

# George Floyd's America (3): "How do you get a George Floyd to think beyond the walls of that housing project?"

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing November 25, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd murder 

*"You and me [speaking to Councilman Reynolds] had one path in life, and we got to where we are because of that path. There's other people who don't have that path, don't have those opportunities."*

***Mark DiLuzio, Bethlehem Chief of Police, 2014-2020***

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George Floyd died 6 months ago today. The *Washington Post's* six-part series, "**George Floyd's America**," examines the role systemic racism played throughout Floyd's 46-year life. Gadfly would like you to join with him in reading one part of that remarkable series each day this week,

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***"Segregated from opportunity: Nearly three decades after George Floyd first left Cuney Homes, another generation tries to make it out of Houston's oldest housing project"***

HOUSTON — The last time Kimberly Gibson made a cake for her son was on his first birthday. But she knows 18 is a milestone, especially for a young man on his way out of the projects, destined to play college football.

So on a September afternoon, Gibson dumped two boxes of Betty Crocker vanilla cake mix into a bowl, added eggs, water and oil, and stirred the lumpy batter in her cramped galley kitchen.



Baking hadn't been an option for birthdays past, when she was exhausted by the daily tasks required to simply keep her son out of trouble and alive in a neighborhood riddled with violence. In this part of Third Ward, where Black men are referred to as an "endangered species," each untimely death is memorialized on the orange brick wall of the corner store. The "ghetto angels," as they are collectively known.

The most prominent of those is now George Floyd, the former Cuney Homes kid who has become the embodiment of police brutality and systemic racial inequality in America.

For Gibson, Floyd's death has been more personal, an unsettling reminder that the future for her son Daniel Hunt remains precarious. His goal of making it out of Houston's oldest public housing project on a football scholarship echoes Floyd's journey nearly three decades ago. She knew Floyd as a "gentle giant," and his face, now emblazoned on neighborhood murals, serves as a solemn warning of the obstacles ahead for Daniel.

"Sports was supposed to have saved him," Gibson said of Floyd. "I told my son: 'That is you. That is you all day, every day.'"

Daniel had been accepted to a historically Black Christian college a three-hour drive away in Tyler, Tex., on the prospect of an athletic scholarship. But the novel coronavirus halted those plans. With college turning to virtual classes until at least January and the football season canceled, so, too, was his chance to escape a neighborhood that, by design, remains segregated from opportunity.

Decades of government-sanctioned housing discrimination reverberate through this city. In one of the nation's most diverse metropolises, much of the housing occupied by low-income Black families is segregated into the shape of a backward "C" around the city center, pierced by wealthier, Whiter neighborhoods to the west that form the shape of an arrow.

The pattern, formed by Jim Crow-era policies dictating where African Americans could live, is cemented today by state law allowing landlords to discriminate against Section 8 voucher holders, weak enforcement of federal civil rights laws promoting integration and White residents' objections to the construction of affordable housing in affluent communities.

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*the third part in a 6-part series*

**The Bethlehem Gadfly**