



CAN

WE

ENJOY

OUR

AGAIN?



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Observational Notes

Location 1: Dunkin Donuts; Place of employment

- One women is putting sugar in the machine
- The older coworker is cooking
- The male co worker is cleaning up the display so that it can be presentable to the customers walking in
- There are 2 senior citizens sitting at a table drinking their coffee
- The 2 men are talking and laughing amongst one another
- There is a women on her phone and drinking her coffee while waiting for her food
- Here is also someone behind me washing dishes while listening to music
- There is a tv on playing the news
- Cars pass by on the road
- Cars Also are pulling up in the mall area
- It is 6:00am so it's still dark out

Observational Notes

Continued

- Walked in and saw everyone working



Observational Notes

Location 2: Bowleroo; Prominent business in my town

- People are walking around
- Some people are laughing at the bar
- People are bowling
- Little kids are running around
- People are eating
- Workers are helping customers
- People are on their phones
- Some lanes are empty
- Talking to family
- People coming in and out of bathroom
- Someone almost got a strike
- There are a lot of people walking in
- Toddlers are bowling
- People are cleaning up messes
- There is a long line to get lanes
- A man just walked in with crutches
- The music is loud
- People including myself are dancing
- I made a strike
- My mom made about 3

Observational Notes

Continued

- My little sister is having fun and sometimes mad she doesn't hit all the times
- The food was great
- This one party ordered a lot of pizza
- The lady next to us really knows how to bowl



Interview with Lazaria, Parent / Former Red Hook Resident

November 11th. 2022

Kiara:

My name is Kiara Turner. Do you consent to being recorded?

Lazaria:

What is this recording um being used for?

Kiara:

Work.

Kiara:

Do you consent?

Lazaria:

Yes, I consent.

Kiara:

What's your name?

Lazaria:

Lazaria Foreman.

Kiara:

When you used to live in Brooklyn, what are the major changes that took place now that you live in Maryland?

Lazaria:

Are you asking me what is the difference between Brooklyn and Maryland?

Kiara:

Yeah.

Lazaria:

First I would say the difference is the community. So when I lived in Brooklyn the community was not a great community. It was majority of lower class people, And in Maryland, it's a very mixed variety of people. I live in a better community. The cost of living is cheaper where I currently reside, the crime level is down. So yeah those are some of the changing, and parking.

Kiara:

Okay. What are barriers that you had to face in pursuit of your goal?

Lazaria:

Being in Brooklyn? Or being here?

Kiara:

I guess like moving from out there to out here?

Lazaria:

Honestly, there was no barriers to pursue my goal when I moved to Maryland. I already had a job prior to me moving here. There was really no barriers for me. I'm still pursuing my goals though.

Kiara:

Right. How does the community in Brooklyn look to you? Well, from when you were there.

Lazaria:

So there are some good parts of Brooklyn. I have not been in Red Hook recently, but the last time I was in Red Hook there was like a lot of construction going on. This was around the time they had built the IKEA.

and from some people that I know that lives in Red Hook, you know, they're not too fond about Red Hook, but I'm not really familiar about Red Hook.

Kiara:

What do you do for a living?

Lazaria:

I am a social worker.

Kiara:

What would your vision...no, I'm not going to ask that.um

What would you consider your current goals to be?

Lazaria:

My current goals?

Kiara:

Yeah.

Lazaria:

So my current goals is to be a licensed social worker. That's pretty much one of the things I'm working on right now, and to complete my book.

Kiara:

Okay. What kind of book?

Lazaria:

So I am writing a...I don't want to say self-help, but like a self-help educational type of book about social work.

Kiara:

Okay. Okay, how can we bridge the gap? Well, how do you think we can bridge the gap between different generations in the community?

Lazaria:

By asking people what they want. By including them in the change. I think that the more you like push things on people, the more that you make things like mandatory or just do changes without the opinions of, I'm going to say the youth, cause right now that's where a lot of things are affecting is the youth. You know, you get a lot of pushback. So like just asking the community members, what do they want, what do the youth want to see? You know I think that will bridge the gap to a lot of things.

Kiara:

The youth needs a lot now, especially this youth.

Lazaria:

Yeah.

Kiara:

Okay. So this is the last question. What do you believe the role of the police should be in terms of community safety?

Lazaria:

I think when it comes to the police and community safety, police have to get to know the people in the community that they're serving. um I think that there should also be police officers who live in that same community. you know, To have a police officer that lives in a mission off of the shores of Long Island to come serve in the community of Red Hook.

You know, I don't see how beneficial that would be, because they don't really know what's happening in the community you know, so I think like partnership um, would be good, having conversations with the youth you know, Like, I think that with all the gun violence and police shootings you know, people, they don't trust the police. You know.

Kiara:

You gave some good responses.

Lazaria:

Thank you. I'm smart.

Kiara:

Yeah, you are. Thank you so much for my interview.

Lazaria:

You're welcome.

Can We Enjoy Life Again?

While being born and raised in the city of Brooklyn, I've seen and gone through many good times and bad. Nowadays, it's hard for adults, young adults, teens, and children to go outside in their own communities to be free and have fun. What I mean by that is we don't party outdoors much, we don't have block parties as much, and we don't have community celebrations.

Nor do we send our kids out to play anymore. All of these essential things that make up life and the community are no longer happening because people are afraid they might never see a loved one again, which is terrifying and hurtful. Seeing the community stagnant, divided, and judged puts a strain on fun, laughter, love, and safety.

We all have no trust in each other or the NYPD. Being in and out of Red Hook, I've seen how crazy and unsafe it can get. From fights, shootings, police interactions, etc., nothing seems to be safe, fair, or fun now. It's hard for anyone to want to go outside and live their best life because we never know what will happen in the next hour. The world has become so harsh that it's hard to trust whether people will act right and that the police will have our best interest at heart.

The system has made people feel like they can do whatever, wherever, and however, because of how unapologetic the justice system is. They don't take accountability for any of the things that have occurred; not saying it's always the police; however, they do play a big part in why citizens are reckless in their community. Which plays a big part in why we don't go outside and have fun while being safe.

If the police just took a little time to get to know the community they have to oversee or even come across, some situations might end well. Truthfully, in any community, a police officer should at least be able to see 5 to 10 people and give a warm welcome/hello because of the fact that they had to watch over that community or even because they were called to that community often.

Making people feel acknowledged and cared for goes a long way. Many people have lived in this community for 20-plus years and can't stand to be outside, which is horrible. Everyone has their own mind and should not follow poor leadership, but who will take the law seriously if our police officers don't? In Red Hook, there has been lots of drama within the community involving the police, making it unsafe for people to be outside or even want to be outside to enjoy themselves.

For me, it became easier and safer for me to have fun in my own space and comfort zone, which is home. Being home made me feel less connected with the negativity going on in Red Hook. I always liked being outside with my friends and family and having a great time, but who wants to have to look over their shoulder when they are supposed to be having fun? It's a heavy imposition, and I want to be able to be outside freely and live my best life.

I know we all want that. There are way too many people dying young or ending up in jail just from being outside, or even being at the wrong place at the wrong time. The NYPD has to set at least one boundary that never gets crossed to show us that there is a way to make outside better and safer again.

For example, kids that were shot by the police whose families still have not gotten justice for what happened. The NYPD should never cross this boundary of firing a weapon with no real probable cause.

It's quite incredulous that the NYPD would cross this country rather than take accountability for what you have done to their loved ones. We need stability within the NYPD. It's hurtful to see that no one wants to have cookouts anymore, parties in the parks, games days/nights, or any fun thing you can think of because people are worried about what might happen when their peers either have too much to drink or when the police come to do a routine check.

It's even harder when people are dying in front of everyone in their community. This makes the issues worse no matter who it's being done by. No one wants to lose the people in their community. Help us see that we can have each other's back and that we can make the community a safe place again. Don't get me wrong, and it's not just the police that have made the people feel uneasy and unsafe. It's the people in the community as well.

Things would be much better if we took a second to step back from all the gang activity, gun violence, fighting, and competition. We cannot expect people to care for us in our community if we don't care for each other. When I say this, I mean let's stop fighting each other, stop bringing each other down, and stop making the NYPD feel like they have the right to treat us and ruin our good days.

Even if we all don't agree with one another, it's okay, and there has never been a rule where we can agree to disagree; that doesn't mean we hate each other, we just all have different opinions. We must always be there for each other to protect and stop waiting until the worst happens to want to step up and change. Sticking together is key to a safer and better place. Having each other's back is the first step to a safer and better environment. In a community, we need to be one, not 50 percent standing together,

the other 25 percent standing against everyone else, and the other 25 percent standing with the NYPD. We need everyone to stand together to fight positively against these different things happening within it. We need a common ground. We need more light being shed, more awareness being spread, more love and care being shown.

There is nothing wrong with showing your people you care for them. It doesn't make you less than others and definitely doesn't make you weak. Having to always have to fight for your future, name, race, innocence, justice, etc., is beyond tiring and, of course, more than unfair, but if doing it will bring a better outcome, then maybe it's something we should continue to do. We as people should also want to do better to show the police that we can rise above. At least try to find a way to make them want to do better as well. Even though they hold the weight, we also have a lot of power.

A community is never out of options; we people are way too creative to even be out of options. There are ways we can all help each other change the route of safety and fun. Whether it's moving, starting a group or groups, talking to people, doing positive things for the community, etc. That might go a long way, especially with what we have going on today.

This kind of thing is why I wanted to change and chose to leave. I love to have fun with the people I love and care for without worrying about a shootout or people getting arrested for minor things. For me moving was needed. I don't particularly appreciate feeling trapped or having limited options. I want to be able to go outside whenever I want, wherever I want, with whoever I want, and not be attacked, and Maryland did that for me. . In order to keep me safe and out of trouble, I chose to go. Moving out of state is honestly the best decision I've ever made. Yes, things do happen everywhere.

However, where I stay, it's rare that anything negative or harmful is done. The thought and feeling of being surrounded by many new people initially made me nervous, but after my first month down here, it wasn't bad at all. It is a great feeling to be somewhere new and fresh.

I've been in Maryland for 3-4 months now, and the amount of crime I've witnessed is about 5 percent. In New York, that percentage would've been about 50 percent. It comes easy for you to be able to step outside and enjoy time with family and friends without being harassed or having to break up a fight. I love my city, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't love being in a space where I can have lots of fun with my family and friends.

You can be outside having a cookout; there is no time limit, no cops driving by over and over, just waiting for something to say, nobody trying to come to fight or shoot at people. It's nothing but positivity. Maryland is my safe place now, and this is where I feel I can make my home. In my opinion, moving out of New York has given me a better lifestyle quicker than I expected. In Maryland, it doesn't feel like anyone is competing with each other or trying to outdo each other. Everyone here wants to do better together, no matter the race. The support is different, and the respect level is different, interest is different.

People care more about the safety of others rather than only caring about themselves. In New York, working to me felt like coming to work every day to be in a battle when I'm supposed to be there for the money. As opposed to out here, it's more like a family. Most people get along, and even if there is a bump in the road, it's spoken about positively. The environment feels safer; you can actually be vulnerable and trusting of your peers. Maryland gave me a better outlook on life, if I'm being honest.

No, it's not the best of the best places, but it's safer for me. It makes me feel safe, feels good about where I am in life, and work harder; overall, it gives a different type of push and motivation. If I was still in New York, I know for a fact I wouldn't be working this hard, definitely wouldn't have been pushing myself to do more for my business,

I wouldn't have been taking driving seriously, just a lot of things that I'm accomplishing now wouldn't have been happening had I stayed. Sometimes I get a little sad thinking that I really do not live in New York anymore because there are always ways to help make or even start the change. I'm not saying you have to leave to do better, be safer, and have fun.

This is just what worked for me, and I'm glad I can share this with people. Some people may want to move but fear what others might think and don't ever live that way. Do what is best for you. You have to do what will make you feel at peace and at home. Being able to finally do what you haven't been able to do for so long will make a person different. It will bring that positive change to you as well.

Even being in such a negative environment made me look at things negatively or made me feel not as confident about achieving certain things, and I didn't want that for myself any longer. Starting over will never be easy but truthfully, if you're uncomfortable or feel unsafe, make that change to live the life you want to live and not the life you think you have to live.

There are so many things that need to be changed within the community of Red Hook. As for myself I would like to see more people coming together no matter how big or small the situation and working together to make things safer and positive. Even if it's started by little community meetings in an open space, police officers take the time to ask people how their day was or are they okay.

Anything is possible and if the community works together I know they can accomplish great things. It always starts within a community before you see others coming in trying to be better or live up to the good that is being done in that community.