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**Author**

**MR. WOODARD:** I'm Komozi Woodard and I was born and raised in Newark. The first time I was beaten by the police was when I was 12 years old. I was beat up by four kids. After coming home from school, my mother called the police. A black cop came, asked my mother some questions, said he needed to talk to me downstairs, and in training a white cop he tortured me in the lobby of our apartment. When I went upstairs, I told my mother never to call the police.

My graduation present, I graduated from Weequahic High School in June. 1967 was the Newark uprising. When I graduated from college in 1971, we had the Attica massacre.

Let me make ten points about what's going on here.

Number one, we need to rethink -- I teach history and public policy now, and I want you to understand I went to college on welfare. So all this stuff about what's welfare, it paid for my books. So it didn't hurt me at all.

My father I should say was blinded by the National Guard when they came to Newark. He was trying to go to work as a meat packer. He was blinded by the National Guard. So my family was on welfare. So I took the money and I got my education.

We're trying to rethink the urban crisis now. Basically for your purposes, we've gone from an urban crisis in the '60s to an urban catastrophe in the 21st Century. That's what you're looking at when you look at Katrina. That's what you're looking at when you look at (indiscernible). We are in an urban catastrophe community, but if we use the wrong words, it doesn't wake people up. It puts them to sleep.

This is not an ordinary situation and it is a national situation. It is not a Newark situation. Okay? Please understand that. This is a -- I can't talk about every city, but you have to understand these things are nationally.

And we went to the Gary in 1972, which is something that came out of Newark after 1967. We organized a national political movement. People started to understand that we got the same problems in Los Angeles. We got them in Detroit. We got them in Milwaukee. These are national problems and they make you feel inferior and worthless by saying it's you. Well, it can't be you in LA or in Detroit. You don't even know those people, right?

So what have they got in common? They got in common this system.

We had the Newark rebellion in '67, but everybody forgets we had a Puerto Rican rebellion in 1974. So that's what came out of '67. We had another rebellion. The Puerto

Ricans rebelled in 1974. We had the (indiscernible) black mayor who was trying to beat up on Puerto Ricans. Right now you got the Parisian uprisings. Could that be us in Newark causing that? Right? And I'm going to be talking about these gangs in a minute.

Three, we have a tremendous brain and talent drain in Newark. The whole myth is that good people don't come out of Newark. Everybody here knows better than that, but most of the good people who get -- their parents spend all their time in the community to get them together to go to school, like they did me, cannot find a job commensurate with their talents in Newark.

Four, much of the urban renaissance that we did in Newark was destroyed by the government and white terrorists right here. Right?

I was the director of the project area committee. I was the director of Talaway Towers. Talaway Towers is buried in the North Ward right now. You don't even know where Talaway Towers is. It's buried under the ground. That's what happened since 1967.

We built schools. They were torn down. The NJR32 urban renewal project in Central Ward of Newark, the mob took it over from us illegally in front of the whole government. The whole world looked at it. We called the White House, the Justice Department. The only thing Nixon said to us was if you vote for us -- if you vote for -- if we vote for you, then we'll look at your rights. Right?

But all of that was destroyed. Howard Wilson was the leader of our program, the New Jersey R32 program. They ripped it up. They built a school, a new school in Newark.

Now, let's get this straight about these new schools. I went there because it was my best friend. He was killed in a struggle. I go there. I had to cry for half an hour. It's a school that looks like a detention center for little kids. There's no windows in it. It was just built for \$40 million. Don't tell me about renaissance in Newark.

I had to find (indiscernible). There's not one window in the school. There's not one speck of grass there. What other child is growing up like that. And that's the way you solve the problem? You creating problems because they going to school to be prepared to go to jail. That's what the school looks like.

The housing -- right now in that same development -- I think the brother said he lived in (indiscernible). Across the street from it where the mob built the housing and took it from us, it's already abandoned. \$30 million worth of housing. You can go right there. You see it right there. That was new housing. It's already abandoned because -- the reason they got rid of us because we didn't want them to cheap -- build that same cheap mob housing.

Right? And they blame our kids for it and we blame our kids for it. They building that stuff, like the sister said, with inferior materials.

My job -- the reason they got rid of me was inspecting the material.

You buy it. The taxpayer is paying for grade A and they give you grade Z.

And then you blame the kids because the housing's falling down. It better not fall down.

And they falling down.

Okay. That's my fifth, fifth point.

The counter revolution was this, after we had all these things going, we built all these schools, the Butcher's Institute, you can look it up, came up with a document how do we deal with these urban problems. They said give them face democracy.

They said as long as you got white faces there, they're going to have uprisings, but if you put a black face up there, a brown face or a woman's face, they'll think they're doing it to themselves.

We just heard lectures on how we do it to ourselves, right?

Six, the policies of planned shrinkage. There's a book called A Plague on Your Houses by Debra Wallace. We can go to the United Nations to talk about ethnic cleansing and human rights violations by the federal government and local governments to destroy our communities.

Right? This one's on the South Bronx. When the South Bronx was burning, they closed down fire stations. They put in fake fire boxes. Then they pulled back the police services and they let that community die. That policy was exploited to Newark.

Right? And then they let your house burn and they warehouse all that land and let it fester until they got some rich people to come and then they call it (indiscernible), and they say, oh, look you done messed up your life, but we rich people going to solve that for you. But they made that happen. That's their plan, and we're going to the United Nations to protest.

Now, the other piece that the Wallaces talk about is they made our communities into refugee camps -- and the kind of gang violence we have, the kind of HIV we have, the tuberculosis are typical of refugee conditions whether you're in Palestine, Eastern Europe or the United States. That's what's going on.

Seven. Nine. Our politics have to be about self-emancipation and (indiscernible) democracy. We have to continue the Gary convention policy of a gender voting from below. These communities have to come up with their own agenda because you know the conditions of your life. When you people leave here, it's you that have to handle this. Right?

My last point is -- this is the biggest point. In 1959 -- we're lucky we're still standing. They've been trying to destroy our communities with public policy.

Now, (indiscernible) has just written a dissertation about Newark and she -- Leo Carlin, the mayor, announced in 1959 they had to get rid of tens of thousands of low-income people from the Central Ward of Newark. Okay?

So they've been trying to destroy your community each mayor, whether they was black or brown or whatever, has been doing the same policy ever since and they tried to destroy the black and Latino groups, Young Lords, Black Panther party and so on who are trying to build up these communities.

So this is no accident that has gone on and it's going to take a new kind of politics to change that situation.