sent federal troops into the South to enforce school desegregation. Kennedy, a Democrat, did the same. From the white Southerner’s perspective in the 1950s, federal interference was a bipartisan injustice.

Southerners weren’t delusional regarding their way of life being under siege by the federal government. It was. And in June 1957, ABC television aired a one-hour documentary titled “Segregation in the South” capturing the animosities and hopes in the years in which America was in its last throes of operating as a full-out, white supremacist state. Looking at the film online today, what’s striking is how open Americans were with cameras rolling regarding their hatreds.

In a scene from a Klan rally protesting school integration, crowds of men, women, and children stand behind men dressed in white hooded robes. Smiling, fresh-faced teenage girls appear in the camera's field of view. A minister of the gospel addresses the crowd, asking them to imagine a scenario in their yet-to-be-segregated schools in which black football players mix with white girls at a school dance. "They go in there and they get to rubbing around... (laughter and a catcall in the crowd) ... smelling that vanilla flavor" ... (more intense laughter). The minister continues, "Could you conceive the idea of your fair-skinned daughter... her dancing partner be tapped on the shoulder... by some bar-headed liver-lipped, goat-smelling, ape-faced nigger? (crowd erupts in whoops and clapping). Now the minister is yelling at the crowd, "Can you conceive of such a thing? (Crowd responds with an angry, boisterous "No!"). Are you going to do something about it? (Crowd shouts "Yes!," and claps follow).²⁴⁸

None of this took place in a vacuum. These were the children and grandchildren of the white faces staring back at me in America's lynching postcards. The people in those crowds, in turn, operated in a society shaped by, among other things, the forced migration of almost a million black Americans to the cotton belt. And for a second time in American history, unadulterated white supremacy was about to come under a sustained attack from the federal government. And for the second time, political polarization would take root in America, because cultural continuity is a powerful thing indeed.

36. Two Intertwined Narratives Fueling Polarization

On November 30, 1984, my friend Debbie Wilson and I worked on a project in a Drexel University computer lab late into the evening. Returning to the same building the next day, I passed yellow police tape blocking off a stairwell leading down to a basement entrance. Once in our classroom, I sat and waited for Debbie to arrive. After the lecture started, I periodically glanced at the door expecting to see her sunny persona enter and brighten up the room. Fifteen minutes into class, I began thinking about the police tape, and after class ended, I learned Debbie had been strangled to death.

I went down to Philadelphia police headquarters to give a statement. We'd been in the lab together most of the night, and I'd finished my work shortly after 10:00 PM. Debbie had more to do and would leave later in the evening. We spoke to the security guard about escorting her to the car. She'd drive across the bridge to her home in New Jersey, and we'd see each other the following afternoon.

Her murder went unsolved for nine years until gifted cold-case investigators using Army records and other clues determined that the killer was the security guard who came on duty at midnight. His name is David Dickson, a black man who'd been dishonorably discharged from the Army five years earlier in part, for stealing a private's sneakers. Dickson had beaten and strangled Debbie in the computer lab, driven by some perverse desire to possess the white sneakers she wore. After he killed her, he dragged her barefoot body outside into the stairwell I stepped past each weekday, then brutally beat her fully clothed body, leaving behind a brick, a piece of lumber, and a strip of metal, all smeared with her blood. Dickson proclaimed his innocence throughout his trial, but in jail, he made the mistake of bragging to another inmate that he'd killed the "rich bitch." That

inmate's testimony made a difference regarding a conviction. In reality, Debbie was a hard-working, diligent young woman from a middle-class background, and one of the kindest people I've ever known.

American culture is saturated in greed, violence hatred, and fear. What was slavery if not a national expression of greed backed by violence? What was segregation if not hatred and fear, sustained by violence? Clearly, American culture is more than these impulses, but they are pervasive, and directly impact quality of life. Recall that political polarization was triggered when sufficient numbers of white politicians pushed back on white supremacy in 1854, and again in 1964. In the present day, Fox News sustains hatreds and fears among Americans culturally aligned with white supremacy. Although Debbie's murder at the hands of a black man predates Fox News's first broadcast by a decade, it's precisely the kind of story they routinely consider national news and a key driver of political polarization.

During any given month, Fox News runs multiple stories featuring black-on-white crime. The comment section of corresponding online articles serves as a gathering place for whites harboring racial animosity. Last week, for example, Fox News published an article describing how 18-year-old Darriynn Brown abducted and murdered a four-year-old white boy named Cash Gernon. The 3,200 associated comments make points frequently found in comments on similar articles, expressing strong opinions regarding black criminality, genetic inferiority, and the need for cost-effective executions.

Reminiscing about 20th-century America, one Fox reader, opined, "Bring back public hangings. Pack lunch. Bring the kids. Have a picnic at the square." A Fox reader named *Jjaws* suggested tying Brown to a bumper, referring to James Byrd who, in 1998, was chained by his ankles to a bumper, and dragged three miles on a bucolic road to an agonizing, disfiguring death. Another user stressed the need to teach children how to defend themselves and said his children know how to "brutally incapacitate" attackers, breaking arms, fingers, cheekbones, and knees. Others, like *Patriotwithcommonsense*, spoke of the need to "bring back family values, nuclear family, honor of marriage between a man & woman, [sic] strict parental discipline of children with love."

A Fox News reader named *TheBigV* summarized the simmering contempt millions of whites in America have for many blacks when he wrote,

“Maybe now would be a good time to give thanks for the great contributions of the Black community to our society. Their peaceful and generous nature makes them ideal neighbors, lending testimony to their exceptional family values and parenting skills unrivaled by any other culture. Their commitment to academic excellence enriches our schools and serves as an example to all who hope to achieve prominence as a people. Real estate values are fueled by the mix of African-Americans into an area due to their caring and respectful nature of these communities, an example of all they have achieved through their enthusiasm for self-improvement by hard work and a self-reliant can-do nature. We must not forget their abhorrence for crime and their dedication to observing the law. Without their industrious and creative drive, we would be poorer as a nation.”

The number of “likes” given to the many other comments associated with this article—many overly racist—generally ranged between 20 and 50. This previous comment, however, received nearly 800. Widespread support comes from people who are frightened and disgusted by the behavior brought to them by Fox News and culturally aligned media outlets. If Debbie’s murder were to have happened today, responses would be much the same.

Behind these comments are two persistent, intertwined narratives that do much to fuel polarization. The first is that blacks are disproportionately violent, and they’re killing whites in large numbers. The second says the political left has peddled socialist policies that are responsible for the breakdown of black families, and the social disintegration of their communities.

These narratives are powerful because they contain elements of truth that tap into deeply held racial resentments and antagonism. Christine and I knew that when the weather got hot on 11th Street, we’d hear the distinct pop-pop sound of gunfire more frequently. Gunfire in the alley on one hot July night prompted Christine to grab our boys, then ages two and four, and throw them to the floor of the dining room. Pick just

about any other city, and you can find the same thing. When a headline announces that 104 people got shot in Chicago in a single weekend, everyone understands who's doing the shooting. It's indisputable that violence is a part of street life for millions of blacks living in cities that I might otherwise consider living in.

And for most black children, a stable, two-parent, nuclear family is a non-starter. The vast majority of black children are born out of wedlock. Back in 1965, 75% of black children were born into two-parent families. Today, that figure stands at 33%.

So yes, there are elements of truth to these narratives. But these narratives are also incomplete and contain falsehoods that undermine what's so desperately needed in the United States, namely a better conversation. Misleading, monocausal reasoning fuels polarization and undermines any progress against the problems that plague the country. In the six years it's taken me to write this book, those problems have only grown more prominent as cities become more violent, raging wildfires more frequent, outright denial of science more acceptable, drought more intense, resentments more entrenched, and suburbia more prevalent than ever. Monocausal reasoning prevents us from understanding the interplay between the perpetual creation of auto-dependent development, the hatreds and fears of white people like me, and the damage done to the maligned.

As global warming accelerates, the state of Texas is planning to spend \$25 billion to widen highways in an attempt to reduce severe, chronic highway congestion. Research has long shown that in most scenarios, building more lanes will induce traffic demand and make a bad situation worse, but power rests with the highway construction lobby and their conservative advocacy groups.²⁴⁹

Once such group, Texans for Toll-Free Highways, sent a man oddly named Jack Finger to the Texas House of Representatives to testify against a bill that would allow highway funds to be used for bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transportation. Speaking to lawmakers, Finger admonished, "Do not take my gas tax dollars for the bus, nor for bike paths, nor for sidewalks... To me it smacks at a socialistic attempt to get me out of my vehicle." Despite, widespread support from the dozens of others who testified, the bill went nowhere.²⁵⁰

And it's with Jack Finger's reference to socialism that we see the kind of utterances made every day in America, buoyed by the narrative that claims that "socialist" policies enacted during the civil rights era of the 1960s produced fatherless black children, black poverty, crime, and crumbling cities. It's precisely the claim made repeatedly in comments at Fox News. Over and again, we peer into the depths of polarization that undermines our ability to problem-solve, and meaningfully improve quality of life. In ten years, Texas will have its widened highways, with all they entail.

The Jack Fingers of the world speak of the evils of socialism and the sanctity of family in the same breath. It's no longer fashionable to attend rallies led by conservative ministers describing threats to fair-skinned daughters by "goat-smelling, ape-faced negroes." Today, it's about the family. I'm often reminded by conservatives of the black family's demise. The implication is that there was some "golden age of the negro family" that was destroyed by liberals in the 1960s. This narrative is as credible as claiming global warming is a hoax, vaccines don't end pandemics, and election fraud is widespread in America. There was no golden age. It did not exist. Ever.

37.Polarization's Unexpected Dimensions

In October 2006, a black man walks down a sidewalk with two little white boys age three and five. He stops in front of a corner store that sits at the base of a three-story brick townhouse. A dirty, yellow canvas awning over the entrance reads "Sonya's Market." Cigarette butts are scattered about his feet, and a dried-out bouquet of flowers hangs from a parking sign twenty yards down on the cross street, marking a recent double homicide. For the man, who grew up in Chicago, the surroundings feel familiar.

Walking into the dingy, cramped store, the three-year-old, who has straight blonde hair, runs ahead, to find the candy. The clerk standing behind bulletproof plexiglass wears an impassive expression. Money is exchanged by dropping it into a little gully that sits beneath the plexiglass. The man and the boys step back into the daylight, returning in the direction from which they came, passing circa-1910 townhouses with small front yards filled with weeds, or a few bushes. Mid-block, the trio passes a middle-aged man sitting on a front stoop holding a beer. It's not yet noon, but his eyes are glassy. He nods knowingly to the boys.

Five houses down, the trio walk up brick steps, past a small front yard filled with flowers. The iron gate and front door are unlocked. They walk in, past a grand wooden staircase, and head to the kitchen in the back where the boy's parents are making brunch to the sounds of Solas, a traditional Irish group.

A week before our sons leave for Montreal and Kingston, they get on a zoom call with me to talk with Nkosi, a longtime friend. He and I speak periodically by phone, but it's been three years since we last stayed with him when he was living outside of Boston. A

lot of growing happens in your late teenage years, and as we smile big smiles from laptops, Nkosi calls out, “Look at you two! Damn! Hollywood boys now huh?”

Our sons have always felt a connection to Nkosi. He’s interested in them as people and engages them in conversation. Our virtual gathering is about the boys entering a new phase of life, living on their own.²⁵¹ It’s been fifteen years since their candy run, but all have a memory of it. It felt normal to the boys. For Nkosi, stepping back into his past with two little white boys in tow was surreal.

On one level, Nkosi understands me better than anyone outside my immediate family. Before we met, he’d never known a white man living with his family in a violent, predominantly black section of town. I’d never known a former Chicago gang member whose father died in a maximum-security prison—a black man who lived in a white, gated community and worked as a database architect.

When we first met, I told him straight up that I disliked living around blacks. He cocked his head thinking, “This guy doesn’t seem like a racist. Let me see what he has to say.” Quickly, he instinctively understood the nature of my simmering anger, and the seeds of a friendship were planted.

When the boys would step into the different condos Nkosi’s lived in over the years, they’d see walls filled with books and art—a lot like their own home. I had my troubled upbringing, and Nkosi had his.²⁵² My parents were on food stamps for a time. He grew up on welfare. I felt shame over blood-stained carpeting, and the police called to the house in the middle of the night. His father, locked up for murdering two police officers, taught him how to play chess in prison. Books and a connection with art helped each of us make sense of the intersecting worlds we were born into, and create space that supported our intent to live differently.

Months can go by without our talking, then boom, we’re together. On this day we talk with the boys for 45 minutes. Nkosi speaks with the older one about his program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, and they talk briefly about Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. He’s tickled by the younger one’s choice to study mechanical engineering in French, and they talk about options for working in Montreal. After the boys say goodbye it's just us. We talk for another five hours.

Evidence of polarization can crop up in unexpected places. Previously, Nkosi lived in a newly constructed multi-unit building in Washington DC— an expensive place, but per policy, ten percent of the units were reserved for affordable housing.²⁵³ He lived next to one of them, and at different times of day and night, the sounds of shouting, loud music, obnoxious banter, and slamming doors pierced his shared wall. Working, sleeping, and enjoying his own space frequently became impossible, so he moved out. “Patrick,” he says, “I didn’t work this hard to live next to a welfare-sucking baby momma who lets Pookie and Ray Ray in through the front door of my building to join the party.” He continues, “I sometimes find myself agreeing with the garbage that spews from Tucker Carlson’s mouth. Does that make me a racist? Why are my tax dollars paying for this crap?”

I start to respond, but he cuts me off, reminding me of an experience I told him of years ago. I was sitting inside a Washington metro train near two heavysset black girls about thirteen years old who were loud and disruptive.²⁵⁴ Seconds later, they were standing in the aisle, rubbing crotches together as part of a dance, hollering and laughing. Nkosi reminds me that I was disgusted at the time. “Patrick, you’re in Canada now, but if you get too much of that in your face, Carlson’s spew just might stick.” Taken aback, I ask, “You listen to Tucker Carlson?” Nkosi paused, and grinned, “Yes, on occasion he’s been known to bend my ear.”

Polarization has a dimension I had not appreciated, and it had a black face. Nkosi resents “shelling out tax dollars” that, ultimately, brought the dysfunction to his doorstep. Welfare, he implies, is part of the problem, encouraging out-of-wedlock births, and dragging down the family. More recently, he’s been living in a place called Owings Mills, twenty minutes outside Baltimore. He moved there to reconnect with black middle-class life, and figures ten percent of the population is from what he calls the “dregs.” They remind Nkosi of the people he grew up around. Their presence, coupled with the litter scattered about an otherwise clean, newly built environment, irritates him, and he’d like to send them back to Baltimore. We look at each other on our laptop screens for a moment in silence. Sunlight streams in through tall windows behind him, illuminating a beautiful apartment with high ceilings. The sun’s angle makes it difficult for me to make out his dark facial features. He moves his head ever so slightly, and I catch a clear

glimpse of his eyes, staring back at me with understanding. “So, Patrick, am I racist? I know how you think, my brother from another mother. What about you? Are you a racist?”

When Christine and I moved away from 11th Street, my thinking paralleled Nkosi’s, and in some respects, remains unchanged. If the “Pookies and Ray Rays” of the world began moving into my neighborhood, I’d leave. I well remember the disdain I felt after 9-year-old Dante got shot in the back of the head a block up and over from our house. Nobody marched in outrage, and nothing changed. Then there was that professor’s wife who played the race card after I sent her a letter documenting flood damage to our home caused by her rental property during heavy rains. There she was, this well-dressed, black, middle-aged woman standing next to her late model Mercedes, refusing to even acknowledge the photographs, and information assembled. I subsequently learned the roof had partially collapsed, but that didn’t matter to her until paying tenants were forced to vacate. I found her mindset as disturbing as any run-of-the-mill white racist. It wasn’t just the behavior of poor blacks I took issue with. Racial animosity was multidimensional.

At times, I’ve held thoughts that would elicit a knowing smirk from Tucker Carlson. Like Nkosi, I’ve considered welfare as a root problem, and after living on 11th Street, the last thing I wanted to do was give “those people” a handout. They needed to get over it—whatever “it” was. I’ve exercised monocausal reasoning, and have absorbed, to varying degrees, dominant narratives regarding blacks that permeate American life—narratives, it’s worth repeating, tap into deeply held racial resentments and antagonism. They contain half-truths which makes them powerful. They’re divorced from our past, fueling the simmering contempt we have for one another, pitting white against black, and white against white. And while there are a few who benefit from this, most of us do not.

38. The Imagined Golden Age of the Negro Family

Nkosi's great-great grandparents were enslaved in Mississippi. Mindful that, as Secretary of War, Lewis Cass expanded slavery in that state in the 1830s, our family histories cross paths.²⁵⁵ Nkosi tells me, "My mother's parents came up from Mississippi to Chicago in the 1940s. My grandpa was a good man, Patrick. Solid. He worked hard as a machinist. Never knew about my being in the Vice Lords, but it would have deadened his soul if he did."^{lxvii}

Memories of his father are scarce. He might have been around the apartment when Nkosi was a toddler in the late 1960s, but he's not sure. As a teenager, Nkosi knew nothing about his father until an uncle told him he was imprisoned in Pontiac Correctional Center. He says, "I was fifteen when I first passed through that gate to get myself searched up and down by guards." Behind bars, his father had standing. During one visit, Nkosi watched as a guard approached to tell his father there was another visitor, a woman, who came to the prison for a particular purpose. Looking back in her direction, his father calmly said, "I'm with my son here. I'll see her later." And the chess game continued.

I ask Nkosi, "So precisely when was this golden age of the American Negro family that the liberal welfare state destroyed? Which one of Lyndon Johnson's policies sent your father over to the other side?" The smile on my face triggers his laughter. Nkosi gets the point. He knows that for over a century, America's most respected authorities on black life have described conditions within the black community that mirror those today. Works by W.E.B. Dubois (*A Philadelphia Negro, 1899*) John Dollard (*Caste and Class*

^{lxvii} The Vice Lords is one of the two largest gangs in Chicago and was established in 1957.

in a Southern Town, 1937), Franklin Frazier (*The Negro Family in the United States, 1939*), Gunnar Myrdal (*An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, 1944*), and others all describe longstanding pathologies in black life that in our time are routinely and incorrectly blamed on the modern welfare state.²⁵⁶

To understand the origins of an increase in black crime after our civil war, read what Dubois wrote in 1899. Read Dollard to understand what drove black men in the South to kill each other in large numbers. Read Frazier to understand why familial ties between black men and women were strained both before and after our civil war, or to understand why black men abandoned families in relatively large numbers in the 1930s.²⁵⁷ Read Myrdal to find concerns spelled out in 1944 regarding how agricultural mechanization would seal the fate of millions of low-skilled black workers who would inevitably follow other migrants north to increasingly overcrowded cities where dire poverty, economic insecurity, and high levels of crime were the norm. We're dealing with a continuum that began with people chained to the inner deck of a ship, packed like spoons with no room for movement, enveloped in feces and vomit.

Franklin Frazier's definitive 1939 study found that the sexual dominance of enslavers weakened marital bonds among the enslaved.²⁵⁸ He wrote, "The loose ties that had held men and women together in a nominal marriage relation during slavery broke easily during the crisis of emancipation." Referring to a recently emancipated woman, Frazier noted, "Since often her sexual contacts continued to be of a more or less casual nature, she found herself, as in slavery, surrounded by children depending on her for support and parental affection."

What circumstances might contribute to such "loose ties"? Consider what happened in just one New Orleans slave market. Records for 553 women in the prime of their childbearing years show that only 6 were sold with their husbands, and just 28 were sold with their children.²⁵⁹ Based on these figures, should we assume that just 1% were in a relationship, and only 5% had children? Unlikely.

Replicate these transactions in slave markets across the South, and you've identified one part of a socioeconomic system that did much to "loosen ties"—transactions taking place in a country where it was not a crime for a white man to rape a

black woman.²⁶⁰ And the number of such transactions was enormous. In addition to the nearly 1 million, black Americans sold off and forcibly migrated across state lines by domestic slave traders, at least as many were trafficked within individual states. And as the centrality of enslavement to American capitalism became more entrenched in the last three decades leading to civil war, a black American was sold every three and a half minutes.²⁶¹

Circumstances that drew my family to Ohio from New Hampshire at the dawn of the 19th century look nothing like those that pulled Nkosi's family out of the upper South into Mississippi. My family came via a large land grant and federal credit.²⁶² His came via coffles and chained up in coastal ships that were integral to the domestic slave trade.²⁶³

My great-great-great grandfather Barnard Cass settled in Ohio in 1816, following his older brother there from New Hampshire.²⁶⁴ That brother, Major Jonathan Cass, fought at Bunker Hill and spent the winter of 1777/78 with George Washington's army at Valley Forge. Five years after the Revolution ended, Jonathan fought in the Northwest Indian War, the first of many wars the United States Army waged to expel native tribes from territories to open them up to white families like mine. After suppressing native resistance in Ohio, the U.S. government gave Jonathan 4000 acres of prime land as delayed compensation for his service in the Revolution.

Senator Lewis Cass was Jonathan's oldest son. A graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Lewis joined his father in Ohio in 1801. By the time Barnard and his family, joined his brother Jonathan in 1816, Lewis had studied law, fought in the War of 1812, received his first federal appointment from Thomas Jefferson, and had become governor of the Michigan Territory. He remained governor until Andrew Jackson appointed him to be Secretary of War in 1831.

As described earlier, Secretary of War, Lewis Cass had jurisdiction over Indian affairs.²⁶⁵ One of his first responsibilities upon taking office was overseeing the expulsion of the Choctaw, who occupied one-third of Mississippi. In 1832, Lewis reported to Congress that the relocated Choctaw were, "highly gratified with the climate of the country and satisfied with the exchange they had made." Ignore the fact that

approximately one-third of the 12,500 who were forcibly relocated died during the 500-mile ordeal.

Nkosi can't say when precisely his people were sold in Mississippi. Little was recorded on account of anti-literacy laws across the South. But it's likely that for at least some relatives, it was the 1830s. Passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, served as a bright neon sign announcing that a huge new market for enslaved people would be opening shortly.²⁶⁶ And those enslaved on newly cleared lands would all be native-born black Americans.

Two decades earlier, Congress had ended the Atlantic Slave trade for reasons divorced from morality. It had become clear to politically influential enslavers in the Mid-Atlantic states that they were producing a surplus of people they could sell. Factors included a low mortality rate relative to places like Brazil due to climate, a decline in labor demand due to depressed tobacco markets, and successful steps to breed humans. The combination of millions of newly available acres for cotton, and a growing domestic supply of enslaved Americans, meant slave traders, enslavers, and the financiers who made it all possible would profit handsomely. And they did, particularly the slave traders.

Isaac Franklin and John Armfield established the most influential domestic slave trading firm in America in 1828, three years before Lewis's appointment as Secretary of War. Although Franklin and Armfield never met Lewis, the billions of present-day dollars they amassed was made possible by Indian removal policies Lewis was central to conceiving of and implementing.²⁶⁷ The people they trafficked were sold in Mississippi and Louisiana. Lewis's tenure in Andrew Jackson's cabinet coincides with the last five of the eight years their firm was in operation.

Franklin and Armfield developed a business model for slave trading that influenced the formation of dozens of like-minded firms in the three-decade runup to civil war. They transformed the domestic slave trade from a semi-permanent pursuit conducted out of taverns into a large-scale, business operation featuring regional offices, slave pens, slave purchasing agents, prison ships, and increasingly sophisticated forms of finance and accounting.

During its eight years in operation, the firm trafficked over ten thousand human beings. And a defining feature of the business was rape. Franklin, Armfield, and their principal slave purchaser—a man named Rice Ballard—routinely raped girls and women who whetted their appetite. They then trafficked these victims to enslavers they understood would want the opportunity to do the same. Mixed-race women and girls in particular were often sold into a life of prostitution. It was a game. And they wrote about it extensively, making references to the “One-Eyed Friends” (penises), and “fancy girls” (sex trafficking victims).²⁶⁸ And, importantly, these activities took place in what amounted to be a federally sanctioned, protected, and financed market. In 1832, a full five percent of credit extended by the Bank of the United States went to Franklin and Armfield to buy humans.²⁶⁹ Those “loose ties” Franklin Frazier refers to were produced in no small part by the policies of the United States government.

In 1832, while Franklin and Armfield were devastating the lives of families like Nkosi’s, my great-great grandfather, Joseph Cass (Barnard’s son) was building an 18’ x 12’ log cabin at the corner of what is today the intersection of Cass and Ryan roads, where Toledo meets Maumee, Ohio.²⁷⁰ He’d recently purchased 160 pristine acres of forest from the federal government at \$1.25 an acre on which to grow corn, wheat, and oats.²⁷¹ Those crops got sold at a profit and helped build a future in which—per my great-grandmother—young Cass men (Joseph’s sons) could take their “best girl” on 4th of July carriage rides in “natty rigs,” and admire the handsome large white farmhouse that replaced the cabin. And one of those Cass men—Chester—had a lovely daughter named Nellie and, as mentioned, delivered my father into this world. We’ve had our golden age. Nkosi’s family? Not so much.

39. Origins of Black Criminality

Nellie was born in 1882, five years after the last of the federal army was pulled out of the South. A year later, the Supreme Court ruled the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. She was fourteen when the Court ruled that it was legal for states to pass laws mandating segregation. These two court decisions formalized a reality that already took hold in America. White supremacists had won the peace. The vision laid out by progressives in Congress to fully integrate black Americans into mainstream life failed—too much racial hatred, and contempt for it to have been any other way. Those who sought racial justice were fewer in number with each passing year, and coming out of more than 250 years of chattel slavery, a great deal remained unchanged.²⁷²

If you were black in America, you had the “widespread feeling” that “the Negro is something less than an American and ought not to be much more than he is.” W.E.B. Dubois made this observation in 1899 when writing his pioneering analysis of black life in Philadelphia. He’d moved there at the invitation of the University of Pennsylvania to conduct what would become a landmark study in American Social Science. For a year and a half, his family lived over top a cafeteria “in the worst part of Philadelphia’s Seventh Ward.” Years later he wrote, “We lived in the midst of an atmosphere of dirt, drunkenness, poverty, and crime. Murder sat on our doorsteps, police were our government, and philanthropy dropped in with periodic advice.”²⁷³

Dubois exhaustively examined black life in the Seventh Ward, looking at education, family life, work, housing, health, demographics, and crime.²⁷⁴ At the time he lived there roughly 40% of the city’s 40,000 black residents were recent migrants from the South. These formerly enslaved Americans and their children were as Dubois

described, “untrained and poorly educated countrymen, rushing from hovels of the country or cottages from country towns.”

When introducing the “Negro Problem” to his reader Dubois, who was black, wrote, “In Philadelphia, as elsewhere in the United States, the existence of certain peculiar social problems affecting the Negro people are plainly manifest.”²⁷⁵ None more so than crime. He determined that even before the Civil war, blacks accounted for a disproportionate amount of crime, and the black crime rate had risen further during the two decades leading up to his 1899 study.²⁷⁶ Dubois was asking “why?” six decades before Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society purportedly destroyed the black family.

At the time, the Seventh Ward was one-third black, in a city that was 95% white. Earlier, I mentioned my mother’s mom grew up in a small Irish-Catholic neighborhood in Philadelphia called the Devil’s Pocket. She lived on Taney Street, which sits at the western edge of Dubois’s study area. Born eight years after Dubois completed his study, she shared a small row home with her siblings, mother, and grandmother. Two generations of men were absent, and money was scarce. The father who had abandoned her was a young Philadelphia policeman at the time Dubois lived there. And later, as a young woman, she married a man who infused in her children problems from which they would not recover.

I know little else about my mother’s side of the family. Rife with pathology, people died earlier relative to my father’s side. My mother’s mom held me once as a newborn before dying of cancer in middle age. I have just one memory of interacting with my mother’s younger brother, Ted. I’d just turned eight, and my mother had taken me to her childhood home in Philadelphia for the first time since I was a baby. Still, in his early thirties, uncle Ted had recently completed his aforementioned prison sentence for rape. At some point during the visit, I climbed into his gray pickup truck to go on an errand. A house painter by trade, he wore a white t-shirt with a pack of Camels tucked into his sleeve. Growing up, I could feel shame over how my clothing would occasionally reek of cigarettes on account of my parent’s habit. And as cigarette smoke filled the cab, I loathed my circumstances. At a stop sign, he looked at me and said simply, “Pat, don’t wind up like me.” There was a sadness in his eyes, but I remember little else. He died of

cirrhosis at age 37, and his sister (my mother) would go through the same painful death a few years later.

At its core, DuBois's *A Philadelphia Negro*, is the story of how black dysfunction born of enslavement was compounded by a white majority's disdain in the three decades following our civil war. My mother's family dynamics tell me that dysfunction was not limited to black Philadelphians. When attending college, I had complex feelings about Philadelphia. Unprocessed emotions relating to my mother's lineage sometimes intertwined with the melancholy I could feel when surrounded by the city's pathologies of the sort Dubois saw deepening.²⁷⁷ I wanted to escape but didn't know where or why. Years would pass before I understood that the dysfunction and poverty that characterized much of black life in Philadelphia is a human condition born of degradation, not some inherent characteristic of skin color or race.²⁷⁸

Race is a man-made construct whose definition has changed over time.²⁷⁹ In the nineteenth century, for example, the British wrote about the inferior qualities of the "Irish race." They don't do that anymore. Genetic diversity is a biological fact, yet we're more alike than we are different. The sequence of genes that shape who we are is largely identical to a person living in Ghana, Nepal, or Taiwan. In fact, the sequence of chemical building blocks that makes up our complete set of genes is 99.9% identical to everyone else on the planet. It's analogous to having different editions of the same book. My version has a couple of different spelling errors than yours, and uses the word "colour," while yours uses "color." Scientists refer to these differences as genetic variability.

Of the 0.1% variability that makes us unique, a full 95.7% occurs within the socially constructed racial categories established in the eighteenth century. Only 0.0043% of overall genetic variability is between the "races."²⁸⁰ Decades before scientists began unraveling the mysteries of our genetic code, Dubois, knew the belief in biologically distinct races was a red herring. In 1906, he wrote, "The human species so shade and mingle with each other that not only indeed is it impossible to draw a color line between black and other races."²⁸¹ America's problem wasn't the "Negro race," it was racism.

At the time of Dubois's study, crime rates for whites were also rising—a fact he attributed to the hazards of life in quickly changing industrial cities that had attracted

waves of European immigrants. But crime rates were always higher for blacks. Some of that difference could be attributed to the fact that courts favor the rich at the expense of the poor, and whites at the expense of blacks, but something more was at play.

Dubois determined that higher crime rates were a consequence of excluding black Philadelphians from mainstream economic and social life. It's not that the recently credentialed black engineering graduate who's denied work in his field started snatching pocketbooks. He got a job as a waiter at the university club, serving fellow graduates. A young, job-seeking pharmacist heard a druggist remark, "I wouldn't have a darky clean out my store, much less stand behind the counter." He didn't turn around and burglarize houses. He took a job as a domestic servant. But along the way, things did break down. Enslavement, Dubois said, did not prepare the "mass of black workmen" to compete with skilled white American workers and European immigrants. Most whites were "willing" and "eager" to keep blacks in the role of "menial servant" rather than develop their skills. And the relatively small number of blacks who had skills were often banned from newly forming trade unions to which a great deal of work flowed. Here again, ostracized black tradesmen didn't run out and become criminals, but there's a cumulative, corrosive impact when the choice of work for the vast majority of black Philadelphians was between one menial, low-paying job, and another of the same.

This reality prompted Dubois to ask, "How long can a city teach its black children that the road to success is to have a white face?" Contrasting the diverging experiences of white and black, Dubois writes, "The young white man starts life knowing that within some limits and barring accidents, talents and application will tell. The young Negro starts knowing on all sides of his advance is made doubly difficult if not wholly shut off by his color." There's no one response to being despised and shut out of mainstream life, but for an increasing number of blacks in the years after our civil war, crime became a viable alternative.

Dubois had no illusions about the state of black America in the years following emancipation. Generations had been "prohibited from self-support, and self-initiative," and a large percentage, "when thrown upon their own resources," were "found incapable of competing in the race of life." Dubois understood opening up opportunities to a relatively small number of qualified blacks would not magically lift them out of poverty

noting, “some few would be promoted, some would get new places – the mass would remain as they are.” But a “radical change in public opinion” regarding accepting black Americans in mainstream socioeconomic life would he said, make one “vast difference”—“it would inspire the young to try harder, it would stimulate the idle and discouraged, and it would take away from this race the omnipresent excuse for failure: prejudice.” And, importantly, Dubois believed that greater acceptance and integration would “work a revolution” in reducing black crime rates.

Even as Dubois pleaded for a radical change with regards to how whites viewed blacks, he well understood that most felt a “natural repugnance to close intermingling with unfortunate ex-slaves.” Black Philadelphians felt the hostility and were plenty conscious of how racial animosity affected every aspect of their being. Whites, on the other hand, found it unremarkable and natural to abhor “social intercourse with a lower race.” Dubois said that the degree to which white Philadelphians contemplated their prejudice often went no further than asking, “Would you want your sister to marry a N—?” We live, in other words, in completely different mental universes.

Although the United States no longer operates as a full-out white supremacist nation, the mental shift Dubois called for never materialized. Black crime and white racism sustain each other in the present day just as in decades past. Voting patterns and white ridicule of movements such as Black Lives Matter, and Critical Race Theory bear this out. And, again, it’s at Fox News where many white Americans go to find a steady supply of online articles celebrating the depravity of black criminality and providing opportunities to express outrage. Today, I found an article titled, “Blood trail leads Tennessee cops to arrest suspect who allegedly stuffed dead roommate’s body in a suitcase.” The story features a 30-year-old black man in Memphis who killed his 63-year-old roommate of two years, stuffed him into a suitcase, and left him in the alley. A trail of blood from the body brought the police to their apartment.

We (whites) flock to these articles because they confirm what we instinctively believe to be true, just as in Dubois' time, blacks are of a “lower race.” Online comments to these articles most frequently refer to either “the 13%” or a game show called the Wheel of Fortune. Blacks account for 13% of the U.S. population, hence the first

reference. In *Wheel of Fortune*, the objective is to solve a word puzzle based on a single clue. The implied, but never stated clue is, “The race that commits all the crime.” And the puzzle’s solution is always the same.

In response to the Tennessee murder, Fox reader *buzzard10950* writes, “Ah, the 13% continue their contributions to a civilized society.” *Resource70* opines, “13% living up to the cultural standard.” Switching to the game show theme, *cw0530* writes, “As others say daily, new day with the same solvable puzzle.” Referring to *Wheel of Fortune* host Pat Sajak, *AlephUno* writes, “Pat, I think we've solved this puzzle over and over again.” These white contestants are stuck in a game show vortex from which they cannot escape. And they are the tip of the spear. Behind them are millions of whites whose fears and experience fuel their bigotry. Fox provides the venue—a daily online celebration of thinly veiled contempt and hatred, tailored for the modern age.

A Philadelphia Negro was an unheeded warning, telling us of what was to come if our racial animus remained unexamined and unchecked. Dubois thought it all well and good to object to “a race so poor and ignorant and inefficient as the mass of the Negroes,” but if you’re the very group responsible for producing the ignorance in the first place through slavery, and you insist in shutting out blacks out of mainstream socioeconomic life, then you’re pushing people into “pauperism and vice,” and need to hold yourself “largely accountable for the deplorable results.”

Dubois was brought to Philadelphia by white elites who believed the city was, as he said, “going to the dogs because of the crime and venality of its Negro citizens.” His assigned task was to study black Philadelphians and determine what was wrong with them. His research and analysis revealed that black poverty and crime were a symptom rather than a cause. The problem wasn’t with them. It was us. How you treat people matters, and Dubois saw firsthand that formerly enslaved Americans and their children were struggling in a nation where white supremacy reigned supreme. He was imploring white Americans to change “primarily for their sakes,” mindful that what was taking place was essentially a “battle for humanity and human culture.” He wasn’t exaggerating.

40. The Short-Lived Illusion of Shared Purpose

I was born in Philadelphia in August 1963, six decades after *A Philadelphia Negro* went to press. Dubois's warnings had no impact on white America up to that point, and the "deplorable results" he warned of started becoming increasingly visible to the nation during the 1960s as rioting and flames consumed city after city. In 1963, Martin Luther King's civil rights campaign of non-violence was in danger of becoming an anachronism. President Kennedy, when addressing the nation that year after violence consumed Birmingham, Alabama said, "This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over discrimination and segregation exist in every city, in every State of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens public safety."

In that same address, Kennedy announced his intent to introduce civil rights legislation that would strike the biggest blow to sanctioned white supremacy in America of a sort that allowed whites to dictate where blacks could eat, shop, work, recreate, and sleep. Powerful segregationist Democrats in Congress employed procedural devices to ensure Kennedy's legislation languished, and it's questionable if it would have ever been passed had he not been assassinated. His successor, Lyndon Johnson leveraged a masterful knowledge of Congress and the nation's grief to overcome opposition and get the Civil Rights Act of 1964 enacted into law.

If there ever was a time when we might have begun to have a national conversation regarding our tragic history—one that might have led us to effectively address fundamental issues left unresolved by our civil war—it would be the first half of 1964. It was a brief period bookended by Johnson declaring war on poverty in January, and signing the Civil Rights Act into law on July 3rd. It was during these six months that

an American president drew the nation's attention to poverty, racism, and quality of life most visibly without distraction.

In April and May, Johnson embarked on a series of "poverty tours," visiting economically distressed communities around the country. Watching footage of these tours, I see large, enthusiastic, overwhelmingly white crowds in places as different as Pittsburgh, South Bend, and Paintsville, Kentucky.²⁸² Throngs of people listen intently to Johnson speak of ending poverty in a land of plenty. The tours embody an expression of shared purpose and a commitment to community of a sort that's inconceivable today.

Johnson's objective to end poverty was part of a broader domestic agenda laid out in a graduation address he delivered on May 22nd at the University of Michigan. The speech was largely the work of Richard Goodwin, a presidential aide who graduated first in his class at Harvard Law, joined Kennedy's inner circle before age 30, then worked with Johnson on key domestic policy initiatives.²⁸³ The speech resonates deeply with me because it's about precisely the issues that led me and Christine to raise our family in a city outside the United States.

Addressing a crowd of over 80,000, Johnson said that we can choose either to build a society in which "progress is the servant of our needs," or we can exist in a forlorn world in which we're "buried under unbridled growth." We can live in a society that "serves not only the needs of the body, and the demands of commerce," but also "the desire for beauty and hunger for community." We can live in a society in which "man can renew contact with nature," and live amongst citizens who "are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods." Achieving such a society demands we turn our attention and energies toward our cities, our countryside, and our classrooms. Quoting Aristotle, Johnson said, "Men come together in cities in order to live, but they remain together in order to live the good life."²⁸⁴

Acknowledging the growing pathologies in the American city Johnson noted, "It is harder and harder to live the good life in American cities today." His reasoning for such a statement anticipates my own anguish over the bad human habitat that became the norm in my lifetime.

The catalog of ills is long: there is the decay of the centers and the despoiling of the suburbs. There is not enough housing for our people or transportation for our traffic. Open land is vanishing and old landmarks are violated.

Worst of all expansion is eroding the precious and time-honored values of community with neighbors and communion with nature. The loss of these values breeds loneliness and boredom and indifference.

Never before or since has an American president spoken so directly about quality of life. I've focused on what was said of the city, but Johnson said equally important things that day about environmental degradation, our educational deficit, and the loss of beauty. The speech offered hope for a deeper, more honest, and comprehensive, national conversation about things I care deeply about. Unfortunately, the conversation never went any further.

The first six months of 1964 were the last six months of our existence as an unvarnished white supremacist nation—a brief span of time pregnant with potential. Early in the second half of 1964, three poisons coursing through the veins of the American body politic began to visibly overwhelm and destroy that potential. On July 16th, Barry Goldwater won the Republican nomination for president, solidifying the arrival of the far right on the national stage. On July 18th, rioting enveloped Harlem, marking the start of wide-scale urban violence and accelerated decline during the last six years of the Great Migration. And on August 7th, Congress essentially provided Lyndon Johnson with the ability to take America to war in Vietnam based on inaccurate information regarding North Vietnamese aggression against an American warship in the Tonkin Gulf.²⁸⁵

The poisoning influences of Vietnam, urban decline driven by the pressures of migration, and the emergence of the far-right provided the polarization triggered by the Civil Rights Act with the momentum necessary to eventually divide the nation into two irreconcilable parts whose worldviews are not so different than they were in 1854. One part values democracy, and truth. The other is less troubled by authoritarianism and falsehood. As mentioned, the impact of 322 years of enslavement—80% of the time

American culture has been forming—is visible in national life. And it's shaped everything around us whether we care to see it or not.

41. Civil War, Slavery, and Torture in Living Memory

By July of 1863, Nellie's uncle Milton had been back in Ohio for twelve months, after having been classified an invalid by the U.S. Army. He was of little use on the farm, and Nellie's father Chester—then age 15—and his younger brother worked the fields as their father marketed the crops. On July 4, 1863, Nellie's uncles, William and Samuel, understood the preceding three days of fighting at Gettysburg had produced a Union victory. That same day, the fortress town of Vicksburg, Mississippi fell to Grant's army after a 47-day siege in which Confederate forces were bombed and starved into submission. Nellie's uncle Lewis—then age 16—was encamped north of Vicksburg's defenses knowing he'd not need to participate in the kind of futile attack of the sort that produced nine dead Medal of Honor recipients in his regiment alone.²⁸⁶

July 4, 1863, was the turning point in the war, but not a turning point for society in key respects.²⁸⁷ White mob violence and lynching were common in and around Vicksburg into the 1950s. Whites later abandoned Vicksburg as they did towns throughout Mississippi after schools were desegregated in the 1970s.²⁸⁸ Today, Vicksburg is two-thirds black, poor, and far more violent than the Pennsylvania suburb of my childhood.²⁸⁹ Google "Is Vicksburg safe?" and see what you come up with.

After Vicksburg fell, young Lewis laid eyes on some of the 20,000 black refugees who streamed toward Union army positions, seeking freedom. By war's end, half of Mississippi's enslaved population of 400,000 had done the same. A Union army chaplain in Grant's army wrote, "The arrival among us of these hordes was like the oncoming of cities... There were men, women, and children in every stage of disease and decrepitude, often nearly naked, with flesh torn by the terrible experiences of their escapes." The

Army paid them to load supplies and clear land, and they lived in squalor. That same chaplain noted that their “ignorance” caused “a veritable moral chaos” in all camps.²⁹⁰ The brutal conditions that millions of blacks in the Cotton South faced provided little opportunity to be anything other than “ignorant.”

Growing up, I’d periodically flip through my father’s Naval Academy yearbooks, spanning the years 1936 thru 1939.²⁹¹ I enjoyed looking at eye-catching advertisements in the back from storied American companies like RCA (radios), the Electric Boat Company (submarines), and Grumman (aircraft). His graduation year was one of the last in which you could still find classmates who were the grandchildren of Civil War veterans.²⁹²

He never suggested there was tension between midshipmen from the North and South. One of his closest friends was a Southerner named Eugene “Sorry” Simpson, who—per his brief yearbook bio—“came from the rugged hills of Tennessee,” with “his consoling philosophy of a ‘loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and a squirrel gun beside me’.” Yet, it is possible to find references to the Civil War in a few midshipman biographies. My father’s classmate, Dan Carrison, was “born and reared on the sunny fields of a Carolina plantation.” And Landon Davis, who graduated from military school before attending Annapolis, was known as “Jeff” Davis, namesake of the Confederate president.

Throughout my father’s time at Annapolis, the civil war that produced 700,000 dead was still within living memory. Some 10,000 veterans survived into the late 1930s. And during the first four days of July 1938, over 250,000 Americans converged on Gettysburg, joining 1,870 war veterans to construct an edifice of brotherhood in memory of battlefield sacrifices. On July 3rd, President Roosevelt unveiled a memorial dedicated to national reconciliation seventy-five years to the day after Samuel and William fought on Cemetery Hill. Referring to Union and Confederate veterans Roosevelt said, “All of them we honor, not asking under which flag they fought then. Thankfully they stand together under one flag now.” Absent was any mention of why they fought. The cancerous impact of chattel slavery and what came after was papered over with a narrative about the boys in blue and gray.

Also, in living memory during my father’s time at Annapolis was the experience of slavery. Of the 4 million enslaved in 1861, over 80,000 lived another seven decades

into the late 1930s.²⁹³ Although Roosevelt did not broach the subject of slavery when at Gettysburg, his Works Progress Administration (WPA), embarked on a project to interview over 2,000 ex-slaves.²⁹⁴ Interviews took place in 1937 and 1938, at a time when much of America held Lost-Cause-inspired views on slavery shaped by, among others, prominent racist historian Ulrich Phillips who advanced the belief that slavery was a dying, but ultimately benign institution, and we whites did Africans a favor by enslaving them because it civilized them.²⁹⁵

In one interview conducted in 1937, Ms. Adeline Hodges expressed a haunting fear that stayed with her for the rest of her life. She spoke of hating to see anything weighed on scales of the sort you might find, for example, at the meat counter in a grocery on account of her being reminded of what she called “weighing up time.”²⁹⁶ At the end of each day across the Cotton South, Adeline and countless others came in from the fields and waited to get their cotton haul weighed. Enslavers required every person in the field to pick a certain number of pounds each day. Quotas varied from person to person. If Adeline fell short, she was whipped.

As a teen, Adeline was enslaved in Mississippi when young Lewis was fighting in the Vicksburg campaign. During that campaign, Lewis passed north of a plantation that had been owned by a man named Bennet Barrow until he died in 1854. Like most enslavers, Barrow kept obsessively detailed records of how much a person picked each day.²⁹⁷ But unlike most, he also recorded who was whipped in response to how much they picked. What’s revealing is that Barrow often whipped his most productive pickers more than those falling short of quotas.²⁹⁸ To understand why this was the case, consider that in the 60-year run-up to civil war, the average poundage of cotton picked per person rose from 28.1 pounds to 114.2 pounds.²⁹⁹ Part of this *four-fold increase* related to improvements in seeds which produced taller plants (so you don’t have to stoop), and larger cotton bolls (so you get more for each “pick”). But it’s also true that torture played a role in increasing productivity. Researchers Sven Beckert (Harvard) and Mark Stelzner (Connecticut College) state, “there is a reliable body of sources that testify to the widespread use of torture on US plantations to maintain discipline,” to a degree that “physical discipline was central to the plantation economy.”

Their use of the term “torture” makes a fundamental point raised by historian Edward Baptist. Torture is often applied when attempting to extract the truth. The brutality practiced across the South was, in a literal sense, torture—an exercise in extracting truth in terms of determining how much a person could harvest under coercion.³⁰⁰ You find ample evidence regarding torture’s daily reality expressed by the Southern ruling caste. Enslaver S.A. Townes threatened to “make those bitches go at least 100 [pounds] or whip them like the devil.” A Mississippi doctor named J.W. Monett observed that overseers routinely whipped those who picked less than the assigned weight.³⁰¹ John Fripp wrote of beating the people he owned for missing quotas, and Henry Turner and John Quitman both wrote of how people who fell short often tried to escape to avoid whippings.

I don’t wish to oversell coercion’s impact on productivity, but quantitative analysis has shown coercion to be a part of what drove increased cotton production. In the simplest of terms, Beckert and Stelzner found that the number of overseers per one hundred enslaved workers rose over time. The presence of more overseers correlates to increased output per enslaved worker. I mention this not to take you down a statistical rabbit hole to examine negative coefficients, and f-tests, but rather to clarify that significant effort has gone into confirming that increased coercion—of which torture is a part—contributed to the rise in cotton production in the decades preceding civil war. And, as Adeline implied in 1937, the experience of torture affected the mind in ways that don’t simply disappear. There’s a long-term human cost born by future generations, both for black and white, in terms of values, attitudes, and behavior. We speak about family values in the present day, ignoring the origins of a society that, in many respects, remains stuck in a brutal past.

42. Caste, Defected Rage, and Violence in the Black Community

Nkosi turned fifteen in early 1982. That summer, he and his grandfather drove from Chicago to the Mississippi delta to visit family in a town called Hollandale. The trip left him with a memory that still angers him. He'd gone into town with his grandfather to get something at the grocery store. As they were leaving, a white boy—approximately age twelve—spoke to his grandfather contemptuously. It had something to do about a shopping cart that Nkosi no longer recalls. What got seared into his memory was the sudden change in his grandfather's demeanor from one of humble self-respect to one of deference as he responded to the boy with a "yessa"—the vernacular for "yes sir." Nkosi recalls, "I just wanted to whip the boy's ass being from Chi-Town (Chicago) and all. But I bit my lip and ground my teeth. Why? Because we were on the other side of the tracks, and I'd been warned about being in white folk territory."

In 1866, New York Tribune reporter Whitelaw Reid traveled throughout the South and became aware of a growing hatred of, and hostility for free blacks. The reasons were many. For example, whites blamed blacks for causing a war that left the South in ruins. Free blacks' contribution to the North's victory, reminded white Southerners of all that had changed. Mindful of the implications Reid wrote, "However this man may have regarded the negro slave, they hated the negro freeman. However kind they may have been to negro property, they were virulently vindictive against a property that had escaped from their control."³⁰² Nkosi's experience in the Hollandale grocery illustrates that this loss of control was only temporary. Little more than a decade after the Confederacy's defeat, the South re-established a prewar social order that persisted into my lifetime.

In 1935, a white Yale psychologist named John Dollard moved to Indianola, Mississippi (30 miles from where Nkosi's grandfather grew up) to study how white oppression shaped the "Negro personality."³⁰³ Two years later, he finished writing *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, a book speaking directly to the ridicule Fox News readers express regarding black violence and culture. The book's significance is best understood when discussed in combination with the work he did with black anthropologist William Allison Davis with whom Dollard wrote, *Children of Bondage* in 1940.³⁰⁴

In the South, the lives of blacks and whites could not be examined in isolation. They're inextricably linked, two racial castes, each with its own social classes. Established and enforced through domination backed by violence, the black caste was excluded from economic opportunity, and consigned to the lowest paying, "most monotonous forms of work." The white caste exists as a "ridged structure of privilege," whose members enjoy access to the best-paying jobs, women of both races, greater prestige, and – as Nkosi and his grandfather experienced decades later – "an automatic right to demand forms of behavior from Negroes that served to boost whites' self-esteem and provide a gratifying sense of mastery."³⁰⁵

The ever-present threat of overwhelming repression deeply influenced how blacks responded to degradation in a nation reputed to champion democracy and opportunity. The Southern caste system provided little opportunity for blacks to direct anger toward a dominant, inherently violent, white caste. Nkosi's recollection of that "little white bastard" still makes his blood boil, but he knew at the time, he had to swallow his emotions. Dollard and Davis identified the implications of dealing with precisely this kind of rage.

It's a normal human response to direct aggression toward what frustrates or oppresses us. We see it in our children, and we feel it in our bodies. Most Southern blacks, however, understood that directing rage and aggression toward a dominant, inherently violent white caste came with a price. Everyone knew of someone who had been lynched, or arrested under flimsy charges and then sold into forced labor. Yet, anger and deep-seated frustration didn't magically disappear. Perhaps the single most important observation made by Dollard and Davis was that much of the aggression got "defected" from the white caste, and "focused within the Negro group itself."³⁰⁶ This unconscious

response was, as Dollard noted, “biologically satisfying,” and a great deal safer than “taking up a hopeless direct struggle with the white caste.”³⁰⁷

By the 1930s, this deflected aggression—combined with three centuries of systemic oppression—was producing a high rate of violence in families, and within the black community at large. And although whites routinely responded with extrajudicial savagery in response to a black-on-white crime, authorities routinely ignored black-on-black crime, viewing internal strife within the inferior caste as a positive.³⁰⁸ This absence of judicial guardrails contributed to young blacks living “in an atmosphere of violence” on a “sort of frontier of American life where the man with the most courage and the most invulnerable arteries survives.”³⁰⁹ This is the culture Christine, me, and our children were immersed in for 3.5 years on 11th Street, an experience whose coda was the execution of a drug dealer (i.e., Louis Beamon) who knew Christine well enough to call her in Canada to remind her of her manners.

Through interviews with over two hundred black children, and their parents, Davis and Dollard understood that the lowest class in the black caste was affected most deeply.³¹⁰ And their findings directly refuted Southern white dogma claiming blacks were “simple-natured childlike beings with childish needs” who happily accepted their place on the bottom rung of the lower caste.³¹¹

The experience in the late 1930s of a fourteen-year-old Mississippi boy named Judy Tolliver illustrates how this “sting of caste” played out in practice. Like his siblings, Judy was routinely whipped by his father as a disciplinary measure (although perhaps not whipped as brutally as during “weighing up time” seven decades earlier). He speaks of having no money, and being unable to retaliate against the “white folks that talks about kicking me.”³¹² He redirects his anger to other black kids, particularly “colored folks who try to ack lak white folks just cause they is bright and got a little more money than some other colored folks.”³¹³ Elaborating, Judy says, “I sure do drop the wood on ‘em and I don’t feel bad over it...that is when I gets my feelings out on ‘em. I tries to kill ‘em when I gits on ‘em and see jes what good their color does ‘em them...”³¹⁴ Sociologist and Pulitzer finalist Elliot Currie notes that these interviews may sound jarring to contemporary ears, but stresses their importance as they gave young people a voice they’d never had before.

Reading their words, I think of Nkosi. Before joining the Vice Lords at age 13, he was something of a bookworm. That habit, however, got knocked out of him by age 9. Boys in his neighborhood didn't carry books, as that was "acting white."

Tellingly, Nkosi, and almost every boy around him was either a first- or second-generation Chicagoan whose family had migrated north from the world Davis and Dollard studied.³¹⁵ It's likely some of the boys interviewed lived near Nkosi's family in West Chicago as adults. And what they learned about living in America got passed on to their children.

So yes, Fox News readers are correct to say the black community is disproportionately violent, but the roots of that violence precede the liberal welfare state. Furthermore, some twenty western democracies spend more on social programs as a percentage of GDP than the United States, and in none of these countries do we see the kind of violence and fear that degrades our quality of life. How we treat one another matters. Abuse elicits a response.

43. Veil of Time

In late August 2021, Christine and I begin our day in a Montreal hotel with a spring in our step. Over the previous two days, we helped our sons get situated in apartments at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, and Polytechnique Montreal, the engineering school affiliated with the Université de Montréal. As parents, we'd reached a milestone. We'd poured large amounts of ourselves into our boys, in hopes that they'd become independent, thoughtful men with bonds to us, their younger sister, and each other. Even in the best of circumstances, parenting can be a difficult, messy endeavor. But on this day, it does feel as if we'd accomplished something. And we have the day to ourselves.

We spend it wandering for hours through the neighborhoods and shopping districts that make up Le Plateau-Mont-Royal, which is a few square miles of good human habitat of the sort that gives Montreal its reputation for livability. It's also a place where you realize making the effort to learn French—even in modest amounts—is well received by the Quebecois. Late in the afternoon, we rent bikes to get to a shop across town to pick up a Spanish-made espresso maker Christine's coveted for months. I think of it as a milestone gift for her being a mom who's done a really good job with our boys.

The next morning, we stop by our son's apartment to take him to a café in Cote des Neiges, the heart of the university's student district. After a bit, he has an online orientation meeting to join and puts on a headset. We leave him for an hour, step outside, and explore the neighborhood that will be his home for the next few years. When we return, he's wrapping up with classmates in a virtual breakout room. Flipping back into English, he tells us that speaking French during his first 24 hours in the city has been tiring. It doesn't matter that he's essentially fluent. It's an abrupt change that he knows

from experience will require several weeks of adjustment. We have another coffee, and talk about nothing of particular importance as we've covered that ground in hours of conversation spread out over years. We hug him, tell him we love him, and say goodbye.

Driving north towards Quebec City, I'm listening to a band out of Athens, Ohio called Caamp. There's a lump in my throat, and it's growing. Christine looks over at me and knows what's going on. She tells me it'd be ok to cry.

Our sons introduced me to Caamp six months earlier in February 2021. Three guys. Guitar, banjo, bass. Raspy voice. Lyrics are thoroughly modern. The memory of a first kiss under the bleachers in seventh grade. A man struggling with the bottle, scraping by as life's realities weigh heavy on his shoulders. Things you don't forget as a kid growing up: football, tall trees, and an autumn that never ends. The desire to escape, and see the world with your girlfriend. Memories that cut into you, as you realize you're not getting that time back. True love. Making your own good luck. And working towards a future you'd want to raise kids in.

It took time to explain to myself why this music has gotten inside me as it has. Part of it has to do with our sons. To a degree, I associated the music with them. In the car, I turned my head away from Christine's gaze because, at that moment, I wanted to keep my grief over their departure to myself. Our boys know that I'm fiercely devoted to them. And I've become a better version of my flawed self over time, in part, because of my commitment to them. As I've grown older, things inside my head have gotten better, taking a different path than my parents.

The music is written by young guys figuring things out. To a degree, our sons, who aren't far behind in age, have begun the same process. So yes, the music makes me think of them. But it's also got something to do with me, something about my own Americanness. The values, and emotion expressed through their music connects me to a part of America that I respect, and value highly.

And then, there's the fourteen-year-old boy—Nellie's uncle—who left home to fight in our civil war. Sometimes, the music brings him to mind. But for months I couldn't say why.

I became familiar with Caamp shortly after learning of the inconsistency between my family's history claiming young Lewis remained on the farm during war, and reality,

as evidenced by military records, his gravestone and accompanying GAR marker, a separate family monument, and a regimental history.^{lxviii} At the time, our oldest son was home from Queens, doing a second year of coursework online in response to Covid. Our seventeen-year-old, was in his final year of high school, sporting shoulder-length hair, and catching up to his brother in height, and strength. Youthful, loud, profane, humorous, irritating, vulnerable male energy saturated our house, as did the sound of heavy metal during one-rep maximums in the basement gym. I think I'll always associate Caamp's music with this time. A special time that I'll not get back again. Somewhere along the way here, I stopped thinking of Lewis and his brothers as ancestors who stared back at me from an assemblage of small portrait photos on my office wall as I had for years. I began seeing them—Lewis in particular—as young men not so different from our sons.

Young Lewis is most vivid in my mind because we've just spent the past several years raising teenage boys, and because of the aforementioned inconsistency. Like his brothers, Lewis is also close to me in terms of degrees of separation. As mentioned previously, the first human hands to touch my father were those of his physician grandfather, who passed in 1928. I have a photo of them together, and my father spoke and wrote about him. Lewis is that physician's brother.

When Lewis returned to Ohio after fighting for three years at age seventeen, he was still two months younger than our son in Montreal on the day we said goodbye. Lewis died at age twenty-two, just a year older than our son at Queens. In Montreal, our younger son recently spent part of an evening with a couple of French girls on a rooftop deck. He likes his physics professor and is frustrated by Covid restrictions at the university gym. At the age of fifteen Lewis took part in a battle of that produced twenty-three thousand casualties in a single day.^{lxix} At age sixteen he was with Grant at the siege of Vicksburg. At age seventeen, he fought in a series of battles as Sherman's army closed in on Atlanta.

^{lxviii} The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a fraternal, patriotic organization of Union veterans. At its peak in 1890, the GAR had over 400,000 members and was a powerful influence within the Republican Party, and supported voting rights for black veterans. A GAR marker is an iron five-pointed star inscribed simply with "GAR 1861-1865"

^{lxix} As previously mentioned, this is the battle of Antietam, which took place on September 17, 1862.

Two of Caamp's songs in particular lead me to periodically think about Lewis.^{lxx} They reference places he fought, but that's not the connection. Caamp's music has nothing to do with our civil war. There's something in these songs, however, that lifts the veil of time, brings Lewis closer, and triggers my empathy. Three years is a long stretch to fight at any age, much less as a kid.

To lose one of our sons in war would devastate me. Lewis's father lost three. A historical sketch of his father was published about 1880 when he was still alive.^{lxxi} One curious sentence, referring to the children that he and his wife raised, reads, "Three of their sons (all that were old enough) were engaged in the late civil war." This emphasis on being "old enough" is revealing. Twenty percent of the Union Army were teenagers under the minimum age of 18. Over 100,000 were younger than fifteen.³¹⁶ Army recruiters looked the other way. Lewis's youthful presence in an infantry regiment was hardly unique, but that doesn't mean it was something Lewis's father reconciled with. In the absence of a letter, or a story his brother might have told my father, I'm left to speculate. Lewis's gravestone reads, "Lewis Cass PVT CO F 30 OHIO INF 1869." The monument to the three brothers lists them in order of age with dates of birth and death.³¹⁷ After Lewis's father honored his sons with this monument, I can only assume inner torment made it impossible for him to speak of the boy who saw and experienced events well beyond the realm of reality for most of us. Thinking of our sons I've asked the question, was it worth the cost? What was our civil war about in the end, and what remains unresolved?

^{lxx} Those songs are *Vagabond* and *By and By*.

^{lxxi} This is my great-great grandfather who was first cousin to Senator Lewis Cass.

44. All the Barbed Wire Fence Entailed

On a Sunday afternoon in May 2007, Nkosi and I are standing in front of Little Flower Catholic High School in North Philadelphia. A statue of the school's patron saint, Therese of Lisieux, stands in front of the main entrance. My mother walked past it every day for four years. The building's brown brick exterior has aged somewhat, but the green lawn and bushes remain neatly trimmed. Except for the barbed-wire perimeter fence, the place looks much like I imagined it did when she graduated in 1952.

Nkosi's been living in Philadelphia for six months at the time of my visit. He'd moved there to reconnect with a black working-class culture he found missing in the D.C. area—a place like Chicago without going back to Chicago. Before moving, he asked me about Philadelphia. I told him simply, “The floor was a little lower there.”

I drove up from DC for the weekend. On Saturday, we sought out the city's assets. Despite its issues, Philadelphia possesses architecture, history, and culture few American cities can rival. It's easy, however, to find the problems. And late in the day, those problems were on Nkosi's mind. Approaching his Mercedes, he looked at me, smiled, and said, “Patrick, we gotta take a ride. I want to show you how it is in this city.” He understood I already knew how it was, but that wasn't his point.

We spend the next two hours driving through North Philadelphia, up one block, down another. Brick row homes line streets devoid of trees. Some boarded up. Others burned out. Most are still occupied. Over a quarter million people live in this section of town. Most are poor and black. Nkosi and I consume each other's thoughts, talking about many things, attempting to wrap our heads around what we're immersed in. Neither of us yet comprehends a shared past.

Many row homes have ugly metal awnings over windows and porches, and they remind me of the block my mother grew up on a few miles north of us. An image of her father and his camel cigarettes flashes through my mind. Despondency creeps in, and Nkosi's voice pushes it out. A corner store window features an advertisement for the Pennsylvania Lottery, encouraging the poor to "play every day." On Broad Street, we pass beautiful late 19th-century architecture that's long since fallen into ruin. Nkosi remarks, "It's as if people from another planet built this place, then left."

We head back toward his townhouse which sits in a neighborhood called Brewerytown. Along the way, Nkosi wants to show me residential blocks where he'd recently seen layers of trash piling up on the streets and sidewalks. He begins to describe two small girls he'd seen there, then stops mid-sentence. Several young men are standing in the street a block up. Turning right at the intersection to avoid them, he resumes his story about girls in brightly colored dresses on a Sunday. They seemed happy, and oblivious to playing amidst mounds of filth—something you might see in a third-world country. When we arrive at the spot, he seems almost disappointed that it's been cleaned up saying, "The city's done some picking up here recently, but you gotta believe me when I say, this place was a shithole."

The next day is Sunday, and we drive over to JB's Southern Style Restaurant, ten minutes north of us in the direction of my mother's school. Nkosi's route takes us past abandoned factories of the sort that my mother's father worked in. During her high school years, Philadelphia's factories employed over 350,000 people.³¹⁸

Reputed to serve excellent soul food, Nkosi is a regular at JB's. Sustenance aside, it's where he teaches kids to play chess. Once inside I understand the draw. It's an oasis—a lowkey-artsy place where community-minded residents interact. Halfway into our meal, Nkosi introduces me to two younger men who join our table. He mentions my mother's school is close by and touches on pathologies Christine and I deal with on 11th Street. Time passes quickly as we talk about their efforts to mentor and address sources of violence on the street and in the schools. Their involvement may seem futile when weighed against the enormity of the problems, but for individual lives touched, it can make a world of difference.

We left JB's late that Sunday afternoon to visit my mother's school. My desire to see it was about making a small connection with her. Nkosi has a memory of me from that day with my hands on the front gate staring at the school, trying to make sense of all the barbed wire fence entailed.

The Philadelphia Police maintains an interactive map for the public through which I can determine how many and what kinds of crimes have occurred in the last six months within a geographic region I define via clicks of my mouse.³¹⁹ Recently, I located my mother's school, counted out seven blocks to the north and south, then created a square around the school at roughly that distance. The map refreshed and the bounded area was filled with small brightly colored pins. Red for homicide, orange for rape, etc. A legend appeared on the right side, summarizing the data. It read, "There were over 1000+ crimes in this area: 6 Homicides, 16 Rapes, 123 Robberies, 184 Aggravated Assaults, 38 Burglaries, 387 Thefts." All this in just six months.^{lxxii} Philadelphia had its problems in the 1940s, but this is not the city my mother experienced as a teenager.

What changed? For starters, demographics shifted. Five of the six million blacks who moved to cities like Philadelphia during the Great Migration did so after World War II started. But why all the crime? The dominant narrative blames liberals and welfare spending. As mentioned, other western democracies, however, have higher levels of social spending yet have nothing approaching the level of pathology that surrounds my mother's school.³²⁰ The issue is not welfare. The issue is caste, the laws and violence that created and sustained it, and the dysfunction it produced. This dysfunction didn't simply disappear from family systems when blacks migrated. It's not how pathology works.

After our civil war, the existence of the two castes that chattel slavery established was reinforced through black codes, paramilitary terrorism, Jim Crow laws, lynching, and—what is now accurately known as—neoslavery. This oppression shaped millions of lives in the South like the children Dollard and Davis interviewed. It shaped the lives of everyone in Nkosi's extended family including his dignified maternal grandfather, and his murderous, intelligent, chess-playing father. Recall the impact of Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) on white, middle-class Southern Californians. Consider the broader array of ACEs confronting impoverished children born into a black caste in which deflected

^{lxxii} October 14, 2021 thru April 14, 2022

anger and rage further traumatizes the oppressed. Many survived and thrived. Others, however, did not because, like my mother, they are human. What happens to us matters. Humans don't just "get over" their trauma without help. And for the vast majority, there was no help. It's not how our caste system works.

To varying degrees, caste, and the dysfunction it's produced, have had an impact on all of us who've grown up in America in terms of how we feel about places, what we fear, and what we hate. I said the same of slavery at the outset. And it's at this point where we've come full circle. Caste is the product of oppression, and slavery is a form of oppression that has particular resonance for Americans. It's our original sin, and for decades we've told ourselves that we cleansed ourselves of it at the cost of 700,000 dead. Yet, five days after the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt, and his Attorney General well understood slavery's continued existence in America threatened to adversely impact the efforts of a nation representing democracy and freedom.

In 1941, my father began keeping a journal at age 26 when sharing a house in Norfolk, Virginia with other navy dive-bomber pilots going through advanced carrier training. His December 8th entry reads, "The last few days have been eventful, to say the least. Yesterday, I heard an announcement over the radio just as I was going to dinner that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. It was ridiculous even to begin to believe, so I went in to eat as if nothing happened. A few minutes later, Johnny Dunn, who was in the living room, hollered in that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Both Charlie Ware and I poo-pooed the idea, but after Johnny's insistence we went in to listen to the radio and it was true. All of us were stunned...Evidently, 50-150 planes appeared over Honolulu and Pearl Harbor aiming for Ford Island, the Navy airfield being an excellent target.^{lxxiii} Imagine an airdrome surrounded by capital ships! You are bound to hit something vulnerable, especially on a typical Sunday morning in Pearl Harbor. At 0730 in the morning, no one is up but the duty section among the enlisted men and probably only the watch office among the officers. It must have taken at least 30 minutes to get the guns manned and the ammunition up and probably no one on any ship senior to a Department Head. The news came over that three of our capital ships were hit and Oklahoma was on

^{lxxiii} Per Naval History and Heritage Command (www.history.navy.mil), there were 353 planes.

fire. Later reports indicated that Oklahoma sank, along with a destroyer and a cruiser. Probably the Saratoga and the Enterprise were either sunk or badly damaged.^{lxxiv} If true, we are certainly starting out with a handicap.”

Growing up with an understanding of my father’s experience of war, I had internalized what it meant to be an American in 1941. This sense of Americanness did not include my twentysomething father living in a society in which you could trace the evolution of slavery as a continuous, unbroken human experience from 1619 through 1941.

In 2008, Wall Street Journal reporter Douglas Blackmon completed work on a book clarifying that this unbroken human experience was, in fact, a tragic reality. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, would earn Blackmon a Pulitzer Prize.³²¹ It was through Blackmon that I learned three things of relevance to quality of life in America. First, is that slavery lasted far longer than I’d been taught growing up. It continued for another eight decades and overlapped with my father’s experience as a young man. Second, is that upwards of 200,000 were enslaved, the majority of which were innocent of anything we’d consider a crime. This, in turn, affected millions when factoring in family systems. Third is that the neo-slavery practiced during these eight decades was more brutal than the slavery it replaced. Taken together, the *duration, numbers involved, and level of brutality* characterize a neoslavery that served a singularly important role in sustaining a caste system underpinning the violence and dysfunction that makes American cities unacceptable to middle-class families.

The Thirteenth Amendment consists of just two sentences: “Section 1: Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Section 2: Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.” The transition from slavery to neoslavery depended on the bit that reads, “except as a punishment of a crime”

^{lxxiv} Neither aircraft carrier was at Pearl Harbor on December 7th.

After Southern whites successfully resisted efforts to integrate blacks into mainstream society, they passed laws that effectively criminalized black life—laws that sound almost too absurd to take seriously. State and local governments arrested blacks for selling crops after dark, speaking too loudly in front of white women, playing dice for money, and being unemployed on any given day. After a quick conviction, judges and other quasi-judicial officials (e.g., mayors, justices of the peace, etc.) meted out court fees, and fines that the accused couldn't afford to pay. In response, a month-long sentence of hard labor was routinely extended to six months or more. State and local governments would then lease the “convict” to a brick factory, sugar plantation, turpentine operation, coal mine, or whatever company had contracted with said government. Each month, the company would pay the government a fixed amount, ostensibly paying off a convict's fees and fines. In return, the company got a black man in chains with whom it could, and often did, work to death.³²² Once in the company's possession, reasons were often found to add additional fees or fines, extending the sentence further. Today's equivalent of tens of millions of dollars flowed from companies to governments across the South.

Blackmon was not the first to write about convict leasing. But he was first to clarify that it wasn't some peripheral form of forced labor affecting blacks deserving of punishment who couldn't adjust to the demands of freedom.³²³ Convict leasing was widespread throughout the South. And it was central to black oppression, denying them the full rights of citizenship, and keeping them in servitude long after our civil war ended.

Mindful that German industry and Swiss banking benefited from Jewish slave labor, Blackmon's initial interest was the degree to which American businesses benefitted from decades of black slave labor. There are, for example, prison mines owned by U.S. Steel that leased tens of thousands of men over five decades. Expanding his research, he traveled through Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, visiting courthouse basements and attics, local historical societies, storage sheds, and old county jails. All told, Blackmon found hundreds of thousands of pages of documents that comprise a public record that, as he says, “offer details of a forced labor system of monotonous enormity.”

These original documents contradict official summaries and gubernatorial archives presenting convict leasing as being incidental to black oppression, and implying that those trapped in the system were somehow deserving of the punishment received.

Records show that state and local authorities arrested thousands upon thousands of black men for inconsequential charges, then leased them to slave camps to serve the needs of business cycles.

Convict leasing has long been understood to be barbaric given those lessees could (and did) brutalize convicts and even work them to death because there was no economic cost. As a Southerner involved with leasing convicts put it in 1883, “Before the war, we owned negroes. If a man had a good negro, he could afford to keep him...But these convicts, we don’t own ‘em. One dies, get another.”³²⁴

This sentiment was no exaggeration. On a plantation outside Valdosta, Georgia, guards strapped underperforming, or disobedient men to logs, lying them on their backs and then beating their bare feet with a plank of wood. Those who couldn’t walk on bruised feet afterward were returned to the log, strapped face down, and whipped.³²⁵ In a brick factory outside Atlanta, men ate rancid food and slept chained to their beds on rotting mattresses. Each day, they listened to the screams of the fifteen to twenty men who were whipped for carrying bricks to coal-fired kilns too slowly. Whipping bosses used a leather strap moistened with spit then dipped it in sand so that it would tear off pieces of skin more easily. Failure to physically get up off the ground quickly enough triggered additional whipping, occasionally to the point of death.³²⁶ In a coal mine outside Birmingham, Alabama, sixty shackled forced laborers died over 12 months. Men endured a hellish existence where accidental explosions, collapsing rocks, untreated medical conditions, filth, disease, and the absence of daylight were the norm. Reduced to a state of barbarity, men attacked one another with pickaxes.³²⁷

Blackmon notes, “Where mob violence of the Ku Klux Klan terrorized black citizens periodically, the return of forced labor as a fixture of black life ground pervasively into the daily lives of far more African Americans.” Call it forced labor, neoslavery, convict leasing, or whatever term of your choosing. It was part of a continuum that affected the minds of human beings every bit as much as my father was affected by combat, or my mother was affected by her father’s depravity. Slavery’s continued existence for over three centuries—widespread into the 1930s, and ending just two decades before my birth—has much to do with why barbed wire surrounds my mother’s school.

45. The Tacit Agreement Underpinning Polarization

In a speech at Cornell in 1944 Attorney General Biddle referred to the war's impact on slavery in America saying, "One response of this country to the challenge of the ideals of democracy made by the new ideologies of Fascism and Communism has been a deepened realization of the values of a government based on a belief in the dignity and rights of man." By then, Biddle's Justice Department had prosecuted among others, U.S. Sugar Company, and a Texas farmer who received a four-year prison sentence for enslaving a mentally disabled man disfigured by beatings and whippings. By 1951, Congress had updated statutes to make U.S. Attorneys more effective in prosecuting slavery's variants even as cases became rarer.

Blackmon notes, millions of soldiers—black and white—had returned to America aware of the "horror of racial ideology exalted to its most violent extremes in Nazi Germany." Fewer blacks were willing to play a subservient role in society.³²⁸ And as the 1950s progressed, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of school desegregation, a woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus, and both political parties developed robust civil rights platforms. Looked at from one angle, the future looked promising.

Had I been at Michigan Stadium in May 1964 listening to President Johnson speak of quality of life and eradicating poverty, I'd have felt optimistic. I'd have anticipated we'd use national wealth and talent to address pathologies born of more than 300 years of government decisions and American jurisprudence. I'm referring here to the combination of laws (e.g., those which drove convict leasing), ordinances (e.g., Jim Crow

ordinances mandating separate facilities), and policies (e.g., FHA redlining) that established the caste system in the South, and its more flexible variant in the North.

On that sunny afternoon in 1964, I'd have wished for political leadership to facilitate increasingly productive conversations, equipped with knowledge of how experiences shape the mind. I'd have wished for a shared understanding of our past and hoped that national strength and moral authority on the world stage would be rooted in the ongoing work Americans did to constructively address that past. Through this work would come understanding, healing, and improvements in quality of life. But of course, as the years passed, I'd have been found to be naïve. Instead, the three aforementioned poisons coursed through the veins of the American body politic, and eventually—over thirty years—politically divided the nation into two irreconcilable parts that look much like they did in 1854.

In 1950, the son of a right-wing, ultra-Catholic, multimillionaire oilman graduated from Yale. A year later, the son completed a book criticizing Yale's economics department as being too "collectivist," and chastised the religion department for failing to "proselytize the Christian faith."³²⁹ The book, *God and Man at Yale*, was criticized for its distortions, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies.³³⁰ Its publication, however, marked the birth of the modern conservative movement.

Four years later in 1955, the oilman gave his son \$1.1 million (present-day value) to start a magazine called the *National Review*. The magazine's raison d'etre was to dismantle Roosevelt's New Deal and return America to the halcyon days of the 1920s when business was unregulated, and the poor and powerless fended for themselves. The *National Review* would serve as a rallying point for a nascent far-right movement that opposes social policies considered uncontroversial in Europe's advanced democracies.³³¹

The son who benefitted from his father's \$1.1 million gift was one William F. Buckley. He spoke with an affected, upper-class, quasi-British accent, and told Americans, "There is an inverse relationship between reliance on the state and self-reliance." Notably, he never expounded on the relationship between self-reliance, and reliance on one's multi-millionaire father. Buckley and the *National Review* did, however, achieve two aims that moved Americans to have corrosive discussions

regarding the role of government in American society. First, they conflated laissez-faire economics and conservative Christian doctrine. Second, they established common cause between conservative Republicans who despised the New Deal and Southern Democrats who despised blacks.³³² America's return to the political dynamics of 1854 has much to do with these developments.

Law professor Carl Bogus has noted that the two most consequential sentences William Buckley ever wrote were among his earliest.³³³ In the preface to *God and Man at Yale*, we read, "I myself believe that the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world. I further believe that the struggle between individualism and collectivism is the same struggle reproduced on another level." Here, Buckley signals his intent to spearhead a crusade of sorts. His is a messianic struggle, pitting Christianity and laissez-faire economics against secularism and liberalism. Bogus notes what makes Buckley's words so powerful is that they express a "sentiment" divorced from, and more powerful than, analysis or logic. "One cannot," he says, "understand the 'modern conservative movement' without appreciating this sentiment."³³⁴

Buckley's writers and editors at the *National Review* would ensure this far-right sentiment grew steadily to the point where today Americans hungrily consumed books like Ann Coulter's *Godless: The Church of Liberalism*, and Sean Hannity's *Deliver us from Evil: Defeating Terrorism, Despotism, and Liberalism*.³³⁵ In other western nations, policies characterizing liberalism strive to improve quality of life, and meet the needs of communities in the 21st century. Consider Germany's center-right party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which supports social welfare programs alongside a free-market economy. In 2008, the CDU passed legislation guaranteeing the right to subsidized child care, which is unacceptable to the far-right.³³⁶ This is the same Germany providing Sean Hannity with the BMW X7 and Mercedes EQ sedan he reportedly owns, and presumably enjoys driving.

The story of how the *National Review* fused Republican conservatism with Democratic racism to fundamentally alter the party of Lincoln begins with a dilemma for conservatives. In the 1950s, the Republican party had a moderate and conservative wing.

Moderates supported Roosevelt's New Deal, were politically relevant, had ties to Wall Street, and mostly drew support from the Northeast.³³⁷ Conservatives opposed the New Deal, had relatively little political power, had ties to small business, embraced isolationism, and drew support from the Midwest and West.³³⁸ Conservatives needed to partner with someone other than moderate Republicans if they wanted to launch their crusade.

Segregationist Democrats weren't necessarily an obvious choice. Throughout the 1930s, Roosevelt worked closely with them to get New Deal legislation passed.³³⁹ As historian Harvard Sitkoff notes, "Congress held the power of the purse, and the South held power in Congress."³⁴⁰ Economic recovery trumped all else, and Roosevelt never jeopardized Southern support by challenging segregation or supporting anti-lynching legislation.³⁴¹ In return, programs like social security, and projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority—which provided tens of thousands with electricity—moved forward and proved popular.³⁴² Although not always smooth sailing, this kind of cooperation continued into the 1940s and 1950s.

Recall, however, that by 1948 the civil rights movement had progressed to a point where Truman desegregated the military, and southern Democrats split off to form the States' Rights Party. Although they returned to the Democratic fold in 1952, conservatives understood disaffected racists to be potentially optimal partners with whom to build a national movement.³⁴³

The *National Review's* first issue appeared in November 1955, and over the next five years an ideological group of editors and writers—some overtly racist, others not—would do the movement's most consequential work, reshaping national dialogue with profound consequences for quality of life.³⁴⁴ It was during these five years that the *National Review* formulated a tacit agreement that would, in time, bring conservative Republicans and racist Democrats together as one. Conservatives would support racists in opposing federal efforts to desegregate the South under the guise of states' rights. In return, southern racists would agree to view states' rights more broadly and reject the kind of federal social democratic policymaking they embraced when white supremacy ruled supreme.³⁴⁵

The federally mandated school desegregation that so outraged racists in 1954 provided the *National Review* an opening to use their growing influence to define this agreement.³⁴⁶ Of the many contributions shaping this conservative-racist accord, I believe the two most relevant to political polarization—and hence to my own life—are an article written by Buckley in 1957, and a response written by his best friend at Yale, and brother-in-law, Brent Bozell.³⁴⁷

The essence of Buckley’s article, “Why the South Must Prevail,” is that Whites are entitled—indeed obligated in some cases—to deny Blacks the vote.³⁴⁸ The *National Review* published it at a time when some in Congress were attempting to resurrect black voting rights.

With the voting and school desegregation in mind, Buckley writes, “In some parts of the South, the White community merely intends to prevail – that is all. It means to prevail on any issue on which there is corporate disagreement between Negro and White. The White community will take whatever measures are necessary to make certain it has its way.” If Whites cannot prevail without resorting to violence, then they “must determine whether the prevalence of its will is worth the terrible price of violence.”

“Whites,” Buckley says, are “entitled to take such measures as are necessary” because they’re the more “advanced race,” and where the “white community is concerned...claims of civilization supersede those of universal suffrage.” Concluding his endorsement of white supremacy, Buckley reminds Southerners that they “must not exploit the fact of Negro backwardness to preserve Negro as a servile class.” “It is tempting and convenient,” he says, “to block the progress of a minority whose service as menials are economically useful. Let the South never permit itself to do this.”³⁴⁹ This coming from the godfather of American conservatism, spearheading a movement indifferent to the implications of caste, trauma, and pathology.

Brent Bozell believed Buckley's raw expression of white supremacy would cost the *National Review* support. In the next issue, Bozell wrote, “This magazine has expressed views on the racial question that I consider dead wrong, and capable of doing grave hurt to the conservative movement.”³⁵⁰ Bozell argued that the *National Review* must advocate for rule of law and uphold the Constitution (i.e., the Fifteenth Amendment). Violent intimidation, or illegally invalidating votes was the wrong

message.³⁵¹ The way forward, he said, was to continue supporting what's referred to as "massive resistance," steps taken by state governments to undermine federal law.³⁵² Virginia's legislature, for example, closed schools facing desegregation orders, provided alternative funding for private, white-only schools, and created pupil placement boards to block blacks from being assigned to white schools.³⁵³

Blatantly racist language like Buckley's had been acceptable for three-hundred years, but it wasn't a great fit for the post-war world. Our new role as the beacon of democracy obligated the conservative-racist alliance to adopt a lexicon suitable for changing times. In refuting Buckley, Brent Bozell emerged as an ideal candidate to solidify the new movement's vocabulary. And by 1960, millions of Americans were communicating in a new language I call FreedomSpeak.

46. Freedomspeak

After our daughter's birth, the Canadian government began sending monthly child benefit payments. The amount received varies with household income, and our amount was minimal.³⁵⁴ That lower- and middle-income families receive the lion's share is uncontroversial. Politicians don't spin narratives about women having babies to collect benefits. Nor is there concern over whether a parent works or stays home. Parents—single, married, or divorced—use the allowance as they see fit.

Policymakers across ideological spectrums outside the U.S. understand early childhood is crucial in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physical development. The U.S., however, has long been an outlier among advanced industrial nations in that it provides no permanent monthly child benefit, or paid parental leave.³⁵⁵ Childcare is a similar story. The average spent per child in the OECD is \$14,436.^{lxxv} The average in America? Just \$500, and good luck finding quality care.³⁵⁶ In UNICEF's most recently compiled index of national childcare and parental leave policies, the United States ranked 41 out of 42 countries analyzed.³⁵⁷

In July 2021, Congress passed legislation providing twelve months of temporary child benefit payments. Although not permanent as they are in Canada, it was the first-time families received monthly benefits of the sort that provide the predictability Canadian and European families value. And every Republican in Congress voted against the legislation.

^{lxxv} Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development is made up of 37 democracies with market-based economies who collaborate to develop policy standards to promote economic growth.

Republican congressman Lloyd Smucker represents the Pennsylvania district next to the one I grew up in. We're the same age, and likely have many shared values and experiences as kids. Explaining why he voted against child benefit payments he said, "the radical left" is "creating massive dependency on the federal government," reducing "reliance on the individual, and contributing to "less personal responsibility."³⁵⁸ Lloyd later spoke of the existential threat social spending poses to the United States—spending, he says, that will "completely erode the foundation of a society that has been built on individual freedom, and personal responsibility." What's understood in all other industrialized democracies to be sound policy backed by research is viewed by Lloyd as an attempt to pursue a "radical socialist agenda."³⁵⁹ So, why do Lloyd and a majority of white Americans view the world so differently than people living in other capitalist societies? And here I return to the central corridor of the sunlit prison of the American Dream and ponder the awesome, corrosive power of *FreedomSpeak*.

FreedomSpeak was introduced to Americans in a 115-page book titled *Conscience of a Conservative*.³⁶⁰ It became a bestseller, and is, today, the bible of American conservatism.³⁶¹ It shapes the tone of Fox News and the mind of Lloyd Smucker.

Brent Bozell ghostwrote *Conscience* for Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, at the request of Clarence Manion, an influential right-wing radio host and former Dean of Notre Dame's law school.³⁶² Manion had learned about a speech Goldwater gave in South Carolina on May 16, 1959, in which he criticized *Brown v. Board of Education* and Eisenhower for sending federal troops into Arkansas to enforce it.^{lxxvi} When Manion heard about Goldwater's speech, he was thrilled. In Goldwater, Manion found a conservative standard-bearer who'd be embraced both inside and outside the South. The thing was, Goldwater was largely unknown outside Arizona. To address that, Manion conceived of a policy-oriented manifesto to introduce him to Americans. When Goldwater said he was not the man to write it, Manion turned to the *National Review* brain trust and enlisted Bozell who had written speeches for Goldwater and understood his views.³⁶³

^{lxxvi} Recall that in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court ruled that it was illegal to bar black children from attending the same schools as whites. This, in turn, infuriated white supremacists.

Conscience provides the most forceful case for states' rights since aforementioned slave owner, senator, political theorist, and political ally of Senator Lewis Cass, John C. Calhoun authored *A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States* in 1851.³⁶⁴ It's in Calhoun's *Discourse* where slaveholding oligarchs found legal rationale for seceding from the Union.³⁶⁵ *Conscience of a Conservative* isn't overtly racist, yet its language mirrors Calhoun's. *Discourse* speaks of the "encroachment of the federal government." *Conscience* speaks of the "encroachment of freedom by Big Government." In *Discourse*, interference in slavery and its expansion is the principal concern. With *Conscience*, it's about the clear and imminent danger posed by the federal government to legally sanctioned racial segregation.

Calhoun's *Discourse* was written three years before the application of the Cass Doctrine in Kansas triggered political polarization in 1854. *Conscience* was written four years before the Civil Rights Act triggered political polarization in 1964. Consider *Conscience* as *Discourse* repackaged for contemporary times. It's in this bible of conservatism that we find the text laying out the aforementioned personal responsibility myth. It demands of us that we ignore everything that our historic record has to teach. Decades of analysis, insight, and warnings from Dubois, Dollard, Davis, and others must be erased from memory. Everything neuroscience, psychiatry, and psychology tell us about the relationship between trauma, mental health, and brain function is a hoax. In *Conscience*, Bozell tells me we're coated in Teflon immune to our circumstances:

The Conservative realizes, thirdly, that man's development, in both spiritual and material aspects, is not something that can be directed by outside forces. Every man, for his individual good and for the good of his society, is responsible for his own development.

Bozell, who himself came from a relatively privileged background, ghostwrote for a man that inherited a successful department store. Goldwater's banker referred to him as a "modest millionaire."³⁶⁶ Buckley, for his part, grew up in a mansion on a forty-seven-acre Connecticut estate and had servants and private tutors at his beck and call.³⁶⁷ That all three had a different start in life than the millions born into the black caste is of no matter.

If you're a black man arrested for vagrancy, and sold into industrial slavery, you pull up your bootstraps, get your father to pay your way through Yale, and live the Dream. Like my mother, those at the bottom of the black caste simply didn't have sufficient character to rise beyond their circumstances and thrive. We are masters of our own destiny. To swim in Bozell's mind is to inhabit the realm of denial and absurdity.

It was as a teenager listening to Reagan—a Goldwater devotee—deliver his first inaugural address, that I heard him make that widely embraced proclamation mentioned previously which told us, “Government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem.” This, like much of what Reagan said, was lifted from Bozell (writing for Goldwater), who wrote:

I have little interest in streamlining government or making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but repeal them. ...And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituent's interests, I shall reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can." (p 23)

Reagan was correct in saying that government was the problem, but for the wrong reasons. More than 300 years of government policies established and reinforced our caste system. Bozell is unapologetically frank in saying that government has no role in addressing the pathologies that inherently conservative, oppressive policies produced.³⁶⁸ His goal is to harness the emergent power born of the nascent, yet promising, conservative-racist alliance, and return us to the 1920s when one-third of Americans lived in poverty.³⁶⁹

Written at a time when full-out white supremacy was increasingly threatened, *Conscience* turns reality on its head by claiming that States' Rights, “our chief bulwark against the encroachment of individual freedom by Big Government, is fast disappearing under the piling sands of absolutism.” In fact, Bozell has it backwards. The historical record makes clear absolutism in the United States is principally a function of state and

local governance.³⁷⁰ Nonetheless, *Conscience* enshrined “States’ Rights” as the battle cry of the conservative-racist alliance.

Freedomspeak propelled the conservative-racist alliance forward in the 1964 Republican primary. Their grass-roots campaign developed a network of fervent supporters that hadn’t previously existed for Republicans in the South. As a key operative in creating this network, Buckley—whose maternal great-grandfathers had fought for the Confederacy—cemented ties with prominent segregationists such as Strom Thurmond (family friend, and influential racist Senator), James Kilpatrick (prominent journalist and *National Review* contributor who debated MLK on national television), and William Simmons (head of the White Citizens’ Councils who effectively opposed efforts to desegregate through 1989, and trumpeted the motto “States’ Rights. Racial Integrity”).

As Manion’s involvement with *Conscience* illustrates, Buckley’s *National Review* was not solely responsible for the alliance’s growth and success, but its influence is indisputable. And moderate Republicans were not prepared to respond—especially in the South.

Goldwater lost the general election in November by a landslide for no single reason. Some became alarmed when he famously proclaimed, “Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice. Moderation in pursuit of justice is no virtue.” Others were disturbed by Goldwater’s apparent willingness to use tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam. Still others—including 94% of blacks—failed to support him because he voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964.³⁷¹

Despite the loss, Goldwater did something no other Republican candidate had done since Reconstruction, a time when many former Confederates could not run for office or vote. Namely, he swept the Deep South, where hatred of Republicans had historically been most intense.³⁷² The election demonstrated that the conservative-racist alliance could win. They just needed their candidate to employ Freedomspeak more skillfully. That would happen four years later (Richard Nixon), and in spades in 1980 (Ronald Reagan). A political realignment was in the making. At the presidential level, the impact was immediate. In Congress, it’d take another 30 years to complete, but in time, every American with a racist impulse would be voting Republican.

47. The War That Killed Healing

I've never forgotten the name Hilgartner. He and my father got into an argument at a cookout in early 1971. My recollection is vague; a much taller person looms over my father; two men screaming into each other's faces. It was in the evening, and there was drinking. My parents and I left immediately afterward.

I was seven at the time, and we'd been living in Pebble Beach, California six months. My father had recently finished his Ph.D. and was teaching operations research and management at the Naval Postgraduate School. He seemed a good fit—a decorated combat pilot with degrees from Annapolis, Harvard, and Michigan. But two years earlier, in the fall of 1969, my parents had participated in anti-Vietnam War rallies in Ann Arbor. My father's views on what he referred to as that “stupid war,” wouldn't have gone over well with every military officer taking his classes. Unsurprisingly, my father did not teach there the following academic year. Some combination of his political views and his alcoholism contributed to his dismissal.

I never thought to ask him about the incident, and only recently learned that his disagreement had been with Lieutenant Colonel Peter Hilgartner. In Vietnam, Hilgartner commanded the 1st Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, and fought in numerous actions from 1966-1967. He too was an Annapolis graduate and loved his country. And herein lies one of the many tragedies of the war. Two intelligent men, both dedicated to their country, should not have had to debate the fundamental merits of a major war.

Many called it “McNamara's War” in reference to the war's architect, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. With the exception of President Johnson, no one was more responsible for escalating the conflict into full-scale war in 1965.³⁷³ McNamara

shocked many in 1995 with a book titled *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and the Lessons of Vietnam*. It explains why a war that cost 58,000 American lives and 3.2 million Vietnamese lives was a terrible mistake. Johnson and his advisors saw Vietnam through the lens of the Cold War, conflating Vietnamese and Chinese communism. In fact, the Vietnamese were more nationalist than communist. Furthermore, the Vietnamese and Chinese had fought for centuries, and Vietnamese president Ho Chi Minh had no intention of becoming a satellite of China. After fighting against the Japanese with American support, Ho declared an independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam in September 1945, reading a proclamation of independence in Hanoi which began,

All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.

Ho Chi Minh had previously lived in Boston and admired America.³⁷⁴ After Japan surrendered, he appealed repeatedly to the Truman administration for support for Vietnam's independence. Truman, in return, ignored him and supported French efforts to recolonize Vietnam.³⁷⁵ And over the next three decades, whenever faced with two choices regarding Vietnam, successive American administrations consistently made the wrong one.³⁷⁶

It's been said the United States could have won the war if only the military had fought without restrictions (e.g., the U.S. never invaded North Vietnam out of fear of pulling China and Russia into the conflict). The fact is, America never lost militarily, but neither could we have ever won. Writing in the U.S. Army War College's quarterly journal in 1996, Jeffery Record notes that by the time U.S. forces were pulled out in 1973, they'd fought North Vietnam's conventional army to a stalemate and were "decisively defeating" South Vietnam's insurgent communist elements.³⁷⁷ The intractable

problem was that America had been propping up a succession of corrupt, repressive South Vietnamese governments that did things like gun down monks and jail school children. You can't build a military victory on top of a house of cards. In the end, Record writes, "The United States could not have prevented the forcible reunification of Vietnam under communist auspices at a morally, materially, and strategically acceptable price."

Johnson escalated our involvement in Vietnam to full-scale war at precisely the time American cities began reaching critical mass with respect to serving as receptacles of trauma and imploding under the weight of history. As mentioned, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 7, 1964, which provided Johnson with the authorization he sought to introduce ground troops into Vietnam.³⁷⁸ Three weeks earlier, the first of the major urban riots in the North broke out in Harlem. Three weeks after the resolution passed, rioting and widespread looting broke out in North Philadelphia, six blocks from where Nkosi had taken me to see where the two girls in Sunday dresses had hauntingly played amidst trash-strewn streets.

The Philadelphia riot lasted two days and was one of 329 that destroyed sections of cities and towns across America between 1964 and 1968. Each riot had a different spark, but the flammable material was the same. Recall that thirty years earlier—when American cities were still overwhelmingly white in the 1930s—men in the federal government and real estate made decisions relating to the "structure and growth of neighborhoods" which took into account the likelihood of "threatening or probable infiltration of inharmonious racial groups." "Negroes" were destined to live in sections of cities delineated on maps as "hazardous" or "definitely declining." Whites would move to newly built suburbs, and jobs would follow them to accommodate new living arrangements.

By the time rioting began in 1964, most of the 6 million blacks who would migrate had already done so. Black migrants from the South were joining earlier arrivals, whose lives were characterized by poverty, waning job opportunities, high rent for substandard living conditions, poor nutrition, underfunded schools, high infant mortality, criminality, addiction, and police brutality.³⁷⁹ Writing in 1965, future president of the American Psychological Association, Kenneth B. Clark remarked, "It is one measure of

the depth of insidiousness of American racism that the nation ignores the rage of the rejected—until it explodes in Watts or Harlem.”³⁸⁰ White Americans like my parents and most everyone I grew up around in the 1960s and 1970s displayed little interest in comprehending the despair, lack of self-worth, hostility, apathy, and resentment that fueled the rioting. Most whites recoiled from the images they saw on television screens, either thankful to be living at a safe distance, or making plans to move away from the looming disaster approaching their doorstep.

Throughout the 1964 campaign, Johnson presented himself as the candidate opposed to expanding American involvement in Vietnam. Yet his administration had already written a draft resolution authorizing unlimited force some two months before falsely claiming North Vietnamese PT boats engaged in unprovoked aggression.³⁸¹ Obscuring intentions, Johnson didn’t mention Vietnam in his inaugural address delivered on January 20, 1965. He did, however, give what amounted to being the last, full-throated endorsement of progressive liberalism ever made by an American president when sworn into office. Four weeks later on March 2, American bombs began falling on North Vietnam, and the following week the first ground troops arrived in the South.³⁸² Before the war ended for America in 1973, Johnson and Nixon would send 2.7 million military personnel to Vietnam to participate in a conflict that cost 1 trillion dollars in present-day value.³⁸³ After our troops left, Vietnam went communist with no adverse security impact on the United States. And that was precisely the point made in Senate hearings held in 1966 in which retired generals and George Kennan, the architect of Cold War containment, all said America’s continued involvement in Vietnam’s civil war would be a tragic mistake.³⁸⁴

The Vietnam War killed the potential for healing in the United States. It came at a time when we might have begun to comprehend the ways in which 345 years of unadulterated white supremacy—years that encompassed 322 years of enslavement—had affected all of us. On some level, Johnson appeared to understand this. In his inaugural address, he spoke of the need to heal the “deep and abiding divisions which scar the union for generations”—issues left unresolved by our civil war. Johnson told us that he envisioned a Great Society characterized by the “excitement of becoming--always becoming, trying,

probing, falling, resting, and trying again--but always trying and always gaining.” I interpret these words to be an acknowledgment that our embedded pathologies demand public sector innovation and experimentation. Assess and refine. Keep what works. Shelve what does not. Never tire of striving for gains and healing because “freedom asks more than it gives, and that the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored.” No president before or since has made such a case for bringing the power of government to bear on our social catastrophe born of three centuries of government policies and jurisprudence. And no president so quickly undermined his aims.

Regarding Vietnam, Johnson principally considered the advice of three men: Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, and National Security Advisor McGeorge (a.k.a., “Mac”) Bundy. All advocated for escalation, believing that a failure to do so would advance Soviet and Chinese interests. A fourth advisor, Assistant Secretary of State George Ball, argued strongly against this prevailing view in October 1964 in a memo unpretentiously addressed to “Dean, Bob, and Mac” titled “How Valid Are Assumptions Underlying our Viet-Nam Policy.” The memo predicted a morass but was dismissed, particularly by McNamara who, according to one official, “regarded it as next to treason,” and limited the memo’s circulation.³⁸⁵

Two weeks before the bombing started in March 1965, Vice President Hubert Humphrey conveyed what amounted to being the most prescient warning drafted by a senior official. In a memo to Johnson, Humphrey laid out the domestic and international consequences of full-scale war. Among these, Johnson should expect a “consequent increase in defense expenditures” that would “shift the Administration’s emphasis from its Great Society-oriented programs to further military outlays.”³⁸⁶ And that’s what happened; we spent a trillion dollars to kill 3.2 million Vietnamese. Simultaneously, the last of 6 million blacks—most impoverished, and uneducated—were streaming to cities.

In 1937, the Carnegie Corporation commissioned a study examining the “place of the Negro in American life.” Work began in 1938 and ended in 1944. The effort involved the collaboration of 74 American scholars with knowledge of the social, political, educational, and economic dimensions of black life. Carnegie president Frederick Keppel reached out to Swedish economist—and future Nobel Prize recipient—Gunnar Myrdal

and asked him to lead the study. Keppel wanted the study designed and executed by someone from a “non-imperialistic country with no background of domination of one race over another” who “would approach the situation with an entirely fresh mind.” Keppel told Myrdal that he’d receive all the help he needed, but in the end, it was Myrdal’s responsibility to make final assessments regarding the “Negro problem in America” without “side glances as to what was politically desirable or expedient.” That final assessment is laid out in Myrdal’s landmark 1144-page book, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy*.

Myrdal completed *American Dilemma* two decades before Lyndon Johnson escalated in Vietnam, and shortly after the second phase of the Great Migration began in 1941. Its contents obliterate the myth claiming 1960s-era welfare terminated some “golden age of the American negro family.” Regarding black American poverty in the 1940s, Myrdal writes:

The economic situation of the Negroes in America is pathological. Except for a small minority enjoying upper- or middle-class status, the masses of American Negroes, in the rural South and in the segregated slum quarters in Southern and Northern cities, are destitute. They own little property; even their household goods are mostly inadequate and dilapidated. Their incomes are not only low but irregular. They thus live from day to day and have scant security for the future. Their entire culture and their individual interests and strivings are narrow.

These are the Americans who would soon move to the North Philadelphia neighborhoods later scarred by rioting in 1964, as well as those who moved into the homes surrounding my mother’s school. Myrdal made these observations regarding destitution twenty years before the Great Society supposedly destroyed black families and pushed them into poverty. So, again I ask...when was this golden age that liberalism destroyed?

In the midst of world war, Myrdal wrote, “the Negro problem is not only America’s greatest failure but also America’s incomparably great opportunity for the future.” Reluctantly forced into war, we sold liberty bonds, built liberty ships, and fought,

as Myrdal said, “against aggression and for liberty and equality.” Shedding our isolationism, we claimed to serve as a beacon of freedom in contrast to what Germany and Japan were offering. If America could, as Myrdal urged, “demonstrate that justice, equality, and cooperation are possible between white and colored people,” then we could prove to ourselves and the world it was possible to move beyond empty declarations of morality of the sort that deepen cynicism.

In writing *American Dilemma* in 1944, Myrdal provided a rationale as to why Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society speech was relevant to our lives in 1964. Regarding steps required to heal America, none was (and is) more important than providing meaningful employment to the millions trapped in America’s lower caste. The private sector was in no way prepared to provide employment for many of the millions leaving sharecropped fields. Myrdal optimistically wrote, “Large-scale public intervention will be a necessity. In this endeavor, no national administration will dare to allow unemployment to be too much concentrated upon the Negro.” Essentially, Myrdal was making the case for a domestic Marshal Plan in 1944.

Twenty years later in Michigan Stadium, Johnson sounded like a president ready to execute that plan when he said, “The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning.” Incredibly hopeful rhetoric, but instead, we got Vietnam.

Much changed between May 1964 and May 1968. By the end of this four-year period, the possibility of our beginning to come to terms with our tragic history was diminished, if not extinguished. Healing never came, and the cost to all of us—racists, progressives, and the indifferent—has been significant. We essentially remained on the same path we’ve been on since the South’s military defeat and have consistently ignored the warnings ever since.

Dubois told us in 1899 that white racism had a corrosive impact on the formerly enslaved and their children. Recall that he implored us (whites) to change for our own sakes, stressing that evolving social dynamics were a “battle for humanity and human culture.” We ignored him. Four decades later, Myrdal saw the same battle from the

perspective of an outsider—a Swede. If America could, as he said, “show the world a progressive trend by which the Negro became finally integrated into modern democracy, all mankind would be given faith again.” Knowing the cost of doing nothing he said, “America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity.” We chose the former.

The cultural continuity of our slaveholding republic and the white supremacist nation that followed produced deep seeded trauma throughout the South—a place where black children endured a broader array of adverse childhood events than say, middle-class San Diegans in the 1980s. Caste shaped minds and values. The Great Migration, coupled with the nation’s housing laws, and overt racism funneled these human beings into confined geographic locales within our cities. The declining health of neighborhoods surrounding my mother’s high school was indication that the battle for humanity and human culture was being lost by 1964. In the end, we’d be left with a handful of oases like JB’s Southern Style Restaurant, where Nkosi and I could connect with good-willed souls engaged in the Sisyphean struggle of attempting to heal what they alone could not.³⁸⁷

The heartbreaking thing about the period spanning May 1964 through May 1968 is how it ended. Four years of civil disorder and rage in American cities paralleled four years of escalation in Vietnam. May 1968 marked the deadliest single month of the war at a time when troop strength and expenditures were their highest.³⁸⁸ Johnson’s assurances that the U.S. would soon turn the corner rang increasingly hollow. Vietnam consumed his presidency to the point where, in March 1968, he unexpectedly announced he’d not run for re-election, ostensibly to focus on issues of war and peace rather than politics. And one month earlier in February 1968, a presidential commission completed the “Kerner Report,” the most consequential set of findings ever delivered to an American president regarding the enormity of challenges born of enslavement and white supremacy.³⁸⁹ But by May 1968, anyone paying attention understood that the national discussion the report’s authors had hoped to spark, and the recommendations they hoped to see implemented weren’t going to happen. Vietnam drained away whatever capacity and will the nation might have had to begin to come to terms with the past and heal.

Conceived of when black students from my father's formally all white high school were throwing Molotov cocktails through plate glass windows, the Kerner Report answered three questions posed by Lyndon Johnson regarding the 1967 riots: What happened? Why did it happen? And what could be done to prevent future violence?³⁹⁰ Johnson expected his handpicked commission to produce a report that would tell Americans his Great Society programs were winning the War on Poverty, and reflect well on him politically. Instead, the report clarified the limits of those programs in light of problems that were deeper than officially acknowledged. Page one of the report bluntly states, "What white Americans have never fully understood – but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it." In other words, the Kerner report is what Myrdal would have hoped for in the 1940s, namely comprehensive recommendations backed by penetrating analysis. The thing was, the cost of those recommendations rivaled that of the war Johnson was prosecuting, and he was already under conservative pressure to reduce domestic spending.³⁹¹ The report was dead on arrival, with profound consequences for quality of life.

In the months after May 1968, the three poisons coursing through the veins of the American body politic finished the job. Instead of Bobby Kennedy and a domestic Marshall plan, we got Richard Nixon and an expansion of the Vietnam War under a policy called "Vietnamization."³⁹² As the standard bearer of the emerging conservative-racist alliance, Nixon said of the Kerner Report, that its "major weakness" was that it "blames everybody for the riots except the perpetrators of the riots." He believed that the government should meet "force with force if necessary," and provide "retaliation against the perpetrators and planners of violence." Nixon advisor Alan Greenspan opined, "There is no moral justification for violence in a free society. This is not Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. All citizens have the means to achieve their ends through political persuasion." In other words, our past does not matter and present-day realities are to be ignored.

Political polarization would take years to solidify, but the process was in motion. Martin Luther King, seemingly anticipating the difficulty I'd later have finding home in America, called the Kerner Report, "a physicians warning of approaching death with a

prescription for life.” As a nation in 1968, we were pointed in the direction from which we came—back to 1854.

CODA: Shared Fate (TBD)

To be refined further.

I ask about a future in which we remain locked in the sunlight prison of the American Dream, denying our past, diminished by violence, living in fear of one another, and building bad human habitat. I describe sitting at the kitchen table in Halifax, discovering King's April 1967 Riverside speech. I realized that he'd accurately predicted my future regarding my "difficulty finding home in America." I describe the feeling of being understood by a black man who I no longer saw as black. He simply became human, and I realized that we—black and white—have a shared fate. Say what you will about America. It's an experiment that the world cannot afford to fail. We need to get it sorted.

Endnotes

¹ Richard Rothstein discusses how the FHA and Veterans Administration recruited builders such as William Levitt to mass produce housing and required these builders – all of whom received federal loans – to have explicit clauses in deeds prohibiting home sales to Blacks. See Rothstein’s “Modern Segregation.” Economic Policy Institute. March 6, 2014

² See Douglas Blackmon. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II.* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009)

³ Yorktown CV5. Naval History and Heritage Command
<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/y/yorktown-iii.html>

⁴ The American urban designer Jeff Speck has written eloquently about the importance of the quality of the walk. Speck is one of the clearest communicators regarding the relevance and importance of the intersection of urban design and emotional well being.

⁵ See <https://www.newmediaandmarketing.com/millennials-77-million-strong>.

See also:

Adam Okulicz-Kozaryn & Rubia R. Valente (2018): No urban malaise for Millennials, *Regional Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/00343404.2018.1453130

Raymond, E. L., Dill, J., & Lee, Y. (2022). Millennial First-Time Homebuyers and Location Choice. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 42(2), 176-184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X18807751>

⁶ A majority of Canadians, however, live in the same auto-dependent environments as Americans. It’s just that cities have remained viable options for families. This said, middle class Canadians are being priced out of walkable environments due to supply and demand. (i.e., Canadian planners, almost exclusively pursue sprawl development.)

⁷ My relationship to Lewis Cass is easy enough to understand. My grandmother Nellie Cass had a grandfather named Joseph Garrish Cass. Lewis was his first cousin.

⁸ Lewis Cass first articulated his policy of “Popular Sovereignty” when unveiling his presidential platform in the fall of 1857 in correspondence known as the Nicholson letter. His role in defining American racial policy well known. See for example https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bleeding_Kansas

⁹ In addition to the man who was almost president, Cass was a young brigadier general fighting the British in the War of 1812, Governor of the Michigan Territory, Andrew Jackson’s Secretary of War, Ambassador to France, US Senator, Secretary of State in the years leading up to civil war. As Secretary of War he implemented the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

¹⁰ Joffe, Julia. What Donald Trump’s Flimsy Handle on American History Means. *GQ Magazine*. 23-Oct. 2019. (10-Nov. 2019) <<https://www.gq.com/story/donald-trump-george-washington-bad-history>>

¹¹ Louis Jacobson. "What's up with Donald Trump and Andrew Jackson?" *Politifact*. 2 2017. <https://www.politifact.com/article/2017/may/02/whats-up-with-donald-trump-andrew-jackson/>

¹² Many have written about the Cass Doctrine. See for example, Robert Russel. "Constitutional Doctrines with Regard to Slavery in Territories." *The Journal of Southern History*, Nov., 1966, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Nov., 1966), pp.

466-486 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2204926>

¹³ Thomas Jefferson provided Lewis Cass with his first public appointment as a U.S. marshal in 1807.

¹⁴ See “American Political Prints 1766-1876.” *Harp Week.com*, accessed March 3, 2020. <https://loc.harpweek.com/LCPoliticalCartoons/DisplayCartoonLarge.asp?MaxID=&UniqueID=9&Year=1856&YearMark=1856>

¹⁵ *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790.* Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census (publisher). Government Printing Office (printed 1908). 1908 [1790]. LCCN 07-35273; OCLC 2080540 (all editions); census.gov. See Table: Population of the United States as returned at the First Census: 1790. P 8.

¹⁶ Of the first 12 presidents, only John Adams and John Quincy Adams had not owned slaves.

¹⁷ For example, while Northwest Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery, so states like Michigan and Ohio became free states. The Southwest Ordinance of 1790 was silent on the issue, and Tennessee came into the union as a slave state.

¹⁸ Joanne B. Freeman. *The Field of Blood: Violence in Congress and the Road to Civil War*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018)

¹⁹ This is the same Stephen Douglas that defeated Lincoln in 1858 in order to retain his senate seat. Lincoln of course went on to win the presidency two years later, after having lost two consecutive Illinois senate races in 1854 and 1858.

²⁰ See *United States v. Cruikshank* which overturned convictions of Southern paramilitaries who participated in the Colfax Massacre in 1872. Essentially, it deemed the Fourteenth Amendment toothless in terms of protecting the civil rights of black Americans.

²¹ Madigan, Tim, "Their war ended 70 years ago. Their trauma didn't." *Washington Post*. 11-Sep-2015. (14-Oct-2018) < https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-greatest-generations-forgotten-trauma/2015/09/11/8978d3b0-46b0-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html >

²² National Research Council 2007. *PTSD Compensation and Military Service*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/11870>.

²³ Film Notes. *Let Their Be Light*. National Film Preservation Foundation. (21-Mar-2020) < <https://www.filmpreservation.org/preserved-films/screening-room/let-there-be-light-1946> >

²⁴ Vogal, Steve. "John Huston film about World War II soldiers that Army suppressed is restored." *Washington Post*. 24-May-2012. (15-Mar-2020). < https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/john-huston-film-about-ww-ii-soldiers-that-army-suppressed-is-restored/2012/05/23/gJQA7LS3IU_story.html >

²⁵ The film is available for viewing, courtesy of the National Film Preservation Foundation.

²⁶ Ignazio Messina and Mark Reiter. "Poor decisions accelerated decline of Toledo's oncebustling downtown" *The Toledo Blade* 25 April 2015. <https://www.toledoblade.com/local/2015/04/26/Poor-decisions-accelerated-decline/stories/20150425181>

²⁷ On 31-Mar-2020, the house next to my grandparents' house - 3840 Revere Drive - was selling for \$54,449 at a time when the median sale price in Ohio was \$152,226. See <https://www.zillow.com/oh/home-values/> for median home price and visit Zillow.com and search for "Revere Drive Toledo, OH 43612" for current prices. At the time of this writing, the house next to my grandparents' house, at 3840 Revere Drive, was on the market for \$54,449.

²⁸ See Deutsche Welle video titled *Recommended Wolfsburg, Discover Germany*. Discussion about conversion of Porschestraße and its conversion to a pedestrian street begins at 1:50. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8o5WMD3hM8>

²⁹ Arch Daily. "Henning Larsen Designs New Masterplan for Wolfsburg, Germany, Home City of Volkswagen." *Arch Daily*. 4 Nov 2020. <https://worldarchitecture.org/article-links/egczf/henning-larsen-unveils-design-for-wolfsburg-connect-masterplan-in-wolfsburg-germany.html>

³⁰ In the German, the percentage of the workforce that participates in a union is higher than in the United States, although rates of unionization have dropped significantly in both countries. In 1983, 20 percent of American workers were unions versus 11 percent in 2018. As late as 1985, 30 percent of West German workers were in unions. In the East, almost 40% of workers were unionized. See Bernd Fitzenberger's paper titled *The Erosion of Union Membership in Germany*

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a509/5822a60e5d6414ae71d5508ba5d832904dd1.pdf>. See Forbes article titled *Which Countries Have The Highest Levels Of Labor Union Membership?* for rates of unionization across OECD nations at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2017/06/20/which-countries-have-the-highest-levels-of-labor-union-membership-infographic/#1cf805b533c0>

³¹ See *The rise of robots in the German labor market*. <https://voxeu.org/article/rise-robots-german-labour-market>

³² See Richard Florida, "Which countries pay blue-collar workers the most?." *City Lab*. Even after the last major global financial crises of 2007/2008, the average German auto worker made \$67.14 per hour (including benefits) compared with \$33.77 per hour for American auto workers. <https://www.citylab.com/life/2012/01/which-countries-pay-blue-collar-workers-most/818/>

³³ Given the many ways in which Germany thrives, it's ironic that the country has a prominent and growing problem with wealth inequality as the wages of many stall and a small percentage of the population accounts for the lion's share of the nation's profits. See Florian Diekmann's article in *Spiegel* titled "A Look at

Germany's Extremely Unequal Wealth Distribution” at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/inequality-and-wealth-distribution-in-germany-a-1190050.html>. Alternatively see the Geopolitical Futures article titled Germany and US Grapple With Wealth Inequality at <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/germany-us-grapple-wealth-inequality>.

³⁴ See Boll, Sven, Markus Dettmer et al, “The High Cost of German’s Economic Successes,” Spiegel 4-May-2012. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/german-labor-reforms-create-greater-gap-between-rich-and-poor-a-830972.html>

³⁵ For information regarding crime see: Grün Carsten “German rust-belt city of Duisburg gets tough on Arab gangs,” Deutsche Welle 31.08.2018 <https://www.dw.com/en/german-rust-belt-city-of-duisburg-gets-tough-on-arab-gangs/a-45301168>

Chinese investment see: Rick Noack. “Will Chinese investment rescue a city in Germany’s Rust Belt — or exploit it?” Washington Post. September 1, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/09/01/will-chinese-investment-rescue-city-germanys-rust-belt-or-exploit-it/?utm_term=.282824e8bcba

³⁶ Interestingly, the values expressed in Capra’s films don’t entirely align with Capra the man. A lifelong Republican who disliked Roosevelt, he often took sole credit for movies shaped by talented screenwriters. The real-life Capra bore little resemblance to heroic figures found in his most famous movies. To learn more about Capra, see the May 17, 1992 *Los Angeles Times* article titled, “The World Outside the Pictures”

³⁷ According to an obscure 1915 Vassar College publication, philathean means truth loving.

³⁸ Art Tatum is said to have gone to Scott, but my uncle, who is six months younger, never met him or saw him and his name does not appear anywhere in his yearbook.

³⁹ The details of the “Long hot summer” of 1967 are presented in Kerner Report, which I discuss later in the book.

⁴⁰ For the overall number see: Malcolm McLaughlin. *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967: Urban Rebellion in America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. xiii, 227. A reprinted 1967 article in *US News* contains a listing of disturbances up through the time the article was published on 14-Aug-1967. By that date, 109 cities had experienced one or more civil disturbances. Details regarding Tampa and the other disturbances comes from the full Kerner Commission report.

⁴¹ Bill McGraw. “William Walter Scott III: The man who started the 1967 riot in Detroit”. *Detroit Free Press* 24 December 2016 <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2016/12/24/william-walter-scott-riot-detroit/95606816/>

⁴² Descriptions of the killing: Moutzalais, Tanya. “On this day – August 1, 1967: Federal troops leave Detroit as youngest riot victim laid to rest” *Michigan Live* 1-Aug-2017. https://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/2017/08/detroit_riots_august_1_1967_fe.html

Cosgrove, Stuart. *Detroit 1967: The Year that Changed Soul*. Clayton Media and Publishing 20-Jan-2015.

The guardsman who fired into the apartment was a 41-year-old national guard tank commander named Mortimer LeBlanc. As a teenager LeBlanc fought against the Germans, was wounded and taken prisoner. According to his obituary published in the *Detroit News*, he died at the age of 82 in 2012 after living as a retiree in Florida for over twenty years. Remarkably, he left behind 25 great grandchildren and 10 great-great grandchildren, suggesting his progeny had children at a very young age.

Detroit News obituary found at affiliate site Legacy.com

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/detroitnews/obituary.aspx?n=mortimer-j-leblanc&pid=181320637>

⁴³ McGraw, Bill “A quick guide to the 1967 riot” *The Center for Michigan/Bridge Magazine* 11-Mar-2016. https://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/2016/03/a_quick_guide_to_the_1967_detr.html

⁴⁴ In late 1829, Lewis wrote a 59-page piece that appeared in the January 1830 edition of the *North American Review*. The article, titled “Removal of the Indians,” drew from his extensive experience with native tribes in the Michigan Territory, where he had served for governor the past 18 years. In a 2017 interview with *Detroit Public Radio* (WDET), Michael Witgen, Director of the Native American Studies Program at the University of Michigan stated that Lewis Cass is both the “intellectual genius behind” and the “architect of Indian removal.”

⁴⁵ Willard Carl Klunder. *Lewis Cass and the Politics of Moderation* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1996), Kindle file, Chapter 3.

⁴⁶ The actual number was 845,720. The cotton belt encompasses Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, southwestern Tennessee, and northern Florida.

⁴⁷ Edward Ball, Retracing Slavery's Trail of Tears, *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 2015, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/>

⁴⁸ This equates to a present-day value of \$80 million in 1837. See Baptist. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. (New York: Basic Books, 2016) p 255.

⁴⁹ See Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States . . . from the Returns of the Sixth Census (Washington, D.C., 1841) See also 1840 U.S. Federal Census - Online Records and Indexes on www.cyndislist.com (21 Links) Includes links to sites with any or all of the following: digitized images, indexes, transcriptions, extractions, abstracts, and partial or whole copies of census materials.

⁵⁰ I'll return to this subject in Part IV of the book.

⁵¹ Peter Tonge. "Natchez: in 1850 half of the millionaires in the US lived here." *The Christian Science Monitor*. 22 March 1983. <https://www.csmonitor.com/1983/0322/032230.html>

⁵² The point is not to say this economic prowess would not have developed without enslaving humans. But the historic record is clear that American economic development heavily influenced by slavery.

⁵³ In recent years, a tremendous amount of work had been done by talented teams operating out of four American universities to make these maps available to the public. Search for "Mapping Inequality" and you've got them on your screen.

⁵⁴ See Amy Hillier. Redlining and the Homeowners' Loan Corporation, City and Regional Planning Departmental Papers. University of Pennsylvania 1-May 2003.

⁵⁵ And of course, the size of a block varies within and across cities, so this was hardly an exact science.

⁵⁶ According to a 1938 analysis done by David Birdwell, almost half of all home mortgages were delinquent by the end of 1933. See David C. Wheelock's paper titled Government Response to Home Mortgage Distress: Lessons from the Great Depression. Working Paper 2008-038A Research Division Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis. October 2008 <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/595f/05055380d5cbda97931321e7a362da34113a.pdf>

⁵⁷ Previously, the feds had involved themselves with farm mortgages but never residential mortgages. In 1933, Congress created the Home Owner Loan Corporation which provided what amount to be emergency loans to Americans for a period of 2 years.

⁵⁸ See Richard K Green and Susan M. Wachter's paper titled The American Mortgage in Historic and International Context Penn Institute for Urban Research Penn IUR Publications. 21-September 2005. https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=penniur_papers

⁵⁹ Or more to the point, "white people." Statistically speaking, few black Americans were putting down 50% on a house in the 1920s.

⁶⁰ I shall get to the significance of the white, protestant significance shortly. For now, just know that these most, if not all of these men had a background that was either English, German, Irish, or Scandinavian.

⁶¹ In 1939, Congress permitted the government to add as much as another ten years to the original fifteen year term. See Lowell Harriss. History and Policies of the Home Owner's Loan Corporation. The National Bureau of Economic Research (Washington DC, 1951) p. 5 <https://www.nber.org/chapters/c3205.pdf>

⁶² In time, the mortgage industry as a whole started offering similar terms for non-government insured mortgages. The only difference was you were likely to pay a slightly higher interest rate, depending on your credit score.

⁶³ FHA. Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act. (Federal Housing Administration. Washington DC, 1936) <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015018409246>

⁶⁴ There is one exception to this rule where black residents in <> lobbied to have their area classification upgraded from D to C. (Go back to Mapping Inequality and identify the city.)

⁶⁵ More about this in Part IV.

⁶⁶ I split my undergraduate years between the U.S. Naval Academy and Drexel University, hence arriving in Philadelphia at age 20.

⁶⁷ Ida B Wells-Barnett, "'Lynching is color-line murder': the blistering speech denouncing America's shame" *The Guardian*. 27 April 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/27/ida-b-wells-barnett-national-negro-conference-chicago-speech>

⁶⁸ *Racism: A History – Part 3 (A Savage Legacy)*. Directed by Paul Tickell, London: BBC, 2007 (See interview with James Allen starting at minute eight of the film.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4sYJdYEsHM&t=1s>

⁶⁹ See Linda Kim (2012) A Law of Unintended Consequences: United States Postal Censorship of Lynching Photographs, *Visual Resources*, 28:2, 171-193, DOI: [10.1080/01973762.2012.678812](https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2012.678812) 31-May 2012.

⁷⁰ In 2016, writer Jesse Washington (no relationship to the 1916 lynching victim) wrote an article called "The Waco Horror" for ESPN's website *The Undeclared*. In that article he interviews the great-grandson of Lucy Fryer who is one of the people who raises the possibility of a forced confession given the relative amount of detail in the confession, and the apparent mental deficiencies that hampered the accused. See <https://theundefeated.com/features/the-waco-horror/>

⁷¹ See 5-Nov 2014 CSPAN (at minute 4:30) with Patricia Bernstein, author of *The First Waco Horror*. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?322668-1/the-waco-horror>

⁷² Belonsky, Andrew, "How the NAACP fought lynching – by using the racist's own pictures against them." *The Guardian* 27-Apr 2018. (14-Aug-2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/apr/27/lynching-naacp-photographs-waco-texas-campaign>

⁷³ Erik Wemple. "Fox News stands by decision to post heinous ISIS burning video online." *Washington Post*. 4 Feb 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2015/02/04/fox-news-stands-by-decision-to-post-heinous-isis-burning-video-online/>

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ As anglophones, we've been to send our three children to public French immersion schools since they were age five. Franco-Canadian exchanges are moderately priced in Canada and relatively common given the prevalence of French immersion in school districts across the country.

⁷⁶ Rochester TV station WHEC published a short article in 2019 pointing out that Rochester is listed in the top 100 most dangerous cities. See <https://www.whec.com/news/rochester-ranked-most-dangerous-cities/5204356/>

⁷⁷ Jane Taber. "It takes a Lebanese village to raise Halifax's skyline" *The Globe and Mail*. 25 Nov 2013. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/diman-developers-usher-in-brave-new-halifax/article15599792/>

⁷⁸ The objective to triple the population as if climate change does not exist, or Canada is not the leading carbon polluter is shared by most "elite" members of the Liberal party. See there "Century Initiative" at: <https://www.centuryinitiative.ca/>

⁷⁹ See CO2 Emissions per capita at <https://www.worldometers.info/co2-emissions/co2-emissions-per-capita/>

⁸⁰ Leyland Cecco. "Spiraling housing prices are an 'intergenerational injustice', says Canada's deputy PM" *The Guardian* 12 April 2022.

⁸¹ Keep in main body or remove this? Her head chef established a kitchen culture that similarly deviated from the norm. One sous chef said, "Jane's was like no kitchen I'd ever seen before. I mean, the kitchen itself was like any other kitchen, fairly small, but, at any given time, there could be eight to ten back-of-house staff working, and half of them were female. I had never seen that before. And the atmosphere was just so different. The ego-filled, bro culture I was used to (in western Canada) wouldn't even get past the front door of Jane's. That was a game changer for me."

⁸² Jon Tattrie. "Africville." *The Canadian Encyclopedia* Historica Canada. Article published January 27, 2014. Last Edited January 20, 2021. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/africville>

⁸³ Jean Laroche. "Family poverty rates higher in Indigenous, African-Nova Scotian communities." *CBC News*. 21 November 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/child-poverty-study-report-card-indigenous-african-nova-scotian-poor-families-1.4410857>

⁸⁴ Michael Tutton. "Black, Indigenous people receive apology for systemic racism in Nova Scotia." *National Observer*. 30 September 2020. <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/09/30/news/black-indigenous-people-receive-apology-systemic-racism-nova-scotia>

⁸⁵ Again, had the British been able to grow tobacco and cotton north of the 49th parallel, things would be different. Weather and geography, rather than superior morals, shaped Canada.

⁸⁶ For example, urban schools in America introduced metal detectors and other forms of security in the 1980s and 1990s to combat gang and drug violence.

⁸⁷ See Statistics Canada Number and rate of homicide victims, by Census Metropolitan Areas

⁸⁸ Springtime in Halifax is cold, rainy and gray on account of the Atlantic Ocean taking a long time to heat up after its cooled in the winter. I don't mention Springtime in the park because Halifax does not really have one.

⁸⁹ Akemi Furuyashiki, Keiji Tabuchi, Kensuke Norikoshi, Toshio Kobayashi, and Sanae Oriyama. "A comparative study of the physiological and psychological effects of forest bathing (Shinrin-yoku) on working age people with and without depressive tendencies." *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*. The Japanese Society for Hygiene. 22 June 2019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6589172/#:~:text=Studies%20have%20found%20that%20%E2%80%9Cforest,depression%20and%20improving%20mental%20health.>

⁹⁰ Again, a function of geography rather than supposed Canadian moral superiority.

⁹¹ When they first started playing on the waterfront at age 10 and 7 Christine would be in the general vicinity but at some point, they started going alone.

⁹² Political scientist Kevin Leyden describes social capital as the "social networks and interactions that inspire trust and reciprocity among citizens."

⁹³ See also Kevin Leyden. *Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighborhoods*. *American Journal of Public Health*. September 2003. Vol 98. No. 9. <https://www.jtc.sala.ubc.ca/reports/leyden.pdf>

⁹⁴ See The Surgeon General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation. Office of the Surgeon General (US). Rockville (MD): Office of the Surgeon General (US). 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44656/>

⁹⁵ The CDC maintains current information on obesity at <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

⁹⁶ Studies examining the relationship between obesity, disease, and the built environment are many.

See Frank LD, Adhikari B, White KR, Dummer T, Sandhu J, Demlow E, Hu Y, Hong A, Van den Bosch M. Chronic disease and where you live: Built and natural environment relationships with physical activity, obesity, and diabetes. *Environ Int*. 2022 Jan. 158:106959. doi: 10.1016/j.envint.2021.106959. Epub 2021 Nov 9. PMID: 34768046.

See Sarkar C, Webster C, Gallacher J. Neighbourhood walkability and incidence of hypertension: Findings from the study of 429,334 UK Biobank participants. *Int J Hyg Environ Health*. 2018 Apr;221(3):458-468. doi: 10.1016/j.ijheh.2018.01.009. Epub 2018 Feb 3. PMID: 29398408.

See also Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States: Implementation and Measurement Guide*. https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf (10 Nov 2017)

Clearly, not everyone in our neighborhood walks every possible opportunity they get. We're not above using the car to make a weekly grocery run even though it's within walking distance. But on aggregate, we're walking, or biking to a lot of things we need or want because we can. Our kids have walked to all three of their schools. And they do plenty of walking and biking throughout the city to socialize, get to sports practice, and run errands. Ambient exercise as an early age matters.

⁹⁷ State of Oregon. *Neighborhood Street Design Guidelines: An Oregon Guide for Reducing Street Widths*. November 2000. https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/neighborhood_street_design_guidelines_oregon.pdf

⁹⁸ Dewan Karim. *Narrower Lanes, Safer Streets* Conference Paper: Canadian Institute of Transportation Engineers, Regina 2015 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277590178_Narrower_Lanes_Safer_Streets

⁹⁹ Barbara McCann and Bianca DeLille. "Mean Streets 2000". National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine/Surface Transportation Policy Project. 2000. <https://trid.trb.org/view/654216>

¹⁰⁰ I'm not sure why 30'x100' lots aren't more common across the country. Before modern planning came along, they seemed to have it down about right.

¹⁰¹ They walk, bike, and borrow our car occasionally. They can also use a car share service, as it's far cheaper for the occasional driver.

¹⁰² See AAA. Average Annual Cost of New Vehicle Ownership (undated, but retrieved 28 July 2022) <https://www.aaa.com/autorepair/articles/average-annual-cost-of-new-vehicle-ownership#>

¹⁰³ David Schrank, Bill Eisele, Tim Lomax. 2019 Urban Mobility Report. Texas Transportation Institute. August 2019. See to the “Very Large” category in Exhibit 4 for 84-hour figure. <https://static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.edu/documents/umr/archive/mobility-report-2019.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ Congestion measurements have grown more accurate in recent years due to new technology utilizing crowdsourced GPS data providing data from millions of drivers on thousands of roads of all sizes.

¹⁰⁵ See: Sonia Hirt. “To Zone or Not to Zone” Planung Neu Denken Online. 2010. Available via the Virginia Tech site (Where Hirt is a professor) at https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48185/hirt_to_zone_or_not_to_zone.pdf?sequence=4

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Dizikes. Lots of Trouble. MIT News. 13 March 2012. <https://news.mit.edu/2012/parking-lot-redesign-0313>

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ See <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/maryland/county/baltimore-city/black-population-percentage#chart>

¹¹² U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Housing: 1961 Commission on Civil Rights Report. Washington DC, GPO. 1961) p 1.

¹¹³ Commission on Civil Rights. Equal Opportunity in Suburbia: A Report of the United State Commission on Civil Rights. (Washington DC, GPO. July 1974) p 11.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p 11.

¹¹⁵ Editorial Board. “Baltimore County’s long legacy of segregation.” *The Baltimore Sun*. Mar 20 2017 <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-county-segregation-20170320-story.html>

¹¹⁶ Commission on Civil Rights p 31.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p 45.

¹¹⁸ Marc A. Weiss. Urban Land Developers and the Origins of Zoning Laws: The Case of Berkeley. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 3(1). 1986. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/BP33113187> <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/26b8d8zh>

¹¹⁹ Maya Tulip Lorey, “A History of Residential Segregation in Berkeley, California, 1878-1960,” *The Concord Review* 24, no. 2 (2014): p 5.

¹²⁰ See *Buchanan v. Warley* - 245 U.S. 60, 38 S. Ct. 16 (1917) at LexisNexis: <https://www.lexisnexis.com/community/casebrief/p/casebrief-buchanan-v-warley>

¹²¹ Ordinance No. 452. District Ordinance of the City of Berkeley. March 10, 1916. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c044977650&view=1up&seq=1>

¹²² Raphael Fischler "The Six Stories of Zoning." In *Zoning: A Guide for 21st-Century Planning*. eds. Elliott Sclar, Bernadette Baird-Zars, Lauren Ames Fisher, and Valerie Stahl. (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2019) ebook.

¹²³ James W. Loewen. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York. The New Press, 2018)

¹²⁴ Two academics from USC, Peter Gordon and Harry Richardson have made a career out of claiming that sprawl is the result of market forces. For example, see their 2001 article in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* titled, “The Sprawl Debate: Let Markets Plan.” This article begins by expressing a sentiment found in most of their articles, namely, “Americans have been moving to both suburban and private communities for many years, an expression of the constitutional right to travel. They seem more direct control over their personal property rights...”

¹²⁵ See David C. Wheelcock. *Lessons from the Great Depression*. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review, May/June 2008, 90(3, Part 1), p. 138.

¹²⁶ See *The FHA Story, 1934-1959* (Washington DC: FHA Publications, 1959)

¹²⁷ Federal Housing Administration. *Subdivision Standards: For the Insurance of Mortgages on Properties Located in Undeveloped Subdivisions*. Title II of the National Housing Act. 15 August 1938. p. 4. Available on Google Play at <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=MxPxyRfUjMC&pg=GBS.PP1&hl=en> .

¹²⁸ *Subdivision Standards*. p. 15-16.

¹²⁹ *Subdivision Standards*. 12.

-
- ¹³⁰ Technical Bulletin No. 5 17.
- ¹³¹ Technical Bulletin No. 5 18.
- ¹³² Subdivision Standards. 18.
- ¹³³ This is a point made by Michael Southworth and Eran Ben-Joseph in their paper titled: Regulated Streets: The Evolution of Standards for Suburban Residential Streets. Working Paper. The Institute of Transportation Studies. University of California at Berkeley. April 1993. p 38.
- ¹³⁴ Associated Press. J.A. Moffett Quits Standard Oil Post. *New York Times*. July 29, 1933.
- ¹³⁵ Special to the NY Times, “Moffett Resigns as FHA Director.” *New York Times* Aug 29, 1935. The article refers to Moffett becoming head of Standard Oil of California, which later merged with Gulf Oil to become Chevron in 1984.
- ¹³⁶ The FHA Story p 10.
- ¹³⁷ Michael Southworth and Eran Ben-Joseph. p. 33.
- ¹³⁸ Michael Southworth and Eran Ben-Joseph. p. 43.
- ¹³⁹ To get a sense of the boosterism and enthusiasm for the automobile industry in the early days, read Arthur Pound’s 1934 history of General Motors titled *The Turning Wheel: The Story of General Motors Through Twenty-Five Years 1908-1933*. Available at the Internet Archive.
- ¹⁴⁰ For enrollment figures at our neighborhood school (LeMarchant-St. Thomas Elementary) see <https://lmt.hrce.ca/lmt/general-information/about-us>
- ¹⁴¹ Michael Southworth and Eran Ben-Joseph. p. 39.
- ¹⁴² Geographic size in 1990 specified in Gaithersburg’s 1997 Master Plan Process Overview. See at <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/services/planning-services/city-master-plan>
- ¹⁴³ Harvard named the winner, and the Ford Foundation provided a \$100,000 cash award. See ” Smart Growth Wins Ford Foundation innovation award.” Baltimore Sun. Oct 13, 2000. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-2000-10-13-0010130237-story.html>
- ¹⁴⁴ The redevelopment legislation is found under Section 450A in the Baltimore County Code of Ordinances. See Renaissance Redevelopment Pilot Program at https://library.municode.com/md/baltimore_county/codes/zoning_regulations?nodeId=ZONING_CODE_ART45PRE_S430AREREPIPR
- ¹⁴⁵ “Developers get help with new law, old tactic.” The Daily Record. Jan 19, 2005. <https://thedailyrecord.com/2005/01/19/developers-get-help-with-new-law-old-tactic>
- ¹⁴⁶ I used the main street in Renaissance Square (i.e., Renaissance Drive) to determine the walk score.
- ¹⁴⁷ See Watkins Mill Town Center overview at <https://www.rodgers.com/projects/#project-662>
Also see detailed information provided by Gaithersburg at <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/government/projects-in-the-city/watkins-mill-town-center>
- ¹⁴⁸ Gaithersburg has used design charrettes for the redevelopment of Kentlands Town Center, Kentlands Boulevard, their historic district, and the Route 355 corridor.
- ¹⁴⁹ Pamela Wood. “Greenleigh at Crossroads mixed-use project to break ground in Baltimore County.” Baltimore Sun. 15 May 2016. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-bz-greenleigh-20160516-story.html>
- ¹⁵⁰ I calculated the walk score for three Greenleigh addresses in Middle River, MD: 6468 Totteridge Street (20). 6327 Islington St (21), and 6403 Chessington St (27). The commercial component is already built out, and I’d not expect these scores to improve significantly.
- ¹⁵¹ Alexander Quon. "Halifax joins Vancouver as 2nd Canadian city to declare climate emergency." Global News 29 Jan 2019. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4903401/halifax-climate-emergency/>
- ¹⁵² Francis Campbell. "Halifax council signs off on detailed HalifACT 2050 climate action plan." Saltwire. 23 June 2020 <https://www.saltwire.com/nova-scotia/news/halifax-council-signs-off-on-detailed-halifact-2050-climate-action-plan-465581/>
See also: Halifax Regional Municipality. HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together. <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/energy-environment/halifact-2050-acting-climate-together>
- ¹⁵³ Zane Woodward. “Halifax councillors pass 4.6% increase to average property tax bill, including 3% for climate action” Halifax Examiner 12 April 2022 <https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/government/city-hall/halifax-councillors-pass-4-6-increase-to-average-property-tax-bill-including-3-for-climate-action/>
- ¹⁵⁴ Government of Canada - Canada Energy Regulator. Provincial and Territorial Energy Profiles – Nova Scotia. Sector breakdown appears beneath section titled “GHG Emissions.” <https://www.cer->

[rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-nova-scotia.html#:~:text=Nova%20Scotia's%20GHG%20emissions%20in,equivalent%20\(CO2e\).](https://rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-nova-scotia.html#:~:text=Nova%20Scotia's%20GHG%20emissions%20in,equivalent%20(CO2e).)

Passenger vehicles account for the largest percentage within the transportation sector. See Government of Canada. Transportation in Canada 2020 - Overview Report from Transport Canada. <https://tc.canada.ca/en/corporate-services/transparency/corporate-management-reporting/transportation-canada-annual-reports/green-transportation>

See also Government of Canada report which reads, "Passenger car and light trucks account for about half of the transportation sector's emissions. Decreasing emissions in all sectors, including transportation, is necessary to tackle climate change and reach the Government's GHG emissions reduction target of 40 to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050."

<https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2022/2022-12-31/html/reg1-eng.html>

¹⁵⁵ All meetings and promotional videos of which I speak are on YouTube. Simply search on HalifACT.

¹⁵⁶ See HalifACT: 2022/23 budget breakdown at <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/energy-environment/halifact-2050-acting-climate-together#readplan> Who knew the Sackville Sports Stadium needed an electric re-surfacer?

¹⁵⁷ IPCC, 2019: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.- O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)]. In press. Bart, Istvan. (2010). Urban sprawl and climate change: A statistical exploration of cause and effect, with policy options for the EU. Land Use Policy. 27. 283-292. 10.1016/j.landusepol.2009.03.003.

¹⁵⁸ Numerous researchers and publications have focused on the impact of sprawl on climate change. A few include:

Feng, Qiu, and Pierre Gauthier. 2021. "Untangling Urban Sprawl and Climate Change: A Review of the Literature on Physical Planning and Transportation Drivers" Atmosphere 12, no. 5: 547. <https://doi.org/10.3390/atmos12050547>

See also: OECD. "Rethinking Urban Sprawl: Moving Towards Sustainable Cities." OECD Policy Highlights. Undated. <https://www.oecd.org/environment/tools-evaluation/Policy-Highlights-Rethinking-Urban-Sprawl.pdf>

See also: Jocelyn Timperley, "Urban sprawl defines unsustainable cities, but it can be undone: Our car-dependent cities are at the center of the climate dilemma," Popular Science. 3 May 2022. <https://www.popsci.com/environment/urban-sprawl-cities-sustainable/>

¹⁵⁹ Adie Tomer, Joseph W. Kane, Jenny Schuetz, Caroline George. "We can't beat the climate crisis without rethinking land use" Brookings Institution. 12 May 2021.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/we-cant-beat-the-climate-crisis-without-rethinking-land-use/>

¹⁶⁰ See Halifax Regional Municipality. Regional Centre Plan at. <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/regional-community-planning/community-plan-areas/regional-centre-plan-area>

¹⁶¹ Victoria Walton. "Demolition of Robie Street houses is rooted in renovations." The Coast. 6 May 2022. <https://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/demolition-of-robie-street-houses-is-rooted-in-renovations/Content?oid=28579163>

¹⁶² Two towers are described in Zane Woodford's article, "Robie Street project with taller towers and more units" Halifax Examiner. 16 July 2020. <https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/government/city-hall/halifax-developer-updates-design-of-massive-robie-street-project-with-taller-towers-and-more-units/>

See also Pam Berman. "Proposals for 4 downtown Halifax towers clear heritage hurdle." CBC News

¹⁶³ World Bank. CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita – Canada). See table labeled, All Countries and Economies sorted by "Most Recent Value"

For ratio of Canada to EU emission, I used EU/Canada CO2 emission figures from Ritchie et al, below and most recent EU/Canada populations.

Hannah Ritchie, Max Roser and Pablo Rosado (2020) - "CO2 and Greenhouse Gas Emissions."

Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from: 'https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions' [Online Resource]

https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC?locations=CA&most_recent_value_desc=true

¹⁶⁴ Lewis Akenji, Magnus Bengtsson, Viivi Toivio, Michael Lettenmeier, Tina Fawcett, Yael Parag,

- Yamina Saheb, Anna Coote, Joachim H. Spangenberg, Stuart Capstick, Tim Gore, Luca Coscieme, Mathis Wackernagel, Dario Kenner.
- "1.5-Degree Lifestyles: Towards A Fair Consumption Space for All." Hot or Cool Institute, Berlin. 2021. p 15.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p 91.
- ¹⁶⁶ Michael Gorman. "N.S. prepares \$2.5M campaign aimed at attracting new residents." CBC News 01 Oct 2021.
- ¹⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁸ Jessie Thomas. Nova Scotia looks to double population to 2 million by 2060." CTV News. 30 November 2022
- ¹⁶⁹ Maine Climate Council. Sea Level Rise in Maine: An Accelerating Problem. Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. Maine Department of Environmental Protection. 06 May 2021.
- ¹⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁷¹ Justin Worland "Ron DeSantis Is at the Forefront of New Republican Climate Politics." Time Magazine 4 Oct 2022 <https://time.com/6219326/ron-desantis-climate-florida/>
- ¹⁷² Andy Olin. "Where are Texas' fastest-growing cities? Check the suburbs" Rice University Kinder Institute for Urban Research. 14 Oct 2020. <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/where-are-texas-fastest-growing-cities-check-suburbs>
- ¹⁷³ Construction21 International. Embodied Carbon – Updated ICE Database and RICS Building Carbon Database. See Figure 1: Total whole life carbon emission breakdown for different building types. 6 May 2019. <https://www.construction21.org/articles/h/embodied-carbon-updated-ice-database-and-rics-building-carbon-database.html>
- See also,
- ¹⁷⁴ Kay Pitman. Lowering embodied carbon: five trends in building design and construction. Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. 7 December 2021. <https://www.rics.org/news-insights/wbef/lowering-embodied-carbon-five-trends-in-building-design-and-construction>
- See also The Economist | Finance and Economics. "The construction industry remains horribly climate-unfriendly." The Economist 15 June 2022.
- ¹⁷⁵ Elefante, Carl. "The Greenest Building Is... One That Is Already Built." Forum Journal 27, no. 1 (2012): 62-72. muse.jhu.edu/article/494514.
- ¹⁷⁶ Bull Run (4878), Shilo (23,746), Seven Pines (11,165), Gain's Mill (14,830), Glendale (7470), Malvern Hill (7750), Second Battle of Bull Run (18,300), South Mountain (5010).
- ¹⁷⁷ Charles was later deemed an "invalid" by the U.S. Government.
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁷⁹ See Tommy Beer. "Majority of Republicans Believe the QAnon Conspiracy Theory Is Partly Or Mostly True, Survey Finds." Forbes. 2 Sep 2020 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tommybeer/2020/09/02/majority-of-republicans-believe-the-qanon-conspiracy-theory-is-partly-or-mostly-true-survey-finds/?sh=e29369b5231d>
- See also Andrew Romano and Caitlin Dickson. "New Yahoo News/YouGov poll: Half of Trump supporters believe QAnon's imaginary claims" Yahoo!Finance 20 Oct 2020 <https://ca.finance.yahoo.com/news/new-yahoo-news-you-gov-poll-half-of-trump-supporters-believe-q-anons-imaginary-claims-124025042.html>
- ¹⁸⁰ Lauren Boebert campaign advertisement at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl0f9uFE5IU>
- Ms. Boebert's commitment to Glock at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nuvwiG84uo&t=34s>
- ¹⁸¹ Marjorie Greene campaign advertisement, "Save America. Stop Socialism" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5LEC8Vuxhc>
- ¹⁸² See Brittany Shammass, "Journalists were attacked, threatened, and detained during the Capitol siege," Washington Post. 9 Jan 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2021/01/09/he-was-documenting-chaotic-scene-when-suddenly-trump-supporters-turned-their-ire-him/>
- See Elaine Godfrey "It was Suppose to be So Much Worse." The Atlantic. 9 Jan 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/01/trump-rioters-wanted-more-violence-worse/617614/>
- ¹⁸³ Peter Hermann. "We got to hold this door: How battered D.C. police made a stand against the Capitol mob" Washington Post. 14 Jan 2021 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/01/14/dc-police-capitol-riot/?arc404=true>

¹⁸⁴ Harm Venhuizen. "Insurrectionist 'Zip-Tie Guy' identified as retired Air Force lieutenant colonel." Military Times 9 Jan 2021 <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2021/01/09/insurrectionist-zip-tie-guy-identified-as-retired-air-force-lieutenant-colonel/>

See also Ronan Farrow. "An Air Force Combat Veteran Breached the Senate." The New Yorker. 9 Jan 2021 <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/an-air-force-combat-veteran-breached-the-senate>

¹⁸⁵ Claire Wang. "Behind the viral photo of Rep. Andy Kim cleaning up at midnight after riots" NBC News 8 Jan 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/behind-viral-photo-rep-andy-kim-cleaning-midnight-after-riots-n1253519>

See Leena Kim. "The Capitol's Preservationists Might Leave Some of the Damage As a Historical Marker" Town and Country 9 Jan 2021. <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/politics/a35166019/us-capitol-damage-art-curators-trump-siege/>

¹⁸⁶ One of those arrested was Cleveland Meredith, a Georgia man who came to Washington with a Glock nine-millimeter pistol, an assault rifle, and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. Referring to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Meredith texted a friend, "Dead B**** Walking. I predict within 12 days, many in our country will die." See FBI Statement of Fact, Case 1:21-mj-00017. GW Program of Extremism. George Washington University 8 Jan 2021. <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Cleveland%20Grover%20Meredith%20Statement%20of%20Facts.pdf>

Other notable arrests: Alabama: Lonnie Coffman; Arkansas, Richard Barnette; Kentucky: Robert Baur; Florida: Adam Johnson; Georgia: Cleveland Meredith; North Carolina: Emily Rainey (dismissed from U.S. army only); Tennessee, Eric Munchel; Texas: Larry Brock, Jenny Cudd; Virginia: Edward Hemenway; West Virginia: Derrick Evans; Arizona (slaveholding territory of the Confederacy): Jake Angeli and Jacob Chansley,

Sample of related articles:

Key arrests <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/13/politics/notable-arrests-capitol/index.html>

Lonnie Coffman <https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/2021/01/lonnie-coffman-alabama-man-arrested-in-dc-ordered-held-without-bond.html>

Baur <https://thehill.com/policy/national-security/534566-fbi-capitol-rioters-claim-officer-told-them-its-your-house-now>

Rainey https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/army-investigating-officer-who-led-group-to-washington-rally/2021/01/10/e8b76712-53c8-11eb-acc5-92d2819a1ccb_story.html

There were considerably fewer prominent arrests involving people outside slaveholding states.

Notables were:

Mark Leffingwell, Washington,

Doug Jensen, Iowa

Klete Keller, raised in Arizona, no resides in Colorado Springs

¹⁸⁷ Of the three states that did not, two—Virginia and North Carolina—were no longer solid conservative states due to demographic changes. The third, Georgia, is one of the four states whose votes the lawsuit sought to invalidate.

¹⁸⁸ Persistent inequality in education is well known. See for example:

Keith Maetto. "Still Separate, Still Unequal: Teaching about School Segregation and Educational Inequality." New York Times. 2 May 2019.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/learning/lesson-plans/still-separate-still-unequal-teaching-about-school-segregation-and-educational-inequality.html>

Ileana Najarro. "The Origins of Racial Inequality in Education". Education Week. 20 March 2023. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-origins-of-racial-inequality-in-education/2023/03>

Linda Darling-Hammond. "Unequal Opportunity: Race and Education." Brookings Institution. 1 Mar 1998 <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unequal-opportunity-race-and-education/>

¹⁸⁹ 13th – Abolished slavery; 14th – Citizenship and equal rights for all, irrespective of race 15th – Voting rights for all men, irrespective of race.

¹⁹⁰ "Brooks and Sumner". Carolina Spartan 29 May 1856.

<https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/secession-editorials/all/editorials/263/>

See also "Exciting Debate in the Senate. Senator Sumner Whipped!". Weekly North Carolina Standard. 28-May-1856. <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/secession-editorials/all/editorials/263/n-2020>

¹⁹¹ See for example, Justin Haskins “Elizabeth Warren is a socialist – if she's the Dem nominee, THIS happens in 2020” Fox News 24 Nov 2019. <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/justin-haskins-elizabeth-warren-is-a-socialist-if-shes-the-dem-nominee-this-happens-i>

¹⁹² The carnage at Gettysburg would start the next day.

¹⁹³ Most of the 16 confederates killed that day died in the barn. Another 20-30 cavalymen were wounded during the skirmish. Union losses were lighter, with just 11 wounded.

¹⁹⁴ Few if any wore uniforms, so it would have been difficult form distinguishing them from civilians

¹⁹⁵ Frank Reeves, “Confederates' 'slave hunt' in North a military disgrace,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, June 30, 2013.

<https://www.post-gazette.com/news/state/2013/06/30/Confederates-slave-hunt-in-North-a-military-disgrace/stories/201306300221>

¹⁹⁶ Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Laws and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2001)

¹⁹⁷ My mother was reinterred and buried with my father when he died.

¹⁹⁸ In a 2009 interview with Newsweek, Douglas Blackmon stated that it’s difficult to identify the precise number of black Americans subjected to convict leasing across the South, but in Alabama, the focus of his research, he estimates the number to at least 200,000.

See also Newsweek Staff, “Book: American Slavery Continued Until 1941,” Newsweek, Jul 13, 2008, <https://www.newsweek.com/book-american-slavery-continued-until-1941-93231>

¹⁹⁹ See Baptist. Pg 350.

²⁰⁰ Connecticut at the time was the most industrialized state in the North. See Baptist. Pg. 350.

²⁰¹ See Baptist. Pg. 140-141.

²⁰² See U.S. Census Bureau, “Manufacturers of the United States in 1860s,,” 1860 United States Census,

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/manufactures/1860c-02.pdf>

²⁰³ Edward H. Bonekemper III, *The Myth of the Lost Cause: Why the South Fought the Civil War and Why the North Won* (Washington DC: Regnery History, 2015).

²⁰⁴ Walter L. Flemming, “Jefferson Davis, the Negroes and the Negro Problem,” *The Sewanee Review*, Oct., 1908 pp. 407-427 Johns Hopkins University Press <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/27530928.pdf>

²⁰⁵ See James M. McPherson, *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Also see a survey of other historians regarding South’s ability to win at:

James M. McPherson, "Could the South Have Won?," *The New York Review*, June 13, 2002, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2002/06/13/could-the-south-have-won/>

²⁰⁶ The Lost Cause narrative evolved over time, originating with the work of a southern journalist named Edward Pollard who wrote a book published in 1866 titled, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the Confederates*. Ironically, Pollard was highly critical of how Southern leadership executed the war, stated the war was over slavery, and lamented the fact that the military never attempted to use slaves in the military to bolster their ranks. Prominent military and political leaders like General Early and Jefferson Davis did much to shape and hone the myth into its final form by the time the UDC was formed.

²⁰⁷ See Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

See also Greg Huffman, "Twisted Sources: How Confederate propaganda ended up in the South's schoolbooks," *Facing South* April, 2019,

<https://www.facingsouth.org/2019/04/twisted-sources-how-confederate-propaganda-ended-souths-schoolbooks>

²⁰⁸ See David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001)

²⁰⁹ Historians had pointed out that if it were not for voter suppression and massive violence throughout the South targeting black in 1876, there’s little question that Hayes would have won the election by a wide margin.

²¹⁰ This idea of “locking arms” comes directly from David Blight’s *Race and Reunion*. His work examines how Americans remembered our civil war in a way that led to the wholesale abandonment of civil liberties for Black Americans.

²¹¹ Hilary A. Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate Monument*, (Richmond: United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1914)
<https://www.battlefields.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/History%20of%20the%20Arlington%20Confederate%20Monument.pdf>

²¹² I watched the series VHS tape after it was broadcast in September 1990.

²¹³ See Keri Leigh Merritt. *Why We Need a New Civil War Documentary* *Smithsonian Magazine* (Online), Apr 23, 2019.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/why-we-need-new-civil-war-documentary-180971996/>

For the video analysis showing relative times for Foote and Fields see Diran Lyons' video, "Shelby Foot vs Barbara Fields: A Screen Time Comparison of Ken Burns' "The Civil War" Dec 7, 2017
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbRT73od8NI>

²¹⁴ The summary was drawn from a dozen or so pages of Ginzburg’s 296-page book that’s been available for decades.

²¹⁵ The racial balance I found compelling was by chance and did not persist after we left. Admission is by lottery, without regard to race. Today, whites comprise just 7% of the student body, and attempting to create a racial balance would likely meet with opposition. This said, a racially balanced school rooted in a strong social and academic curriculum is an optimal environment in which to begin the process of understanding our collective, traumatized past.

²¹⁶ We never direct conflict with Pluck. It was some of the people he worked for that became a problem.

²¹⁷ At the time, Christine was working as a freelance editor for a Chicago-based firm.

²¹⁸ Olga Khazan, “The Second Assault,” *The Atlantic*, Dec 15, 2015,
<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/12/sexual-abuse-victims-obesity/420186/>

²¹⁹ Alison Giovannelli, Arthur J. Reynolds, Adverse childhood experiences in a low-income black cohort: The importance of context, *Preventive Medicine*, Volume 148, 2021, 106557, ISSN 0091-7435,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106557>.

²²⁰ Ron Haskins “The Sequence of Personal Responsibility,” Brookings Institution. Jul 31, 2009.
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-sequence-of-personal-responsibility/>

²²¹ As one man opined, “They did it to themselves. They drop out of school, get pregnant, then complain they can’t get a job for a living wage.”

²²² This idea of the ACE score being the most important public health study you’ve never heard of comes directly from Jane Ellen Stevens’s excellent description of the original study. See “The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study,” *ACEs Too High News*, Oct 3, 2012
<https://acestoohigh.com/2012/10/03/the-adverse-childhood-experiences-study-the-largest-most-important-public-health-study-you-never-heard-of-began-in-an-obesity-clinic/>

²²³ Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258. [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(98)00017-8/fulltext)

²²⁴ The actual questions have more nuance, but these are the areas covered in a form titled, “Finding your ACE score,” made available today by many organizations.

²²⁵ See Jane Ellen Stevens, “The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study.”

²²⁶ Merrick MT, Ford DC, Ports KA, Guinn AS. Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences From the 2011-2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System in 23 States. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2018;172(11):1038–1044. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2018.2537

²²⁷ Vanessa Sacks and David Murphey, Research Brief: The prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race/ethnicity. Publication #2018-3. *Child Trends* 20-Feb-2018. https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ACESBriefUpdatedFinal_ChildTrends_February2018.pdf

²²⁸ Laura Starechesk, "To Head Off Trauma's Legacy, Start Young," *All Things* 9-Mar-2015 <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/09/377569414/to-head-off-traumas-legacy-start-young>

²²⁹ Herzog, J. I., & Schmahl, C. (2018). Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Consequences on Neurobiological, Psychosocial, and Somatic Conditions Across the Lifespan. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 9, 420. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2018.00420>

See also Anne Trafton, Neuroscientists identify brain circuit necessary for memory formation," *MIT News* Apr 6, 2017" <https://news.mit.edu/2017/neuroscientists-identify-brain-circuit-necessary-memory-formation-0406>

²³⁰ McEwen, B. S., & Morrison, J. H. (2013). The brain on stress: vulnerability and plasticity of the prefrontal cortex over the life course. *Neuron*, 79(1), 16–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2013.06.028>

²³¹ Oshri, Assaf et al. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Amygdalar Reduction: High-Resolution Segmentation Reveals Associations With Subnuclei and Psychiatric Outcomes." *Child maltreatment* vol. 24,4 (2019): 400-410. doi:10.1177/1077559519839491

²³² Bilbo, Staci, and Beth Stevens. "Microglia: The Brain's First Responders." *Cerebrum : the Dana forum on brain science* vol. 2017 cer-14-17. 1 Nov. 2017 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6132046/>

²³³ Catale, Clarissa et al. "Microglial Function in the Effects of Early-Life Stress on Brain and Behavioral Development." *Journal of clinical medicine* vol. 9,2 468. 8 Feb. 2020, doi:10.3390/jcm9020468

²³⁴ The actual chemical was acetophenone, a fragrance used in soaps.

²³⁵ See Dias, Brian & Ressler, Kerry. (2013). Parental olfactory experience influences behavior and neural structure in subsequent generations. *Nature neuroscience*. 17. 10.1038/nn.3594.

²³⁶ Which is to say, toggle the gene on or off.

²³⁷ Epigenetic inheritance also comes by way of the egg.

²³⁸ For good paper on the promise and limitations of research to date see: Yehuda, Rachel, and Amy Lehrner. "Intergenerational transmission of trauma effects: putative role of epigenetic mechanisms." *World psychiatry : official journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)* vol. 17,3 (2018): 243-257. doi:10.1002/wps.20568

²³⁹ The American Creed, for the purposes of this book refers to the fact that, in a literal sense, almost anything economic activity is acceptable in America so long as it makes the right people sufficient sums of money. AR-15 production would be one illustrative example that follows in the footsteps of tobacco, enslavement through 1942, and big oil underpinning mass suburbanization.

²⁴⁰ Google "worst cities in America" and read any one of the 100,000 results returned.

²⁴¹ Aside from the 1872 platform, which recognizes the "equality of all men before the law," there is nothing in Democratic platforms in the years after the civil war on into the mid-twentieth century.

²⁴² When complaining about the frequently poor behavior of white American soldiers, the famed George Orwell wrote, "The general consensus of opinion seems to be that the only American soldiers with decent manners are the Negroes."

See also Afua Hirsch, "An American Uprising in Second World War England by Kate Werran – review," *The Guardian*, Aug 5, 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/aug/05/an-american-uprising-in-second-world-war-england-by-kate-werran-review>

Also see: Kate Werran, "Incident at Launceston – How Racial Tensions Among GIs in Great Britain Led to Armed Confrontation," *Military History Now*, Jun 18, 2020, <https://militaryhistorynow.com/2020/06/18/the-battle-of-launceston-how-racial-tensions-among-gis-in-great-britain-during-ww2-led-to-armed-confrontation/>

²⁴³ Höhn, Maria. “‘We Will Never Go Back to the Old Way Again’: Germany in the African-American Debate on Civil Rights.” *Central European History*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2008, pp. 605–637. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20457398. Accessed 17 May 2021.

²⁴⁴ Richard Gergel. An Account of the Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard by the Police Officer, Lynwood Shull. *Literary Hub*. 22 Jan 2019. <https://lithub.com/an-account-of-the-blinding-of-sgt-isaac-woodard-by-the-police-officer-lynwood-shull/>

²⁴⁵ Richard Gergel. The Black Sergeant and the White Judge Who Changed Civil Rights History. *New York Times*. 7 Feb 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/07/books/review/richard-gergel-unexampled-courage.html>

Notably, both Truman and Waring were southerners in the process of confronting their own racial prejudices relatively late in life.

²⁴⁶ Laws forbidding black and white to marry.

²⁴⁷ In 1854, all Republicans opposed the westward expansion of slavery, but only a subset had concerns over civil and human rights for black Americans. Pennsylvania Congressman Thaddeus Stevens and Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner were two Republican leaders very much invested in civil and human rights.

²⁴⁸ *Segregation and the South*. Directed by James Peck. New York: Fund for the Republic, 1957

²⁴⁹ Multiple studies have drawn the same conclusion regarding increasing capacity inducing demand in areas where net population growth is positive. See recent studies:

Kent Hymel, If you build it, they will drive: Measuring induced demand for vehicle travel in urban areas, *Transport Policy*, Volume 76, 2019, Pages 57-66, ISSN 0967-070X,

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2018.12.006>.

See also Sisson, Patrick. "Expanding highways and building more roads actually makes traffic worse." *Curbed*. Mar 6, 2020 <https://archive.curbed.com/2020/3/6/21166655/highway-traffic-congestion-induced-demand>

²⁵⁰ Megan Kimble, “If They Can Tear Down This Highway in Texas, Yes, Texas!” *The Nation*. July 12, 2021. <https://www.thenation.com/article/environment/texas-transportation-highways-racism/>

²⁵¹ Like European universities, French Canadian universities don’t offer guaranteed housing to first year students, and our younger son spent his first year in a house living with eight others from France, Belgium, and Quebec. Our older son spent his first year in a dorm, and his second year doing courses online, due to Covid.

²⁵² I had a juvenile arrest record. He did not.

²⁵³ In a departure with the past, the intent was to mix income groups throughout redeveloped sections of the city.

²⁵⁴ Referring to a young black teenage girl as obnoxious and loud is a trigger for many on the left as it reinforces a negative stereotype. Nevertheless, this was my experience and my perception. Although I might better appreciate where the behavior comes from, I do not embrace the behavior.

²⁵⁵ Lewis Cass’s father and my great-great-great grandfather were brothers.

²⁵⁶ The summary of observations from DuBois, Dollard, and Myrdal, is a distillation of an excellent analysis of their works written by Pulitzer-Prize finalist Elliot Currie found in chapter 3 of *A Peculiar Indifference: The Neglected Toll of Violence on Black America*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020)

²⁵⁷ Slavery’s impact on families varied considerably, depending on several factors, plantation size being the most important. Families enslaved on smaller plantations in the Cotton South, for example, were more likely to be separated for sale due to the increased level of financial instability relative to larger plantations. Similarly, enslaved women on smaller plantations were more likely to get pregnant as teenagers, and have sexual relations with the enslaver(s). Donna L. Franklin and Angela D. James provide a comprehensive look at slavery’s impact on families in their book titled, *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African-American Family*.

²⁵⁸ Frazier was America’s first black president of the American Sociological Association.

²⁵⁹ Baptist, p. 106.

²⁶⁰ With the passage of the fourteenth amendment in 1868, raping a black woman became a criminal offence, but long afterwards barriers to prosecution remained in place.

See Jeffrey J. Pokorak. Rape as a Badge of Slavery: The Legal History of, And Remedies for, Prosecutorial Race-of-Victim Charging Disparities. Nevada Law Journal. Vol 7:1 (Fall 2006). <https://scholars.law.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1418&context=nlj>

²⁶¹ Joshua Rothman, *The Ledge and the Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America*, 2021. Basic Books, NY.

²⁶² Regarding credit, see Ohio History Central's essay on the Land Act of 1820 at https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Land_Act_of_1820

²⁶³ The market for transporting enslaved Americans via coastal water routes developed along with the domestic slave trade itself after 1808. See Schermerhorn, Calvin. "Capitalism's Captives: The Maritime United States Slave Trade, 1807-1850." *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 4 (2014): 897–921. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43308821>.

²⁶⁴ Barnard is the grandfather of the four boys who fought in the Civil War, and their brother Chester, who delivered my father into this world.

²⁶⁵ Recall also that Jackson had appointed Lewis to his cabinet because of Lewis's experience with and advocacy for Indian removal.

²⁶⁶ Baptist makes this same point on page 238.

²⁶⁷ Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and Lewis Cass have all been referred to as "architects of Indian removal." Of the three, Lewis perhaps has the most direct experience with the process as Governor of Michigan and Secretary of War. This said, there were many minds aligned with the idea as evidenced by the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

²⁶⁸ Baptist, p 240.

²⁶⁹ Baptist, p 239.

²⁷⁰ Joseph is Barnard's son, and father to Chester, the doctor who delivered my father into this world. And the father of young Lewis RB Cass and his three brothers who fought during the war.

²⁷¹ Growing up, my father would occasionally quip that his great-grandmother (Joseph's wife) "cut down half the trees in Maumee." At the time of her arrival, Ohio was almost entirely covered by forests. Per the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, just 10 percent remained shortly after father was born in 1915. The 1640 acres my family 'owned' started as a rich, complex forest ecosystem, and eventually wound up covered by suburban houses with the ubiquitous 2-car garage.

²⁷² Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner died in 1868 and 1874 respectively. There were no progressive heirs picking up the baton. The country was rapidly industrializing, and influential people were focused on making money any way they could.

²⁷³ For an exceptional analysis of Dubois, see Elliott Currie's book *A Peculiar Indifference: The Neglected Toll of Violence on Black America*. 2020. Henry Holt and Company. NY. My discussion on the origins of black crime at the dawn of the 20th century is influenced by Currie's work, as well as the original text of *The Philadelphia Negro*.

²⁷⁴ He interviewed nearly 5,000 people over the 18 months he lived in the Seventh Ward.

²⁷⁵ W.E.B. Dubois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. 1899. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia.

²⁷⁶ In the 1880s, roughly 4% of Philadelphia's population was black, yet between 1885 and 1889, yet they accounted for 14% of all serious crimes between 1885 and 1889, and 22% between 1890-1895.

²⁷⁷ During my time in Philadelphia, I saw plenty. For example, a police helicopter dropped a bomb on a row home in the middle of a residential block to flush out a black militant group called MOVE. I watched black smoke filled the horizon as two city blocks burned to the ground. The situation was the very definition of insanity, in terms of MOVE's collective behavior, and the city's response to a legitimately dangerous situation.

²⁷⁸ Humans cannot be classified by biological races. Sickle cell anemia, for example, is not a "black disease." The genetic mutation does not exist in northern or southern Africa, but it does exist in India, the Mediterranean and on the Arabian Peninsula. Genetic variation is associated with specific locations around the globe. As biological anthropologist Alan Goodman has written, "Let's be clear that genetic variation is an amazingly complex result of evolution and mustn't ever be reduced to race." Race is a cultural construct, not a genetic reality.

²⁷⁹ Jonathan Jarry. "Are You There, Race? It's Me, DNA" McGill Office for Science and Society. 9 August 2019. <https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/health-general-science/are-you-there-race-its-me-dna>

See also Alan Goodman's "Race Is Real, But It's Not Genetic." *Discover Magazine*. 25 June 2020.

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/race-is-real-but-its-not-genetic>

²⁸⁰ Ah, but what about skin color you ask? It's determined by a selective gene that's got nothing to do with being a part of a mythical biological race; it's a function of how far our ancestors lived from the equator. Darker skin offers greater protection against sunburn and skin cancer.

²⁸¹ W.E.B. Dubois (editor). *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*. 1906. University of Atlanta Press. Also see Michael Yudell. "A century after W.E.B. Du Bois, science still gets race wrong." *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 3 October 2014. https://www.inquirer.com/philly/blogs/public_health/A-century-after-WEB-Du-Bois-science-still-gets-race-wrong.html

²⁸² You can find it online at the LBJ library.

²⁸³ Robert D. McFadden. "Richard N. Goodwin, Adviser to Democratic Presidents, Dies at 86." *New York Times*. 21 May 2018. See also: Associated Press. Richard Goodwin: writer of acclaimed political speeches, dies at 86. 21-May 2018. Republished at Politico. See <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/21/richard-goodwin-writer-of-famous-speeches-dies-at-86-602655>

²⁸⁴ This captures the feeling I had as a college graduate returning from Europe over 30 years ago.

²⁸⁵ Pat Paterson. The Truth About Tonkin. *Naval History Magazine* February 2022 Volume 22, Number 1. <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2008/february/truth-about-tonkin>

²⁸⁶ See Medal of Honor Recipients Ohio Civil War. <http://www.ohiocivilwar.com/moh.html>

²⁸⁷ Vicksburg was the Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. With Vicksburg in hand, the Union controlled the entire river, and had split the Confederacy in two. And Gettysburg forced Lee abandon his plans to invade Pennsylvania secure a string of victories, and pressure the North for a negotiated settlement.

²⁸⁸ See *Lynching in America*, 3rd edition, 2017; SUPPLEMENT: Lynchings by County, p. 7" (PDF). Eji.org.

See Caleb Smith, "White Flight." *Mississippi Encyclopedia*. 11-July 2018

<http://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/white-flight/>

See also Alan Huffman. "How White Flight Ravaged the Mississippi Delta." *The Atlantic*. 6 Jan 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/01/how-white-flight-ruined-the-mississippi-delta/384227>

²⁸⁹ See <https://crimegrade.org/safest-places-in-vicksburg-ms/>

²⁹⁰ See David M. Oshinsky. *Worse than Slavery: The Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*. (New York, Basic Books, 1997)

²⁹¹ As mentioned earlier, my father was about 15-20 years older than my friend's dads.

²⁹² Grandfathers at that point would, like Lewis, have fought as teenagers and would have reached their late 80s by the late 1930s.

²⁹³ Most were those who'd been enslaved as children and teens.

²⁹⁴ You can access the slave narrative online at the Library of Congress. See <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/articles-and-essays/>

²⁹⁵ See Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment, and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime*. (Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 1966).

²⁹⁶ Adeline Hodges. Interviewed by Federal Writers Project. *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1938*. Mobile, Alabama. 4 Aug. 1937. Manuscript available at Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mesn.010/?sp=187>

²⁹⁷ See paper presented in Economic History Seminar at the Paris School of Economics on 16 Mar 2022 by Sven Beckert (Harvard) and Mark Stelzner (Connecticut College) titled "Productivity Growth of Enslaved Workers."

²⁹⁸ Baptist. p. 140

²⁹⁹ Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode. *Biological Innovation and Productivity Growth in the Antebellum Cotton Economy*. Working Paper 14142. National Bureau of Economic Research. Cambridge. June 2008. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14142>

³⁰⁰ I've focused on the Cotton South, but – at risk of stating the obvious - violence was the bedrock of enslavement in the Upper South as well. See Tristan Stubbs *Masters of Violence: The Plantation Overseers and Eighteenth-Century Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press: 2018)

³⁰¹ Enslavers typically employed overseers on plantations having 50 or more enslaved persons. Their focus was to do everything possible to increase crop yield.

³⁰² David M. Oshinsky. *Worse Than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press, 1997)

³⁰³ See Currie. Chapter 3. (Kobo Desktop reader 21/67)

³⁰⁴ In 2020, Professor Elliot Currie (UC Irving) completed a book titled, *A Peculiar Indifference: The Neglected Toll of Violence on Black America*. My own description of Dollard and Davis's work is based on Currie's analysis. His work helped me make sense of my own experience with black violence, and white contempt.

³⁰⁵ This quote comes directly from Currie's book which in itself contains quotes referencing Dollard. For readability, I've chosen to encapsulate everything as a single quote as if it came from Currie, on whom my own writing depends.

³⁰⁶ Currie. p. 31.

³⁰⁷ Currie. p. 31.

³⁰⁸ Currie. p. 33.

³⁰⁹ Currie. p. 41.

³¹⁰ Currie. p. 41.

³¹¹ Currie. p. 40.

³¹² Currie. p. 43.

³¹³ Currie. p. 43.

³¹⁴ Currie. p. 44.

³¹⁵ During the Great Migration, northern cities tended to draw blacks from specific regions in the South. Many black Philadelphians, for example, have roots in the Carolinas, and Chicago drew from Mississippi and Alabama.

³¹⁶ Lewis was one of 7 fourteen-year-olds in his regiment.

³¹⁷ In the assemblage of photos on my wall (which itself is a single print that was recorded with the Library of Congress), Lewis appears dressed in a suit wears a suit. It was taken after the war, likely within a year of his death. Photos of the ten siblings are arranged such that the brothers appear in the bottom row of photos, beneath the living.

³¹⁸ Philadelphia is littered with abandoned factories of the sort that employed hundreds of thousands of men during the time my mother was coming of age. The area I'm referring to is in the vicinity of 2900 block of N. 20th Street. See also Walter Licht's essay titled "Workshop of the World" in *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia, which is a* "is a civic project to increase understanding of one of America's greatest cities." <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/about/>

³¹⁹ See Philadelphia Police's Crime Mapper site at: <https://www.phillypolice.com/crime-maps-stats>

³²⁰ Per OECD figures, there are 19 countries that have higher rates of social spending as a percentage of their GDP. In none of these countries do you find the levels of violence and deep poverty found in America.

³²¹ Books preceding Blackmon's on this subject include, Matthew Mancini's *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928*, and David Oshinsky's *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*.

³²² The overwhelming majority of convicts were black. A much smaller percentage were white. The system, as Blackmon notes, was reconfigured after the Civil War to coerce blacks to comply with labor demands and social customs.

³²³ Blackmon makes this point in various ways in the introduction of his book on pages 5 thru 8.

³²⁴ Fisher-Giorlando, Marianne. Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association 38, no. 3 (1997): 379–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4233438>

³²⁵ Blackmon 251

³²⁶ Blackmon 345.

³²⁷ Blackmon 329.

³²⁸ Recall that Sergeant Woodward was severely beaten after returning home from the Pacific theater after advocating for himself regarding using a bathroom during a bus stop (See chapter 38 - Prelude to Polarization.)

³²⁹ Buckley biographer and critic Carl T. Bogus summarizes Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* in the Los Angeles Times on 27 Nov 2011. See <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/la-xpm-2011-nov-27-la-oe-bogus-buckley-and-american-conservatism-20111127-story.html>

³³⁰ Future presidential advisor to Kennedy and Yale graduate McGeorge Bundy, excoriated Buckley in the November 1951 issue of the Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1951/11/the-attack-on-yale/306724/>

See also Douglas Martin. William F. Buckley Jr. Is Dead at 82. *New York Times* 27 Feb 2008. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/27/business/media/27cnd-buckley.html>

³³¹ Today, that movement denies global warming's existence, undermines democracy by claiming elections are fraudulent, disbelieves science, and hold medieval views regarding a woman's right to choose based on literal interpretation of mythology.

³³² In the 1950s, moderate Republicans generally hailed from the Northeast and were affiliated with Wall Street. Conservative Republicans were more often found in the Midwest and West, identified with small business, and were isolationist, strongly anti-New Deal.

³³³ Ideas around conflating religion and lassie-fair economics come from law professor Carl Bogus, who has written extensively about Buckley's influence on the modern conservative moment. He calls attention to Buckley's "two most historically important sentences" in his November 27, 2011 LA Time piece titled, "God and man and William F. Buckley." Additionally Bogus has written extensively about conservatism's evolution in a *American Conservatism*, published in 2016 by NYU Press and available via NYU Press Scholarship Online (DOI:10.18574/nyu/9781479812370.001.0001).

³³⁴ Bogus. LA Times.

³³⁵ Bogus. LA Times.

³³⁶ Sadiya Ansari. "Child Care Revolution: What Canada Can Learn from Germany." *The Walrus*. 5 Apr 2022. <https://thewalrus.ca/child-care-canada/>

³³⁷ Similar to Germany's center-right Christian Democratic Union party.

³³⁸ Joseph E. Lowndes. *From the New Deal to the New Right* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)

³³⁹ United States House of Representatives - Office of Art & Archives Party. *Realignment And The New Deal* <https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Keeping-the-Faith/Party-Realignment--New-Deal>

³⁴⁰ Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981): 51.

³⁴¹ Melissa Cooper. *Reframing Eleanor Roosevelt's Influence in the 1930s Anti-Lynching Movement around a 'New Philosophy of Government'.* *European Journal of American Studies*. Spring 2017: Special Issue - Eleanor Roosevelt and Diplomacy in the Public Interest <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/11914>

³⁴² Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*. (Yale University Press, 2009) chap 3. Kobo edition.

³⁴³ Lowndes presents the details of how a partnership (my words) between conservatives and racists developed in chapters 2 and 3 of his book.

³⁴⁴ Lowndes presents the writings of many at the *National Review* during the late 1950s. For example, conservative scholar Richard Weaver equated desegregation with communism. Journalist James Kilpatrick made constitutional arguments against desegregation. And South Carolina columnist Anthony Harrigan, spoke to the shared values between far-right lassie-faire values and southern racists noting, "The original shapers of Southern tradition believed that progress resulted not from equality of condition, but from fruitful inequalities..."

³⁴⁵ Neither Lowndes, nor the *National Review* refers to any sort of agreement per se, but that's what it amounted to.

³⁴⁶ Various authors have spoken to the fact that Brown animated the *National Review*. In addition to Lowndes, see Alvin Felzenberg's *A Man and His Presidents: The Political Odyssey of William F. Buckley, Jr* (2017). Also see Ryan Grim's article in the *Intercept* titled, "National Review is Trying to Rewrite Its Own Racist History." 5 July 2020 <https://theintercept.com/2020/07/05/national-review-william-buckley-racism/>

³⁴⁷ Bozell is the person at the *National Review*, with whom I'd perhaps most want to have a conversation. Like Buckley, he came from a wealthy family. At Yale he converted to Catholicism under

Buckley's mentorship and later married Buckley's sister. Intellectually gifted and deeply ideological, Bozell moved his family to Spain in 1965, having been attracted to the conservative brand of Catholicism practiced at the time. He was vehemently opposed abortion, and embraced Spanish dictator Francisco Franco who had solidified power with the help of Hitler and the Church. Bozell later referred to America as a "vast moral and spiritual wasteland," disliked homosexuality, and abhorred abortion his grandson n. In the 1970s, he suffered from bipolar disorder and alcoholism. Referred to as the "Tea Party's Godfather," Bozell was arrested repeatedly and forcibly hospitalized. Living the end of his life in obscurity in a relative state of grace, Bozell regularly visited prisoners in Lorton Reformatory outside Washington DC once a week. Notably, his grandson participated in the January 6th insurrection. All of this is captured in Daniel Kelly's sympathetic biography titled, *Living on Fire: The Life of L. Brent Bozell Jr.*

³⁴⁸ As of this writing, Buckley's November 1957 article "Why the South Must Prevail," is available at <https://adamgomez.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/whyythesouthmustprevail-1957.pdf> My thoughts on Buckley here are in response to his editorial, versus what Grim, Felzenberg, or Lowndes have written.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Lowndes, chap 2.

³⁵¹ See Buccola's feature essay titled "The Great Debate: James Baldwin, William F. Buckley, Jr., and the Civil Rights Revolution," Manchester Openhive. Manchester University Press Open Access Content 26 November 2019. Page 19. Buccola covers this same ground in his book, *The Fire Is Upon Us: James Baldwin, William F. Buckley Jr., and the Debate Over Race in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019)

³⁵² Lowndes, chap 3.

³⁵³ James Hershman. "Massive Resistance" Encyclopedia Virginia. Virginia Humanities, (07 Dec. 2020). Web. 16 May. 2022. Every state pursued massive resistance, and in many cases, it delayed school desegregation well into the 1960s, giving Whites time to create private, all-white academies, or move to racially segregated suburbs.

³⁵⁴ The Canada Child Benefit is administered by the Canada Revenue Agency. Estimated payments for any household income can be calculated online. See <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html>

³⁵⁵ For a comparison of the U.S. with other advanced economies see, Timothy Smeeding, and Celine Thevenot. Addressing Child Poverty: How Does the United States Compare With Other Nations?. Academic Pediatrics. Volume 16, Issue 3. Supplement S67-S65. 1-April-2016. Academic Pediatric Association. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6087662/>

³⁵⁶ Claire Cain Miller. "How Other Nations Pay for Child Care. The U.S. Is an Outlier." New York Times. 6-Oct-2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/upshot/child-care-biden.html>

³⁵⁷ Peter Adamson. "Measuring Child Poverty Innocenti Report Card 10." UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre May 2012 p. 7 <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/660-measuring-child-poverty-new-league-tables-of-child-poverty-in-the-worlds-rich-countries.html>

³⁵⁸ Lauren Rude. "Despite republicans voting against it, child tax credit payments began." WHTM-TV/ABC 27. 16-July-2021. <https://www.abc27.com/news/pennsylvania/despite-republicans-voting-against-it-child-tax-credit-payments-began/>

³⁵⁹ Lloyd Smucker House Speech 29-Sep-2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOsy4RrG7oo&t=40s>

³⁶⁰ The word "freedom" appears 76 times across the 115 pages.

³⁶¹ See David Faber. *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) p 90.

See also Alfred Regnery. Goldwater's "The Conscience of a Conservative" transformed American politics." *The Washington Times*. 17 Nov 2014. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/nov/17/goldwaters-the-conscience-of-a-conservative-transf/>

³⁶² Bozell graduated from Yale, embodied fundamentalist Catholic views, was militantly anti-choice, admired Spanish dictator Francisco Franco (who received considerable help from Hitler to gain power), moved his family to Spain, struggled with bi-polar disorder, opposed American militarism, fell into alcoholism, and later found grace in serving the poor in obscurity. I mention these things to stress that he was a complicated man.

³⁶³ Faber. p. 89

³⁶⁴ Calhoun and Lewis Cass formed a close political relationship that spanned 30 years. They appear together in political cartoons such as “Cass and His Cabinet in 1849” which has Calhoun and other likely cabinet members with Cass. Google “Lewis Cass and John C Calhoun” to learn more.

³⁶⁵ *A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States* is a well-argued book written by a man with a razor-sharp mind who began his political career staunchly in favor of a strong federal government, only to opportunistically reverse himself after slavery came under greater criticism in the North starting in the 1820s. See:

Ethan S. Rafuse.” John C. Calhoun: The Man Who Started the Civil War.” Civil War Times. October 2002. Vol 41 Issue 5. Reprinted by History Net at <https://www.historynet.com/john-c-calhoun-the-man-who-started-the-civil-war.htm>

Although Calhoun writes of the state’s relationship to the judiciary and tariffs, maintaining and expanding slavery is unquestionably the overriding concern in the context of states rights. See: John C. Calhoun. *A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States*. General Assembly of State of South Carolina. 1851. Available online at:

https://en.m.wikisource.org/wiki/Works_of_John_C._Calhoun/A_Discourse_on_the_Constitution_and_Government_of_the_United_States

³⁶⁶ "GOLDWATER STORE SOURCE OF WEALTH; Senator's Banker Calls Him a 'Modest Millionaire'." *New York Times*. 16 July 1964. <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/07/16/archives/goldwater-store-source-of-wealth-senators-banker-calls-him-a-modest.html>

³⁶⁷ Buccola. p. 11

³⁶⁸ It’s worth reiterating that leading Republicans in the 1860s like Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner were progressives who would be despised by the conservative-racist alliance if they were alive today. And racist Democrats like Lewis Cass and John Calhoun would most certainly be siding with conservative Republicans today.

³⁶⁹ See Eugene Smolensky and Robert Plotnick. Inequality and Poverty in the United States:1900 to 1900. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Institute for Research on Poverty. Discussion Paper #998-93. p. 23. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/dps/pdfs/dp99893.pdf> The validity of poverty rates prior to 1947 must be scrutinized due to limited data. When using mean personal income data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, economists estimate that poverty rates exceeded 60 to 70% around 1900. This rate fell to around 50% in the 1920s then rose again during the Depression. The authors clarify that they’re applying the current official poverty line to an earlier era, which they consider to be problematic. Similarly, if they applied an official poverty line defined in 1904 to the present day, then they’d conclude poverty would have been eliminated, which clearly is not the case. With this in mind, they state that it makes more sense to measure relative rather than absolute poverty. Using this refined analysis, researchers conclude that “from the turn of the century until the Depression the proportion of the population considered poor hovered around one-third; between mid-Depression and 1960, that proportion fell to about one-fifth.” A decade later it was little more than one-tenth. And today, if you consider the poverty line to be outdated, the official poverty rate of about 12% might be considered the lower bound.

³⁷⁰ Certainly, the federal government played a major role as seen in Plessy v. Ferguson (affirming state-level segregation), and FHA lending policies, but the driver and epicenter of oppression rests with state and local government.

³⁷¹ The Republican percentage of the black vote dropped from 39% in 1960 to just 6% in 1964 on account of Goldwater voting against the Civil Rights Act. See Mathew Delmont. “When Jackie Robinson Confronted a Trump-Like Candidate.” *The Atlantic*. 16 March 2016.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/goldwater-jackie-robinson/474498>

³⁷² And where, as Secretary of War, Lewis Cass opened up new lands for enslavement financed by mortgage-backed securities.

³⁷³ See Robert McNamara. In *Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996) See also David L. DiLeo. *George Ball, Vietnam, and the Rethinking of Containment* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) On page 104, DiLeo talks about the distinction between McNamara’s call for “precipitous escalation” and George Ball advocating for “precipitous abandonment” of Vietnam.

³⁷⁴ Chris Woolf. "The little-known story of Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh's admiration for the US." *The World*. 18 Sep 2017. <https://theworld.org/stories/2017-09-18/little-known-story-vietnamese-communist-leader-ho-chi-minh-s-admiration-us>

³⁷⁵ James M. Lindsay. "Remembering Ho Chi Minh's 1945 Declaration of Vietnam's Independence." *Council on Foreign Relations*. 2 Sep 2016. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/remembering-ho-chi-minhs-1945-declaration-vietnams-independence>

³⁷⁶ See Frances Fitzgerald's 1972 Pulitzer Prize winning book *Fire In the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietna*

³⁷⁷ Jeffrey Record, "Vietnam in Retrospect: Could We Have Won?," *Parameters* 26, no. 4 (1996), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.1804.

³⁷⁸ As touched on previously, authorization was based on conflicting information. But by the time Johnson began to escalate several months later, it was clear to all that claims made in August 1964 regarding back-to-back attacks on U.S. warships on August 2nd and August 4th were inaccurate. There were no attacks on the 4th, and the North Vietnamese torpedo boats that attacked a U.S. destroyer on August 2nd had every reason to believe the ship was involved in attacks that the CIA and South Vietnamese military had been executing that same day along the coast.

³⁷⁹ Kenneth B. Clark describes objective and subjective aspects of the ghetto in his 1965 book, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

³⁸⁰ Kenneth B. Clark. "The Wonder is Why There Have Been So Few Riots" *New York Times Magazine*. 5 Sep 1965.

³⁸¹ Fitzgerald. 264.

³⁸² Prior to introducing combat-ready troops, the U.S. had just over 20,000 "advisors" in Vietnam.

³⁸³ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Military Health History Pocket Card: Vietnam. <https://www.va.gov/oaa/pocketcard/m-vietnam.asp> See also Stephen Daggett. Cost of Major U.S. Wars. Congressional Research Service. 29 June 2010.

³⁸⁴ See United States Senate. Vietnam Hearings. January 24, 1966. https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Vietnam_Hearings.htm

There were plenty of skeptical voices outside the Johnson administration. Fitzgerald (p 265-266) notes that enemy troop strength in 1965 led Johnson's advisors to prepare for a long and costly war, even as they questioned their actions, and CIA intelligence analysts expressed pessimism. Jeffrey Record notes that in 1954, when the French were defeated in Vietnam, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a statement reading, "Indochina is devoid of decisive military objectives and the allocation of more than token US armed forces in Indochina would be a serious diversion of limited US capabilities."

³⁸⁵ DiLeo p. 103-104.

³⁸⁶ Hubert Humphrey. 17 Feb 1965 Memorandum From Vice President Humphrey to President Johnson. U.S. State Department Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v02/d134>

³⁸⁷ As mentioned earlier, plenty of black Americans have thrived in the post-civil rights era. Most, however, have not.

³⁸⁸ See LBJ Library film titled "May 1968: Vietnam War Peace Talks," which speaks to May casualties starting at min 3:30. <https://www.lbjlibrary.org/object/video/may-1968-vietnam-war-peace-talks>

³⁸⁹ The commission was named after the commissions' chairman, Illinois governor Otto Kerner.

³⁹⁰ Steven Gillion's book, *Separate and Unequal: The Kerner Commission and the Unraveling of American Liberalism* provides an engaging, thorough look at the report's creation and impact.

³⁹¹ Steven M. Gillion. *Separate and Unequal: The Kerner Commission and the Unravelling of American Liberalism*. (New York: Basic Books, 2018) [Kobo – Introduction] Also see Justin Driver. "The Report on Race That Shook America." *The Atlantic Monthly*. May 2018.

³⁹² America would slowly withdraw American troops and billions building up South Vietnamese armed forces to fight an American-directed war. They got tanks, squadrons of F-5 tactical bombers, and more.