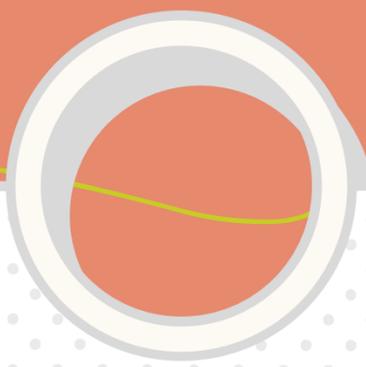


# THE ENDURING ISSUE



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# Community Observations

Location 1: Standing on the corner of  
Clinton Street and Mill street.

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- Man walking past the garbage on the street
- Juice containers and empty wrappers on the ground
- Trash in the street as a car turns the corner
- Words on the fresh concrete sidewalk
- Cigarette buds and used masks on the ground
- Cups , cigarette boxes and liquor bottles in the community green space
- Cut branches left in the community green space
- Shoes left in the branches and candy wrappers
- Bags of food left in the soil
- Highway intersection covered in garbage
- Blue skies big clouds
- Sunny in Coffey park
- Leaves slowly falling off the trees
- Minimum garbage on the ground
- Mostly empty



# Location 2: Coffey Park Greenspace.

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- Leaves appear to not been ranked up in a while
- Not much people is outside
- Projects in the back of Coffey park
- No littering in Coffey park clean
- Women and her dog sitting on the grass
- White women with vest, warm out
- Dog on high alert watching its owner
- Socially distant from the other people in the park
- Leaves covering the grass



# Interview with Anthony, Red Hook Resident

Date: 12/3/2021

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

What is your name?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

My name's Anthony.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Okay. And this is a confirmation that you are being recorded and it's going to be transcribed, approximately 15 minute video, just asking you a few questions-

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

... Completely voluntarily.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Okay.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Okay. How long have you lived in NYCHA ?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Well, my family. Not me.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Uh-huh, so how long?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Uh, 15 years.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

About 15. Do you like living in this  
community?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Not really.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Why?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

It's dangerous.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Okay. And, um, is it clean?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Yes, it's clean.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

It's clean. Okay.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

And NYCHA has to fix the apartments, as well.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

They have to fix the apartments? Okay

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

There's a lot apartments that are fucked up that they haven't done shit about.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

The only reason they fixing all this shit, is because the stakeholder have money in the funds that they have to use in a certain amount of time-

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

Alright.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

... or else they take that money from the funds. That's why they fixing all this sh%. That's all the fuck%ng money that they have hiding.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Wow. Do you feel the housing workers do their job well?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Yeah, they do.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

They do. Do you feel like, in every other NYCHA complex, like do other housing workers... If you have ever been outside of red hook homes-

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Yeah.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

... do you feel like they also do their job?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Yeah.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

Okay. That's good. Um, in some projects, they have increased police presence. Do you feel like that's a good thing?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

No, that's a bad thing, especially here.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

Can you elaborate, please?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

They're fuck%<sup>d</sup> up! They're very, uh... What do you call it? Um, let's just say they're very ignorant, because they do a lot of stupid sh\*t that they know they're not supposed to and they still fuc%<sup>ing</sup> do it.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

They don't listen to the law. I break the law, I go straight to jail. They break it, they don't have nothing happens to them.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

They don't listen to the law. I break the law, I go straight to jail. They break it, they don't have nothing happen to them.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Right.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

What the fu%k is the problem with this world ?

You understand? What's the problem here?

We're both the same, we're both human.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

It should be worse for him. He has a fuc%ing badge.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Right. Do you feel like you're safe knowing that cops is like constantly rotating

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Hell, no. Hell no.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

No?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

No. Hell no.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Like, how does it make you feel?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Not for me, for my family.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

How so?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

You know what I'm saying? It's, uh, it's um. It's the safety for the families, you know, for elderly, for the kids. You know, they can barely walk around and sh\*t like that, because of all violence and stuff. You know?

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

And how can we build a bridge to like, bring all of us together? Like what do you feel-

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

It depends what you're talking about. The community or the police?

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

The community. The community in general, like how do you feel-

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Exactly! It's not the community, it's the police.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Right.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

It's not the community. It's the police!

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

So you feel that people are in terror, because of the police?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

They're not in terror. It's not terror. They just try to avoid unnecessary situations with the police.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Police is very, uh... How do you call it? Um, how can I say it? Shit, what's that word? biased.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

They were wrong in a lot of places.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

In a, in a lot, in a lot of situations they're wrong.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

And they're fuc%ing racist

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

Now a little de- debrief and bring it back..

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

... does housing make living here accessible?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Not necessarily.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

What do you mean by that?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Because they have apartments that hasn't been fixed in 10, 20 fuc\*ing years.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety**

**Organizer:**

Right.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

How can you feel comfortable living like that?

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Can, like can you like, kind of like, give me like a glimpse of like how it would look?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

If they was to do they job and fix the apartments that they're supposed to, there wouldn't be a problem.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Yeah, but like, like what's wrong with the apartments?

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

You have lead. You have holes. You have a lot of sh\*t!

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Right.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

That's just the the beginning. You have a lot of sh\*t wrong with these apartments.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Walls are peeling!?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

A lot!

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

It's mold?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

It starts with the lead. You know, dust, uh...  
the lead that comes off of the sh\*t?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

You know these these projects are very  
old?

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Yeah.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Very old. The paint has lead. Let's keep real.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Right

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

A lot of people got sick off of this sh\*t. 17

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:**

so you want housing to like, fix lead.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

What housing needs to do is the millions that they get in those fucking funds, they need to spend it where they were supposed to, fixing all these apartments.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:**

Right.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

Not hiding a hundred million fucking dollars!

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:**

Right.

**Anthony, Red Hook Resident:**

That they just got caught with. That's why they're fixing all the buildings now! Because if they didn't, they would take the money out of the funds.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Right.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Understand?

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Okay.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

it took them 2000 years to fix the fucking, to  
fix this.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

About how long-

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

... have they been doing construction and  
renovations?

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

They just started maybe couple months  
ago.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Oh, okay..

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

Yeah, but how long has it been that they needed to do this sh\*t? A hundred fuc%ing fifty years? Come on now.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

How does the community look to you? Like...

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

The community, the community's good. The community is fine.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

The community is fine? Okay.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

The community's fine.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Okay. Thank you.

Anthony, Red Hook Resident:

You're welcome.

# Interview with Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator

Date: 12/3/2021

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Alright, hello. I'm Charisma, I work at RHI,  
public safety organizers. I just want to  
make sure this is okay for me to record?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
Yes!

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Okay. What is your name?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
Millie. Mildred.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

How long have you been living in Red Hook?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
30 years.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Wow.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
Yeah.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Okay.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
And they still call me, "New". All right.  
(laughing) I don't know what's so new about  
me, but I'm new, all right?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
And I used to be a coordinator out here. I  
worked in the community, helping young  
children and families.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
I was a coordinator. I'm the coordinator for  
the board of elections.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

How do you feel about the community?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Um, the community is getting a little  
better, the shooting is a little better,  
not too much, you know?

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

What do you mean by better?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Um, less, less shooting, less fighting,  
less, less gangs fighting, all that.  
Honestly

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

So it's fair to say, violence has  
decreased?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Right.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

So you feel safe?

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

So you feel safe?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Yes. I feel safe. Everybody loves me.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:  
(laughs)

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

I've noticed that I seen a lot of police  
when I'm over here, like do you feel like  
more police presence? Like, is that  
what's making the community safe?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

No.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Safer?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

No, but they help a lot. They're here a lot.  
They're here more. We feel safe when  
we do see them.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Some of them, anyway.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Um, um, I also noticed that it's like, a lot of  
litter, garbage on the floor.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Yes.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Do you feel housing does their job?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Yes. Sometimes the machine breaks down,  
they can't do their own garbage. But the  
machine's working now, so they took a lot  
of garbage out since Monday. Doing a lot  
of garbage-

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

... and have a lot of stuff to do within the  
community.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

They gave out for Thanksgiving chicken,  
turkeys, vegetables, stuff like that in  
Coffey Park.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

So you feel like, as a citizen of Red Hook,  
you like your community,

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Yeah.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Is there anything you want to see  
change?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

Yes.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

... in the community? Okay.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth  
Coordinator:

I'd like to see more for the younger ones.

**Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:**

To have somewhere to go, play gym, play games. They used to have their own Yogi Bear, then come... Yogi Bear hasn't been here in two years. I don't know why.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

You just want more for the younger community?

**Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:**

Yes.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Okay. So as the generation progress, do you feel Red Hook would be more innovative?

**Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:**

Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

How so? Like in your, perspective?

**Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:**

Like, I feel like the young ones should be, they should support the younger ones like your age and middle class, middle, kids, like teenagers and young adults. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

And a few more questions. Um, the construction. About how long have they been...

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

Three years?

**Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:**

It says it takes six years to finish up.

**Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:**

And do you know what exactly they are doing? Or making-

**Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:**

Putting pipes down, under the ground for heat and hot water. I mean, for heat and gas.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Heat and hot water.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth

Coordinator:

Yeah, electric.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety

Organizer:

Oh, speaking of, um, housing. I've also heard from another person that like, in apartments like, they suffer from mold and peeling-

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth

Coordinator:

Yeah, the gas.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth

Coordinator:

The heat. It's overheated. If you complain about the heat, they'll come and turn it off and they won't turn it back on. I know people live out here-

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth

Coordinator:

..and they haven't heat in six years, three years.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

Okay. But overall, it's a good stay?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:

Yes.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

You're comfortable?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:

Yes.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

All right.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

Oh, I've, I've noticed that there was violence that.. and it has like stopped, like kind of?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:

A lot.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

So, drastically it has changed?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
Yes.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

And why do you think that is? Like why do you think it has stopped?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
The law. The law. They changed the law a lot and when we get in trouble, they don't want to go away (laughs) to the jail house, you know what I'm saying? You know, they're getting older, so a lot of them that got older are working and going to college.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
I know two families out here that became movie stars.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

Oh! That's good.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:  
A very nice family. Very nice. Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety  
Organizer:

So you love your neighborhood?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:

Oh, yeah. I love my neighborhood.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

So, any other wishes that you would like to say? Any final thoughts?

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:

I just pray and hope they all, everybody we all get along and they respect us more.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

Right.

Millie, Red Hook Resident, Youth Coordinator:

Blacks lives matter.

Charisma McWhorter, Public Safety Organizer:

Black lives matter. Well, thank you Millie.

# THE ENDURING ISSUE

*An Auto-Ethnography of a young person of color from/working in Red Hook.*

Research Question: What does public safety mean to me?

Public safety is the "protection of the general public". But what protection are the lower minorities getting? As an African American I am terrified of police, they don't have our interest in hand. Public safety is not what it's defined as, lower class economies don't get the equal justice that an upper class white woman or man will get. To me public safety is the entitlement of justice no matter your class or the color of your skin. The enduring issue of racism still corrupts the mind of our "beloved deputies".

It's fair to say my society fears cops, and has 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 policeman 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, Breyonna Taylor. The list goes on with multiple people that have lost their lives by the hands of someone that's 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. At that time I didn't know why I just listened. Until on my 10th birthday, my mother threw me a big rockstar party with a chocolate fountain and performers. All my friends from school were there and my family came and supported it could've been one of my best birthdays. What sealed the deal was my dad picking me up after the party and we were going to go on a mini daddy and daughter vacation. My dad was in the military and he owned many properties, so he moved around a lot. On the drive to his house he was pulled over for no reason. The cop was instantly rude to my dad, but all he wanted to know was.. Why was he being pulled over? The cop removed my dad from the car, he then was arrested. As a kid you don't know what's going on.. Fortunately he was not convicted of a crime because he didn't do anything. At that moment, I knew I couldn't depend on a cop for my safety because what hero would pull an innocent man away from his daughter.

It pains me to know that no matter what we do to change our livelihood we still endure the same racist treatment we've been getting for generations. Gang violence and drug consumption has expanded. Many in our community see it as a hustle because society labels them not qualified for a sustainable good paying job, they find it easier being on the streets because they are looked at as an outcast in society. It's every man for themselves, we can't even look to our public defenders for help cause we have to protect ourselves from them too. How can you feel safe with people looking over you, collecting data privately on you so they can slowly take my community down one by one then raise rent and fix it up to make it a more suburban complex?

Public safety is not only about the physical safety for the community but how we keep our community. In Red Hook there is a lot of concern about electricity in the community. In fact I've conducted an interview with a Red Hook resident named Millie. Where she stated on cold nights there wouldn't be any heat or hot water and when she does put a ticket in housing will turn the heat and hot water so high it's unbearable. How would you feel living in such unbearable conditions? I conducted another interview with a man named Anthony, who informed me that there's excessive mold and peeling paint in a few of the Red Hook housing units. I was also informed that the mold is so bad people are getting sick because of it. Je fears for his mother's life because she's old and he doesn't want her in such poor living conditions. Red Hook is in desperate need of better supplies to keep Red Hook safe. A couple weeks ago, I was walking on Clinton and Mill street and there were empty plastic bottles, juice containers, cigarette buds, face masks and much more on the ground. People walked past unfazed by the filth that covered the ground. It's normal for the projects to look filthy because they don't care about it. I walked deeper into the projects, near Mill and Henry where the construction is. It was filthy, there were old mattresses on the ground, Liquor bottles, and broken glass yet people were still adding on to the filth. The Streets of Red Hook are completely neglected. Maybe people will treat their housing better if the government did their job and made housing more accessible. People will feel safer instead of taking their frustrations out on the community.

When I go to Coffey Park it's a more different approach. I see more caucasian people and Coffey Park is 10 times cleaner than the actual Red Hook housing and it's more upscale. Coffey park is what disconnects the projects from the houses, which makes sense on why it's cleaned regularly. Coffey park is considered the safe space in Red Hook where both sides can intertwine. Coffey Park is the foundation where everyone feels safe. If you want to relax and take a break from what's on your mind you go to Coffey Park to clear your head. Coffey Park is where we have most of our block parties, voter registration events, and barbeques. Coffey Park is where the kids play. Coffey park is my personal happy place.

I feel safe in Coffey Park, and not because the police constantly circle around, but because that's where our freedom runs wild. That's where you can be unapologetically yourself. I've noticed that on the other side of Coffey Park near the watershed is where all the fancy restaurants and most food spots are. However, the only source of food NYCHA has is a supermarket and a chicken spot. As a Black woman from Red Hook I feel like we are outcast. The only support we get is from the community of people who feel the exact same way. Public safety should be the safety for everyone no matter the color of your skin or where you live, public safety should be the equality of rights rightfully given as a whole. Not neglecting certain neighborhoods because it's predominantly Black and Latino.

Red Hook is not a dangerous place. There hasn't been a murder since 2009. Red Hook is misunderstood. The intentions are pure and it's not the people, it's the lack of support the community has from others. Red Hook residents fight hard for their respect and rights. The citizens protest bringing news surveillance to the projects so they can speak on the problems we face. We want justice. We don't want to be looked down on because we live in a small neighborhood that no one cares about. Red Hook hosts multiple events to give back to the community. Such as Spring into Community, which is a block party designed to help people register to vote so that they can vote for who they want and can make a change. Most people don't care to participate because there's been so much injustice. They don't believe in justice anymore. They don't care to vote for who they want, because they don't believe it would make a difference. People don't believe in public safety. Even in an innovative society we still see the recurring issue of hate stemming from racism, even in Red Hook when crime rates are grade A. The rate of crime is much lower than the average U.S city. Red Hook is in the 94th percentile for safety. 6 percent of cities are safer and 64% of cities are more dangerous. Yet Red Hook is labeled the most dangerous place. Why is that? Because the small project is predominantly Black and everyone is proud of their skin there. Red Hook isn't a dangerous place. The citizens love Red Hook. The citizens feel safe in red hook, Red hook isn't the problem its the lust of hate that makes it a problem for the community.

As a Black girl life is hard trying to fit in when you go to a school with white girls. Trying to fit in with the crowd in the street. In life you have two decisions, fear or be feared. Public safety wasn't designed for colored people. We are left defenseless and scared of the world. I had an incident this past summer when I was walking home from the store. I was groped by a man. I couldn't believe what happened and I couldn't believe the reaction I got from others when I told them. Even as a victim, I was labeled as asking for it because I had on a crop top and sweats. Life is tough being a girl because I was raised not to wear certain articles of clothing in front of men. I was taught to cook and clean. I was taught to be obedient. But I was never taught that I should feel comfortable in my own skin.

As a Black girl life is hard trying to fit in when you go to a school with white girls. Trying to fit in with the crowd in the street. In life you have two decisions, fear or be feared. Public safety wasn't designed for colored people. We are left defenseless and scared of the world. I had an incident this past summer when I was walking home from the store. I was groped by a man. I couldn't believe what happened and I couldn't believe the reaction I got from others when I told them. Even as a victim, I was labeled as asking for it because I had on a crop top and sweats.

Life is tough being a girl because I was raised not to wear certain articles of clothing in front of men. I was taught to cook and clean. I was taught to be obedient. But I was never taught that I should feel comfortable in my own skin. Maybe it was my fault stepping out of my comfort zone and being unapologetically me. The response I got from a cop opened my eyes even more. Living in a world designed to look down on me gives me more reason to fight for what I respect. I know it wasn't my fault. No grown man should put his hands on a woman ever. I looked for my public defenders multiple times to help me out. It's been a while since I called the cops for help. I was arrested because of the color of my skin. I'm afraid of the police. I can never get them to help me or my situations. I feel it only makes the situation worse. Not all policemen are biased against urban people but majority rules, as a society we can't count on the police. We rather handle our situations ourselves.

I realized public safety is not the protection of the general public, however it's the safety of the suburban minorities, it's the protection of keeping Black minorities out of white minorities. It's the biased opinion that African Americans are dangerous. It's the enduring issue of racism.

As a Black public safety organizer we make sure we stand for what we believe in, We stand even when odds are against us we still push forward and help our community, we help with the Red Hook farms, voter registration, we help hand out food, we prepare meals and allow people to come get food. Public safety is about equal rights and justice within every community.

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