



**VIEWS**

**FROM**

**THE**



**HOOK**

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# Observational Notes

Location 1: Smith Street and 9th Street Train Station

- Busy
- F Train just passed
- I see teenagers walking
- Cars driving past
- Graffiti on the walls
- People standing by the bus stop
- Somebody riding a bike
- Trucks coming out the parking lot
- No street lights



# Observational Notes

## Location 2: Coffey Park

- Lady walking with her kid
- Leaves on the floor
- Lots of flowers, trees
- Swings
- Benches
- Slides
- Kids playing around
- Basketball courts
- Man riding a scooter
- Grass field
- Cities bikes



# Interview with Kyah, RHI Employee

November 18th, 2022

**Christian:**

Hi. Hello. My name is Christian Rose. What is your name?

**Kyah:**

Kyah.

**Christian:**

Do you confirm that you participate in this research project voluntarily?

**Kyah:**

Yes.

**Christian:**

Do you understand that this interview will be transcribed and published as a part of this project?

**Kyah:**

Yes.

**Christian:**

What is your connection with Red Hook?

**Kyah:**

I was born and raised out here.

**Christian:**

How long have you lived there?

Kyah:

20 years.

Christian:

Work?

Kyah:

Like seven, about seven, eight years.

Christian:

What do you do for a living?

Kyah:

I am the reproductive health educator at Red Hook Initiative. So I teach sex ed and I also teach spoken word and poetry.

Christian:

How have you seen Red Hook change?

Kyah:

Well now it's like a lot of construction going on. They tore down all of our parks. There's no parks. It's just a big construction site now.

Christian:

What do you consider your goals?

Kyah:

I want to be an educator. I want to work in schools. I want to teach sex health. I want to teach health, but then I also want to find a way to combine health and poetry and spoken word.

Christian:

How would you make that possible in a way?

**Kyah:**

So I already have a plan. The program would be called Health Speaks, and basically it's just like we're learning about health, mental health, reproductive health, personal health, and we just read about it and perform about it.

**Christian:**

How can we bridge the gap between generations within our community?

**Kyah:**

Alright. That's a hard one because the older people are overly likely to feel like the younger people don't know what they're talking about. Or we've haven't here long enough, we know more. I don't know. I would just say for the newer generation to just continue doing what you're doing, work hard and show them.

Don't work to prove your point, but just to show I know as much as you know, and if we work together then we could make things happen

**Christian:**

How do you feel about food access?

**Kyah:**

Like healthy food? What kind of food? Food in general? Well, fast food; it's no fast food over here. There's nothing to eat over here. But healthier food, a lot of people don't know that Red Hook has two farms where you can get healthier food grown on your own soil, your own land. A lot of people don't know that. So I just feel like we need to raise more awareness for that so we can get healthier options.

**Christian:**

What are some pros in Red hook?

**Kyah:**

Pros in Red Hook? So we have the Red Hook initiative. It's been around for almost 20 years, and it helps people get jobs, and helps people like me. I started here when I was 13. I was 13 years old and I started as a participant, and now I am running the same program I started in. So it helps you get a sense of where you want to be or it helps you go after what you want to do in life.

**Christian:**

Anymore?

**Kyah:**

And I was born and raised here. This is my home, so everything's a pro.

**Christian:**

Okay. What would be a con?

**Kyah:**

A con. A basic answer would be violence. It's an ongoing thing. I don't think it's... Not to be a Debbie Downer, but I don't think it's going to change.

**Christian:**

Why would you think that?

**Kyah:**

Because... I don't know. Not to say it's always going to be violent, but I don't know, I just don't think it's going to change. Or we don't have... It's not enough unity here.



No matter how hard we try, we just can't bridge people together. So it's always going to be that. It's always going to be violent.

**Christian:**

What changes should be made in the community of Red Hook?

**Kyah:**

More resources like the Red hook Initiative. Because I know I've been here for a while and I know a lot of people, a lot of my friends, being that it is a community center, which is a good thing, people don't want to be around the people that they grew up with. So it's like you want to make a change, but it's that fear of the judgment coming from people that watch you grow up.

You wanting to do something with your life should be a positive thing and people should be happy to see that. But I don't know, some people just are not as happy for you, and maybe like, yeah, I'm going to go to Initiative to do this. You might get some judgment there. So probably... I wouldn't say invite new people into Red Hook because I don't think... That doesn't sound like a good idea. But just try to find a way in places like this to separate outside, like outside life and work life, if that makes sense.

**Christian:**

Okay. That's all.

# Interview with Tashawn, Red Hook Resident

November 19th. 2022

**Christian:**

Hello. My name is Christian. I work with the Public Safety Organizing Team. What's your name?

**Tashawn:**

My name is Tashawan Davis. I grew up in Red Hook. No longer a resident of Red Hook, but I am frequent in red hook

**Christian:**

Do you confirm that this research project is recorded?

**Tashawn:**

Yes.

**Christian:**

Do you understand that this interview will be transcribed and published by my Autoethnography Project?

**Tashawn:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Christian:**

What are your connections to Red Hook?

**Tashawn:**

I moved to Red Hook when I was, what, five years old. I didn't leave until high school, so I grew up in Red Hook. I'm also a part of Red Hook Art Projects.

was the first student. I also worked with Pioneer Works. So I'm just a long time member of the community, and resident, and a lot of my family's from Red Hook.

**Christian:**

Copy. How long have you been living out here? Or working out here?

**Tashawn:**

Since I was five. And then I was in Red Hook until maybe 2014, 2015, I lived in Red Hook, and then I moved. And then, I started working with RAP again, probably after high school, I would say. So 2016, 2017.

So I've just been coming back and forth to Red Hook, and I'm working in Red Hook right now, at Pioneer Works. I also volunteer at RAP, Red Hook Art Project, So I've been around since I was five, and I'm 25 now, so...

**Christian:**

Got you.

**Christian:**

How does the community look to you?

**Tashawn:**

Right now there's just a bunch of construction going on. So just the physical appearance, alone, I would just say it looks kind of chaotic. A bunch of fences and holes and construction and stuff going on. I'm not really a big fan of the big buildings that they're building in the middle of the apartments and everything. I don't know. I think it just looks out of place, if we are just talking about the physical.

As far as everything else, the community looks like it's trying to figure out a way to be... How do I explain this? Sorry-

**Christian :**

You trying to say is, trying to be gentrified or?

**Tashawn:**

I feel like it is more focused on the aesthetic aspect of the neighborhood, but less about fixing the actual problems in the neighborhood. They probably have a lot of money to build these buildings, and I'm sure it has something to do with Sandy and flood protection. At the same time, the apartments inside of the buildings are not fixed: there are people who have their walls falling down, their ceiling falling down.

They don't have certain things that they should have, and I think we're more focused on the aesthetic aspect of it because there are people with money in Red Hook. So I think it is just more about making it look nice.

Again, I don't know the full purpose of those buildings that they're creating. I heard it has something to do with Sandy. I should probably do more research on it, but yeah. But that's just a problem, in general.

**Christian:**

No, definitely. But at the end of the day, they should still take care of the Nycha residents. It's almost half of Red Hook, so that's most of the population.

**Tashawn:**

Yeah. And at one point, Red Hook didn't even have water, you know what I mean? But we have all of this money to put in new grass. It doesn't make any sense to me, but...

**Christian:**

It's one step at a time.

**Tashawn:**

Yeah, exactly.

**Tashawn:**

Hopefully the infrastructure that they're building creates a better environment for the residents of Red Hook.

**Christian:**

Definitely, definitely. The next question, what would you consider your current goals to be?

**Tashawn:**

My current goals? Let's see. To be honest, I'm just trying to really solidify myself in my career and being able to .. Being able to go to communities like Red Hook and give back. I just would like to be an inspiration to the people, and do my thing, and be able to help people that are in need.

**Christian:**

Copy. What would your version of a safe Red Hook look like?

**Tashawn:**

I think that there's a confusion that more policing means more safety, but I believe that that isn't necessarily true. I believe there needs to be more education and more reform with the residents. I think that there should definitely be a talk to the people who live there about taking care of your neighborhood and why it's important to do certain things, like cleaning up after yourself, or why it's important to get along people in your community.

**Christian:**

Definitely. You said you don't live in Red Hook any more, right?

**Tashawn:**

No. I moved.

**Christian:**

Okay. So great. How have you seen Red Hook change from before, when you were here before and now?

**Tashawn:**

First of all, there wasn't a lot in Red Hook growing up. Red Hook was almost like a deserted land, a forgotten place in Brooklyn, where people don't live. So it was definitely more dangerous, I'll say that. It's definitely gentrified. There's definitely a lot more different things going on in Red Hook for the community.

There used to be playgrounds in front of every building, and those no longer exist. Kids were able to be outside. And like you said, Red Hook itself is not really... The projects aren't developed. The other side of Coffey Park, Van Brunt, those sides are developing, those sides are getting coffee shops and supermarkets and all of these things.

Red Hook hasn't had any of those things. Projects, doesn't have any of those. Doesn't have access to any of those things unless they go to that side of Red Hook, which is not likely because the people there are not necessarily going to accept the people from the projects. It's this divide almost, that I don't think was necessarily there before, when I was growing up

When we were growing up, we used to be able to go to Valentino Pier and hang out, nobody would say anything to us. It's just now you go over there and people are looking at you weird, and people are calling the cops. It gets weird because I grew up here and you did not.

I've been in Red Hook since I was five years old and you just got here two years ago, you know what I mean? So there's definitely a divide. Once you cross that Coffey Park, there's a whole completely different situation. They have access to a lot of things and stuff like not having water would not happen to the residents of Van Brunt. They're not going to tear down the playgrounds at Van Brunt.

So I just feel like me growing up, even though it was a little bit more dangerous, there was definitely a little bit more sense of community, in some weird way, and there was less gentrification. Even you go in a store, things are costing more than they used to because you have people with money, that are on Columbia going to the deli, buying things.

You can come over here, but we can't go over there to access the stuff that you guys have. And it's very strange. I just think that it's very strange to me personally.

**Christian:**

Thank you for your time, bro. Good stuff.

**Tashawn:**

You got anything else to say?

**Christian:**

Power to people. I mean, I hope red hook develops and I hope everybody, the community is safe and has access to all of the things that they need like education, jobs, etc.

# Views from the Hook

As a young man of color, public safety has various meanings that will impact daily living throughout a community. The general aspect of safety in low-income communities is neglected by the ones in power to make change that would benefit the ones in need but to capitalize on land that would make the economy more millions of dollars. Thoughts would constantly change every century. Public safety prevention/protection from events that could endanger the wellbeing of the general population.

Public safety to means learning to look out for the people that are generally impacted by any situation that harms their daily way of living in any environment. The world needs more activists to stand for the voices that need to be heard. We need some more groups such as the public safety team at the Red Hook Initiative to open the doors & eyes to problems that are being swept under the rug and being avoided.

Generational wealth versus generational trauma. Well what's the difference for Black people? People that look like me. The term "generational wealth" refers to assets passed from one generation of a family to another. Those assets can include stocks, bonds, and other investments, as well as real estate and family businesses. As for myself and many other black people in Red Hook we have no clue what that is. We strictly suffer from generational trauma. Generational trauma is a traumatic event that began decades prior to the current generation and has impacted the way that individuals understand, cope with, and heal from trauma. Trauma is shared by a group of people, rather than individually experienced.



The trauma spans multiple generations, such that contemporary members of the affected group may experience trauma-related symptoms without having been present for the past traumatizing event.

It's fair to say my society fears cops, and have great reason to. Our public defenders can commit manslaughter to an innocent Black man or woman and there will be little to no consequences. God forbid a Black man "resist" the higher authority he will be shot and it will all be justified with a resisted arrest, conspiracy or a concealed firearm. The justice system is corrupted there's no public safety.

It's a community who cares. Not all policemen are cruel, but how can you blame the citizen for not trusting authority when every so often we see or hear the same authority brutally murdering one of our own. Trayvon Martin, Eric Gardener, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor. The list goes on with multiple people that have lost their lives by the hands of someone that is supposed to protect us. Growing up I was taught not to trust cops. To code switch when I'm around so I have nothing to worry about.

Through gentrification the city provides more funding for the NYPD attention to areas where the property values are expensive. In theory this protects the business and property assets of the city. But what about us? Humanity rights are being enforced at a long time low where I'm from. Government leaders are often able to evade responsibility for what's happening in local communities. Local leaders often evade questions. It wasn't until recently that I noticed how segregated Red Hook is. The neighborhood has a limited amount of parks and green spaces.

This includes Coffey Park. I have good memories from that which took place in Coffey Park, where RHI through events for communities just had great vibes all around. Families and friends would have fun, play, and have barbecues.

Coffey Park is an important part of the neighborhood because it's an area where Red Hook residents are able to have fun and come together as a community. Public safety is when you're able to go outside and walk around your project community without hearing about it on the news. Things like some people in the community were shot, hearing gunshots when you walk down the street, or that an innocent bystander was getting arrested based on him being a minority.

I want to be able to know women can go home at night without them being mugged or robbed, raped or killed because they're not safe in this world or even men being able to go home without being caught in the middle of a shootout or gang activity. We need to start investing our time in making changes in project communities. I feel like once we fix the community by investing in it, it will decrease any violence in that community.

Public safety is very important because it ensures to stay safe and it helps your loved ones stay safe, too. This world is crazy, and it isn't safe for everyone. So you have to make sure every step of the way that you're safe, and your community is safe. The police aren't here for our community, they are there to over use their power. So we have to be there for each other since our justice system is failing us.

I recently spoke to a resident in Red Hook about the safety in their community. Surprisingly, the violence and danger has increased so much, and it's from the displacement caused by NYCHA construction.

NYCHA doesn't have enough workers, so now project buildings have lead and mold problems. How is that safe for families? Gas leakages, no heat, children are getting sick from all the mold and lead problems which is a problem. There is no gas, so how could they cook for their families? There is no heat, so now that's going to be a problem in the winter, because it gets cold.