

Lawrence Turner

July 7, 2023 at Pray First Mission Ministries in Southeast Newport News

Summary: Lawrence Turner is a resident and volunteer in East End Newport News, where he was raised. He describes visiting his aunt's residence in Harbor Homes as a child, and seeing the coal dust there without knowing what it was at the time. Lawrence is a passionate athlete and describes his experiences growing up playing sports in East End, playing college football and returning to East End Newport News where he coaches youth sports. He reflects on changes the neighborhood has seen including demolitions of Harbor Homes, Dickerson Court and Huntington High School. He observes the problems within his hometown -- poverty, violence, pollution -- while at the same time expressing the deep love he has for the tightly knit community [00:00:00]

Lawrence Turner: so, um, my name is Lawrence Turner. Born and raised here in Newport News. Um, uh, currently I'm a consultant in the field of just different avenues, um, as I start my graduate, uh, project and my company.

Um, but I was a school counselor for six years, five at Woodside High School here in Newport News and Northern Newport News. Um, and then I did a year up in Manassas County, um, at Osborne Park, um, High School, which was a fairly bigger school with give or take maybe like a thousand more students. So it was just a different experience altogether.

Adrian: Yeah.

Lawrence Turner: Thank you for having me.

Adrian: Yeah. I'm so glad you're here.

Lawrence Turner: Yes.

Adrian: Um, so tell me where you're from.

Lawrence Turner: So I'm from, um, what they call now is the S-

Adrian: No, you're good.

Lawrence Turner: Oh, okay.

Adrian: I'm just checking, but you're perfect.

Lawrence Turner: Okay, what they call now is the Southeast District of Newport News, but we call it the East End of Newport News.

Um, so born and raised. Uh, I grew up in, actually when we're talking, we're going to get further into it, but I grew up in, uh, uh, apartment slash project, uh, called Orchid Homes on 33rd and Orchid, which is across the street from Huntington High School, which was the originally the black high school of the area for African Americans, um, before the integration and everything.

Um, so my neighborhood was the first neighborhood to be depleted and demolished. Um, a lot of crime, you know, things of that nature. Um, we. Growing up, it was normal for me to come home and have to leave because there was maybe a body outside or, you know, things of that nature.

So it was just a, it was definitely an experience growing up in this community. Um, but I also was able to grow and learn and catch on fast because things were moving fast around, you know. So, um, I grew up there. I had a family, as we were talking a little bit before, um, that from Harbor Homes, Dickerson Court, Ridley Circle. Um, my mom was originally born and raised in Dickerson Court. Um, my dad was originally raised in Dickerson Court. Um, so that's my, kind of my roots. (some background noise)

Mom and dad, born and raised, um, in Dickerson Court, um, which is on, I mean, it was such a like huge project. It ranged from 23rd street to 17th street, give or take. So yeah, I mean, you're talking about blocks and blocks of projects, um.

Adrian: How many people do you think lived there?

Lawrence Turner: Um, give or take, five to ten thousand.

Um, because one thing about the projects, um, is normally, and I'm not, you know, trying to, but I'm generalizing, um, but you give or take, when you're living in a project, you may experience having other family members live with you. Um, it may be a situation where your parent may have three or four children. You know, so when we're taking into account how many people per household, that's the kind of estimate number that we'll come up with.

Um, so, growing up, when we're talking in relevance to the coal, um, when we would, like, I would stay at my aunt's home, and we would, uh, take a shower,

um, and she would leave her shower door, the window open. It was a little small window, but she would leave it open, um, because of the moisture in this such condensed small space, um, to give it a chance to air out. Um, but in the midst of her airing it out, she stayed in Harbor Homes, which is on the terminal. Um, Terminal F is right behind these projects.

Adrian: So how close would you say the terminal was to your aunt's home?

Lawrence Turner: Less than a quarter mile. I mean, literally, maybe 15 steps, give or take. You know, so it was literally right there. Of course you have the margin, with the interstate. So the interstate separates the project housing from the coal. But the interstate sits up. So everything underneath is just a whole bunch of, like, wild grass growing, you know, and, and junk, basically.

Um, but, uh, when, when we would take showers and we would get in the shower, um, it would be like a little, I guess like a little, like, shelf kind of, sort of, where you put, like, your soap and things of that nature. And it would be, like, black particles. Um, growing up, I never really even thought twice about the black particles. It was just more so, oh man, you know, it's dirt. That's, that's, that was my thought process, not realizing that the coal was right there and it was [00:05:00] coming into people's homes. Cause we weren't the only one doing that. Even if you just opened your window on your own, it was right there.

Um, so that was a big thing, um, in terms of my first experiences with the coal. Um, as we got a little older we start playing sports. So when sports came around, we, we'd practice at Dunbar Erwin High School, which is now Achievable Dream Elementary. Okay. Um, and we would practice in the field where the playground is. So Boys and Girls Club on Hampton Avenue, that's where we participated with, with sports, which was, um, for this particular sport, which was football.

So we would go out there and then, um you know, playing and you just started to see people with asthma and, you know, different little things that me and my family, we didn't really have those issues. But to see others around us that stayed in the same community, it was kind of like, oh, this was our first experience and with, with asthma.

So, um, you know, as you grow, you learn and you see like, okay, well, not realizing that the asthma played a big part with the coal. Um. As you know, we learn about health and things of that nature, the breathing, it in and over time and what it does to the body and things of that nature. Um, but, um, growing up

down downtown Newport News, what we will call it, what a lot of people would call it In Newport News, they just call it Downtown.

Um, Downtown, it, it varies when we're talking about generations. So you may have, uh, my generation, we're just gonna say we're "Downtown". Um, maybe, um, the 40, 50, 60 range, they called it the East End. Okay, um, but it's all "Downtown", but then you split it up. So some may say Mercury on down. Some may say 39th Street on down. Some people say 25th Street on down. Just all depends on your era when you grew up and how it was perceived to you. Um, so a lot of places like Newsome Park would not be considered "downtown". Um, some people don't even consider, I remember the, well, and then the people not gonna remember this, but remember when we canvassed those particular projects, some people don't even consider Marshall Courts "downtown". People in Marshall Courts, that's the name of those projects, they consider "downtown" further down than that, which is underneath of 39th Street. So it's all perception of how you grew up, how your people looked at the particular area.

Um, but, um, as far as me, I, I, uh, because of sports, I was able to get away and see other things. You know, other people they may have never left and never went past 39th Street, you know. Um, so, it's definitely a culture shock going past this 39th Street median for some people.

Um, but um, growing up, it was, it was, it was, it was fun. Um, we, we were all over the place. We play sports, we play hot ball, which is a form of like a football where you throw the ball in the air, whoever catches it has to run to the other end zone, things like that. I stayed in the basketball court. Um, my aunt had a basketball court by her home in Harbor Homes, which is near the terminal. Near the terminal, excuse me. Um, they have a baseball field. It's still there. Um, right. But the basketball courts gone.

Um, but, you know, just having those visuals of like, wow, you know, I used to be at the court all day long. Um, Dickerson Court had a court in the back as well, off the terminal, um, which was gated. So if you shot around, you know, you don't have to worry about your ball going outside of the gate, you know, which was was pretty cool. It felt like a upgrade compared to the Harbor Homes court because it only had like a split gate, like one part was a gate, but if you were on the other end, you would have to run and go get the ball and things like that.

Um, but growing up here, um, we learned a lot, um, early, um, because this community has always been perceived as a place where you have to kind of

catch on (snapping) quick. Because if you don't, you're conceived green or not knowing and people take advantage. Um, it doesn't matter what age group you're at. Everybody's like dog eat dog, you know, is kind of like the mentality here. Um, but of course it's family- oriented as well.

Um, the Moton House where a lot of, um, prominent and prestigious people come from our community, go out into the world and make a impact, came [00:10:00] from the Moton home. Mr. Debrue. Um, Miss Angela. Mr. Mohammed, which he was a boxing coach. Um, and he was able to have a couple of title fighters and things of that nature. Um, so that was, you know, things that were going on in the community.

Of course, the biggest thing for me was football, basketball. Um, which we for football, I played at Boys and Girls Club on Hampton Avenue again, which I expressed. But for basketball, we started at Doris Miller. Doris Miller is a community center, which was just recently knocked down along with Huntington Middle School slash High School, along with the C Waldo Scott Center, which was named after Bobby Scott's father, which is our Senator in our area.

Okay. Um, so it's a lot of history right there within that. Um, but it was a lot of history between Boys and Girls Club and Doris Miller football. Doris Miller football for my time, and I'm 32 um, And it's hard for me to even say this, but I have to be honest about it. But they kind of like ran the city when it came to football. Um, they have championships on championships on championships.

One of their, one of the coaches from that particular program, uh, Coach Moore. He coached me at Newsome Park, but he recently passed away. Um, a legend. And that's why I wanted to mention him because he was a legend in the area, him along with Coach Lewis.

Um, they were, they were, they they help groom and, you know, prepare the next generation for over 40 years. Um, they did football, they did basketball, they did baseball. Um, so they were, you know, real implement in the community. But it's more coaches other than those, of course. But those are two people that I kind of want to just spread light on, um, for the sake of the Doris Miller football league because they were- along with Coach White. I can't forget Coach White. I think he, uh, won a championship every year uh, for like 10 years straight. Um, and I could be under exaggerating, not over exaggerating. Um, but that's because I'm a Boys Club guy. Um, so I don't want to give them too much props. Uh, but they definitely, um, they definitely had a winning program.

Um, one of my coaches when I started playing, uh, football, uh, coach Tavine. Um, Coach Tavine, born and raised in the community, went to Ferguson High School. Um, it's a little older than my parents, but he, and I'm jumping around, but I'm just putting things together. Um, he, it was, it was just a beautiful thing where he was my first coach. And when I was able to coach at my former high school, he was one of my assistant coaches. So, you know, it's like you see it from the beginning and you see it as you're older and like, wow, you know, like people that were there for me are still there for me even as I grew older. Um, but the Boys and Girls Club, you had people like Pooh Johnson.

He was the director of the Boys and Girls Club. Um, he was very influential in my life in terms of, um, it was certain things that my mom ain't. I mean, I haven't been able to, you know, do at certain points in my life, but um, because he, I was a boys club, what we would call a Boys Club Kid, um, they always made sure that I didn't go without, like I didn't miss a program. I didn't miss a camp. I didn't miss a basketball. You know, like if they, if they could help, they were willing to help. And they did help.

Um, Mr. Hagman was another. Um, he was the disciplinarian of the Boys and Girls Club. So growing up, he was the military guy that was there that get your stuff together right now, you know, um, but that was needed.

You know, especially growing up, again, the Boys and Girls Club is surrounded by projects. You have the Walker Village on one side, you have Harbor Homes and Dickinson Court on the other side. So you're getting all those kids, um, coming in and you know, somebody has to instill some order. Because without order, there's chaos.

And we all know what chaos can consist of and what it looks like. Um, and we're, we're just, we're definitely talking about a Boys and Girls Club, but this can turn into life, turn into life lessons and things of that nature. So if you're not getting it at this early age, then there's a possibility that you may not never get it.

Um, growing up here, early, um, we grew, cause I [00:15:00] want to be careful how I word this.

Growing up here, we grew to not, I guess I would have to just say this. We grew up and we learned to accept death. Um, death was around us. Um, it was a big thing. Um, even now today, we can sit around and talk and have conversations and talk about, well, such and such died yesterday.

And it's not like a culture, like, um, shock or anything. Like, it's more so just a, like, um, "Oh wow. I'm sorry to hear that." And you move on. There's no delay. There's no, and it varies, of course, but there's really like a thin line between the emotional part of it and just, uh, we got to move forward part of it, you know what I mean?

And, um, that's something I want to kind of mention in this because it's unhealthy. Um, so that alone is, along with the coal, that brings another avenue of health concerns. You know, when we're talking about mental health, um, which is a big thing now. Days going on and I, as a school counselor, I dealt with it.

So, I understand what, what it looks like. Um, and meeting those people where they are and not expecting them to move forward as though me and my friends would because we've just been so used to death, death, death. Um, and when we're saying death, it's not just natural caused death. We're talking about murders. We're talking about suicides. We're talking about the stuff that can impact someone's life for the duration of their life if it isn't, I don't want to call it checked, but basically if it isn't checked or like, you know, recognized or someone is able to get it out, then you hold it in and it becomes a burden on your life. And then, you know, it's one of those things, you know, um. But I just wanted to kind of touch on that because I just, I think, um, not enough people talk about that here in this community, um, as far as death being okay.

Um, we don't have any, um, programs or anything where, you know, a, a community hood, you know, like, uh, because it's just so much chaos going on around and I've seen programs come through and I'm not bashing any program, because attempt is an attempt. If you're trying, I'm one of those people that believe, and I firmly believe, a try is better than to do nothing at all.

Um, so the city is attempting to, you know, try to do little things, but, um, it's one of those things that if it's never, uh, if it's never, checked, or you know, somebody comes up with some type of solution, and I mean, this is a holistic solution community because this happens not just downtown, but uptown, which is, you know, uh, near Fort Eustis.

Um, then you have Midtown, which is like, uh, we would, we would call it maybe like J Clyde, you know, um, and this apartment complex is all around. So you have these groups all around, um, and we mix in. Um, but growing up downtown, you know, um, we get into, like, even just going to school, you know, um, the zoning.

They will zone downtown when we're talking about Dickerson Court, Harbor Homes. You may be at Dickerson Court, you go to one school, you go, you know, Harbor Homes, you go to a totally different school, but you're really right across the street from each other, but they do that. To kind of mix everybody up.

Adrian: So they don't have a lot of...

Lawrence Turner: ...this population at this particular school, so on and so forth, so they split it up.

Um, I grew up in the Creek area on Buxton Avenue. That was another place I grew up. Uh, that house no longer exists, just as well as the Orcutt Home that doesn't exist anymore. Um, but this particular area, this is downtown by the water. We were going to school on Oyster Point. So we would get on an interstate to go to school.

Um, I didn't grow up, uh, in Stuart Gardens, but Stuart Gardens, they would go to high school in Mitchville, which is on Mitchville Road, which is past J. Clyde. It's like Oyster Point, but it's like, It's like a off area, you know, the, um.

Adrian: Its pretty far.

Lawrence Turner: Yeah, it's like out of the way, you know? So it was like, wow, you know, just having to get up the extra 30, 40 minutes, having to be on the bus ride for an [00:20:00] extra hour to 40 minutes because you still have to get your stops.

So you're tired, you're already tired from waking up early, but you're waking up early than everybody else would normally do, you know, 30, 40 minutes, cause you're, you know, so um, I don't think that was really something that anybody really thought about, um, when they were zoning. I under, again, I understand what they were doing. You didn't want too many, too many, too many, but what about the children? What about their mindset?

Adrian: Can you tell me more about, um, you mentioned that one of the places where you used to play football doesn't exist anymore. It got torn down, and can you tell me more about things getting torn down?

Lawrence Turner: Okay, so, um, Doris Miller, used to call it World War II before me, that was the name for the community, and these are things that I'm learning as I get older, um, but they used to call it World War II.

World War II. So, Doris Miller was, um, if you're not familiar with Doris Miller, Doris Miller is Pearl Harbor. You ever seen Pearl Harbor?

Adrian: No.

Lawrence Turner: Cuba Gooding Jr.?

Adrian: I don't.

Lawrence Turner: So, in Pearl Harbor, uh, Cuba Gooding Jr. played Doris Miller. Um, but he was basically a black soldier, um, that took it upon himself, because he was in a, I think he was a kitchen worker or something, but he took it upon himself when they were bombing Pearl Harbor to, pick up a machine gun and help in the war, the fighting part portion of it.

He was able to knock, He was able to um shoot down a couple of aircraft ships and things and they gave him, you know, a medal and things of that nature. But this particular Community Center was in his honor. Um, so I'm not sure how they came up with the World War II piece, but I know for Doris Miller, that's our history.

Um, and it's just, it's just amazing to sit here and talk about how they knocked it down, because, I mean, growing up, we, everything kind of started there. Uh, especially for basketball. Um, we had the Little League for Basketball, which, um, a lot of my friends and a lot of local people, you know, it was a thing, um, to come and play recreational basketball at the Doris Miller Community Center.

That was something, it was generational. Um, so, what happened, um, as far as them demolishing it, what. They closed down Huntington High School, uh, Middle School. It was a middle school before they closed it down. So I went to Huntington Middle School as well, for 6th grade only. Um, but it was so much tradition. Um, it was almost like walking into, I don't know, like a, um, just say, like, if you were into books. It was like walking into, like, the biggest library, the congressional library up in D. C. or something. You know, um, this is, like, amazing. It's like, wow, you know. Um, so we got that feeling. But they transformed those students to my high school, which is Heritage High School.

Um, so now you have a middle school and a high school in the same building, um, which is similar to the school right next to it, An Achievable Dream. Um, they expanded their program from K through eight or it might be, it might start at third grade, but to eighth grade, and then they go from ninth on to 12th, but they expanded and added a new school.

So they, they're up on more, uh, I want to say Marshall Avenue, um, right next to, uh, herit. Um, so what they decided to do was, they said that the school was run down. Um, but everybody, if you knew it had been run down, um, that it was, there were rumors of asbestos in the building. Um, of course it was out of range of students.

Um, but even when I was going there, they were kind of saying it was asbestos in the school. But it was like a certain part of the school and it had like three, three like, floors. And I think it was like on the third floor, but that was cut off for nobody to go and things like that. Um, and these of course are things that nobody's going to talk about.

Um, but the school was infested with rats, infested with bugs. Um, just not a place for, for learning, you know? Um, and the city decided that they were going to shut it down and renovate it. Okay. Next to Huntington is the C Waldo Scott Center, which was still running even after they had shut down Huntington High School, Middle School, you know, however you want to word that.

Um, and it was still running. Um, but in the midst of them planning to renovate and modernize the Huntington High School, um, with the, because Huntington has a [00:25:00] strong alumni base, but we're thinking about their base. Their base is 70, 80, 90 year old people at this point, you know? Um, but they were fighting.

They were showing up to the community meetings. They were showing up to the school meetings. And they were advocating for their school not to be knocked down. Um, but the city went ahead and decided that they were going to change the plan instead of renovate it, they were just going to knock it down. Um, so they decided they were going to knock down Huntington. They decided they were going to knock down the C. Waldo Scott Center. And in the midst of it, which was kind of amazing to me, that Doris Miller, they had just, maybe in the last ten years or so, they built the pool. So the pool was new, fresh, nice, big, beautiful pool with slides and all this great stuff, yeah.

And they decided they were going to knock that down as well. Um, so that was kind of like a, an eye opener. Um, but I think, um, and not to get off topic with what we're talking about, but even with like, the Doris Miller Community Center, um, me and Angela, um, and a couple other people in the community, um, it was a point in time where I was working on my, undergrad at Old Dominion, and I had, uh, one of my classes was grant writing.

So, my professor, uh, Dr. Roth, um, you know, said, well, you know, find something in the community, you know, and work on this project. So it initially was a project, um, but it turned into a reality. We, we took it and we turned this project into a reality, um, and we end up, at this particular time, I wanna say it was 2013, and they were talking about knocking Doris Miller down then, because of lack of participation.

Um, but people in the community were saying, because again, I was in school, but people in the community were saying, hey, you know, the little leagues, Parks & Rec, were costing too much. Um, which was a conflict of interest type of thing, because, I mean, and on one end, you say it costs too much, which was 40 bucks, but on the other end, your kid has a 150 dollar pair of shoes on, you know. So it's just one of those things like I'm willing to spend my money on this, but I'm not willing to spend money on this, but also the city hadn't done that before, as far as the admissions fee, we will pay like a little fee up front. And then once you got on your team, you will pay your money for you to get your uniforms, you would buy your own shoes, and then you would go from there. Um, so for them to charge 40 was kind of disturbing as well, knowing that it was like a 10 fee, maybe 5 or something when I was coming through, um, to go to 40 dollars.

And that's not including your uniforms or anything. So, um, that portion kind of disturbed me. But with that, we were able to start a little league at Doris Miller, get the numbers up. Every Saturday we would have over, I mean, because there was 100 plus kids in the league itself. So when we're talking about 100 plus kids, we're talking about double that with parents.

You know, even if your mom and dad's not together, they're going to come to your games. Um, so we're talking about a packed gym, standing room only sometimes, you know, um, just to see our children play basketball, which I had grown up and I witnessed this and this is what was the norm for me growing up. So to see them get that, even if it was just for those two years, was a big deal.

Um, but I think that kind of helped keep the Center open for a little longer. And if I'm wrong, anybody hearing this, correct me, but this is my understanding of it. Um, so from there, um, after the league was over, um, it dwindled.

Uh, and I have to just bring light to it because, you know, um, this is when we're talking about influential people in the community. At Doris Miller, we had a guy named Tulu. Tulu was around for my father, my uncles, and all that. And then, you know, my friends, same for them. So when it was our time to come

around, it was a lot of, yeah, your dad, you know, I don't know if you're better than your dad, but he always had the gym open.

He always welcomed us. He always made sure that we were, had somewhere to go to get away from what I was speaking about earlier, the violence, the chaos going on in the city. So we always had that space. And we knew in this space, in Doris Miller, whatever you had going on outside of here, you kept it outside.

You don't bring it in this gym. Um, and we would just, you know, have fun. You know, like a lot of like adult, uh, basketball. Um, even when we were growing up in high school, we were at Doris Miller. That was something to go do at six o'clock. We're going to Doris Miller. Open rent. Um, so that was a big thing. But I just want to shout out Tulu.

Um, he's no longer with us. No, as well as Mr. Hagman. He's no longer with us as [00:30:00] well. Coach Moore. Just people that I want to kind of put in there, um, to big them up because I don't think uh, they got their flowers the way that they should have given the service of 40 plus years. Um, that's a lot longer than a lot of teachers that get recognized, a lot of administrators that get recognized, you know. Um, and I just think that we kind of dropped the ball, um, with recognizing them. Um, I think these people deserve plaques, um, or murals or whatever. You know, that's how influential they were to my generation growing up. Um, but, um, back to the demolition of the, uh, properties.

Um, so.

Adrian: When did that happen for, um, Doris Miller?

Lawrence Turner: Doris Miller just got knocked down. If this is July the 22nd, Doris Miller was knocked down last week. Right.

So, it just happened.

Adrian: That just happened, Oh, I thought it happened-

Lawrence Turner: No, no, no. So they, so, and that's the thing. Remember I told you that the Huntington alum were fighting.

So the school and the school system and the city had to fight them in order to. Well, they, they went past the people anyway, you know, people advocating, they, it was just, I think more of a, we're going to respect our elders, but we already have a plan in place, um, sort of thing. Um, so again, remember they

went from, "we're going to renovate the, we're going to gut it, we're going to renovate it" to "we're just going to knock it down." And this was in a matter of two years. Um, and this was a call by the superintendent at the time, um, along with the city. Um, because you know, you need the city to do all these types of things, so they were in agreement with it. Um, and this started happening in 2015.

So for it to be knocked down now, which is 2023, that just tells you how long, you know, it took, um, for them to figure that whole ordeal out, um, and to make it make sense. So what they decided on, um, upon more research, was they decided that they're going to, So there's a street that, that separates Doris Miller on one side, Scott Center and Huntington on the other side.

So they're gonna remove this street. And they're gonna build Huntington. They're gonna build, um, C Waldo Scott. And they, I've heard this, I'm not 100 percent sure, but they're supposed to knock down Portbelly Library. And this is supposed to be one center, one thing. They're going to make one big, colossal, gigantic building with all these different things in it.

Adrian: It's like a school and a community center.

Lawrence Turner: Yes, library and community center all in one, all in one. Which, I mean, it's innovation.

Adrian: What do you think of that?

Lawrence Turner: Um, when you're from somewhere and you know the history, it's, of course it's frustrating. Um, But I do understand gentrification, um, and moving forward.

But I just, I'm, I'm hopeful and I'm, I'm prayerful that they'll figure a way to recognize these things that have been pillars in our community for as I can remember before me, before my mom, um, probably even before my grandma, um, to recognize these particular things and these particular people.

Adrian: I want to come back to that, but I, I want to ask you about something you just said. When you say you understand gentrification moving forward, what does that mean to you?

Lawrence Turner: So for me, um, , and it's funny because when I bring up gentrification, I had no idea what it was until I went off to school. Um, at

Temple University in Philadelphia. Um, Philadelphia was like a prime example of what gentrification looked like.

When I first got to Philly, um, it looked one way. By the time I left, after the two years that I was there, it was a totally different feeling. And then to go back, year after year after year, you just saw the change. Um, for some, change is not a good thing. For others, change is necessary. One thing that we do know is, change is going to occur whether you want it to or not, because that's life.

So I, I, I, I, I get it because you know, I like, I see the, the before and after and everybody wants their city to look better. Everybody wants more opportunity. Everybody wants, you know, nicer things. But I also see the flip side of it where you're relocating families that have may have had that home in that community for three generations and you're [00:35:00] just kicking them out.

Um, of course you're going to pay them off or whatever. However that goes, don't want to go too deep into that because that's a whole nother story. Um, but um, you just displacing people and putting them where you see fit um, in terms of the city. Um, a lot of times when we're talking about the knocking down 2009, Dickinson Court, Harbor homes, uh, Ridley Circle didn't get knocked down to, I want to say 2000, maybe like 17.

So that was maybe even 10 years after the first big knock down. Um, and as we sit here today and we're talking about gentrification, um, downtown is in the process of gentrifying. Um, they now have, um, I don't want to call them state of the art, but they have, you know, more upscale, I want to say looking, um, apartment complexes with balconies and, you know, things that I don't think we've ever would have experienced in downtown if it wasn't for the gentrification piece.

Um, but it's just, it's just amazing how now that the, uh, Harbor Homes was knocked down maybe 2017, 18. Um, and now they're building up there right now. Um, Harbor Homes, Dickinson Court was knocked down in 2009 and it still fields, it still fields. Um, and it's just interesting because we were told that they were knocking down Harbor Homes and Dickinson Court because of the coal.

Adrian: What, do you remember hearing that?

Lawrence Turner: I heard it, it wasn't like a particular, it was probably more of a rumor. Yeah, it was floating around. Yeah, it was floating around. Like, yeah, that's what they're doing because the land was contaminated so bad. But then

you, I mean, you know, it's a word, a game on words. Um, because I mean, people were living there.

If you, and then another little small piece of history. Harbor Homes, Dickerson Court, Stuart Gardens. These were military barracks. So they were, they were built to withstand the hurricanes. They were built to withstand bombs. Like these things were made out of concrete. Not, Stuart Gardens in particular, but Harbor Homes, Dickerson Court, they were concrete. You fall down the stairs. It's a, you're going to have a lump on your head. You know, like that's what was going on.

Um, so for, for even with that, that history alone, um, who they were named after, these places were named after the first in this area, prominent doctors, lawyers, you know, um, Newsome Park. Dr. Newsome, you know, he has his house is still available to go in and to see how they preserved it over the years.

Um, yes. So it's like, um, it's a tough situation. Um, even, even just to speak to when they knocked down Harbor Homes and Dickinson Court, right?

Adrian: When you're saying that they, that they were built as barracks to withstand all of this.

Lawrence Turner: Yes.

Adrian: Is that, are you thinking like, But they couldn't withstand this contamination, right?

Lawrence Turner: So, um, because I mean this, when we're talking about the cold contamination, we're talking about air. Air goes anywhere. I mean, even with your AC unit is pumping air in and is blowing air out, you know, so it's kind of like, um, it's impossible to run from even in your car. If you roll your windows up, you put your AC on, you're still getting air from outside. It's still flowing, it's still circulating.

So, um, it couldn't withstand, it couldn't, I mean, you know, it's right there, literally. It's the terminal, and then you go further down the terminal, and that's how, I really, and it's, all these years that I've been here, I really don't know how you get to the coal.

Like, I can see the towers. I don't really know how you get over there. Um, it's a dock down, you know, where they have boats and things of that nature. They

have, you can see the big, um, yeah. You see it, but I don't really know how you get over it.

Adrian: Have you ever taken that first exit after the tunnel? The terminal?

Lawrence Turner: The terminal? Yes, yes. So you get down there and it gets interesting. It gets interesting.

Adrian: I have been off that exit one time. I was with Lathaniel and his lovely wife Marquita, um, and, who also grew up in Southeast Community. She was giving us a tour. And, yeah, it's like you see it, you're really close. I think if you-

Lawrence Turner: somewhere up in there.

Adrian: -Mess around in there.

Lawrence Turner: Yeah, long enough.

Adrian: You'll end up in there.

Lawrence Turner: Exactly.

Adrian: But it's.

Lawrence Turner: No.

Adrian: It's not easy. You have to do it on purpose. You do.

Lawrence Turner: And the hurdles.

Adrian: You can't get there by accident.

Lawrence Turner: No. And as you get older, of course, you run into things and you see things, [00:40:00] but it's like it's so much industry over there.

Um, we're talking about the coal, the CNO railroad. Um. How they preserve and keep the coal. I don't, I don't know what they're doing, but it's like water going over there all day. I guess that's to keep the, I don't know. I don't even want to speak to it too much.

But it's like, you got that. Then you have the port. Port of Virginia. Um, Then you have the shipyard. But in the midst of that you have a railroad, uh, auto shop. Which I just learned about in the last year. Excuse me. But they repair the trains that come in and out of there. Excuse me. And, um, these trains, they come in first thing in the morning. They're out, you know, by noon.

And this is just a constant thing. It's been going on for years. They got big boats. Um. I don't know. They're not, they're not, they have nothing to do with the shipyard, but they're like, um, the medical, uh, at the top of my head, I couldn't tell you. Um, what is it? Uh,

Adrian: I don't know.

Lawrence Turner: When, when, um, all right. What's the, the place when, um, who, what's the company? Cause I think they're connected with this, but what's the company? Um, cause I, I know it, but I cannot think of it.

Adrian: That owns the shipyard?

Lawrence Turner: So I'm getting, remember when Katrina happened, who went down there? What was the, those, that company?

Adrian: Oh, the Red Cross?

Lawrence Turner: Right! I think this has something to do with that. Those boats.

Adrian: Okay, okay.

Lawrence Turner: They fill them up with the coal and then they go and do whatever they do. Um, yeah, because the boats will be there for three or four months and they just disappear. And they're big, huge boats, just like shipyard boats. Um, but they have nothing to do with the shipyard. It's a whole different entity.

So it's just like so much industry that we don't, and on top of that you have the Monitor–Merrimac. That's a whole industry within itself. Not to mention that they've just, um, intact the tax with the, um, you know, going back and forth through the, through the tunnel now. And mind you, we've been going through that tunnel for free since it's been available.

Um, so that's the taxes, they're taxing now. Yeah.

Adrian: I didn't know that that was a newer toll.

Lawrence Turner: Yeah, the toll is, yeah, it's new. So it's only been there for maybe like two or three years, if that. Yeah, so that's, that within itself is, you know, a whole different.

Adrian: So what do you think will change when all these people move into these really nice new apartments with balconies? Um, do you think that all this industry is gonna just like, stay, or?

Lawrence Turner: Yeah, so, um, as we see and as we know that that company, the railroad company in particular, has been here since the beginning. We're talking about they tied to the Huntington store, which is 16 ish, 18 ish, you know, somewhere up in there. Um, but the, the original story dates back to about 16 17, when the railroads begin. Cause you gotta imagine, we starting. This is where it starts. So it goes all over the globe. But it starts here.

Adrian: Can you tell me the Huntington story?

Lawrence Turner: So I'm not like 100 percent familiar with the Huntington story. Um, but, uh.

Adrian: You're good.

Lawrence Turner: Okay. With, with Huntington, um. I mean. (background noise)

But Huntington, he was one of like the originators for this area, um, to help, um, with industry and things of that nature. But he, um, I want to say he was from West Virginia. So he bought the coal from West Virginia here. Um, and that's where we get the railroad, um, according to the history.

But they saying that what we're learning is that the railroad was around before he was around. Um, so which, you know. One of those things you gotta, of course, you gotta do more research to be able to speak to it properly, but, um, he was one of the founders for that particular thing.

Adrian: Okay. Cool. So, you were saying about, um, people moving in to the new apartments, and then the railroad being older than you (inaudible)

Lawrence Turner: mm hmm.

Adrian: All right. And I kinda interrupted you.

Lawrence Turner: Okay. Yeah. So, so I mean, basically, I think, um, with these industries, because we got to understand, these are, it's funny because I said a billion dollar industries, but someone [00:45:00] corrected me and said, no, it's trillion dollar industry. Um, these industries, they're not going anywhere.

Coal, as we all know is, that's how you get electricity. Um, yeah. As long as electricity is around, we're gonna need coal and energy and you know, so I don't foresee anything changing in the near future when we're talking about coal, um, or the shipyard for that matter, because these companies, I mean, they, they employ so many people.

Shipyard is over 25, 000 employees and probably more than that at this particular time, because they do layoffs of 10, 000 at a time. You know? It's amazing. Like, wow, you look in the newspaper, layoffs in the shipyards, like 10, 000, it's like, how do you just lay off that many people just to rehire them? You know, but then again, that's industry. I don't know the ins and outs of it, but those are things that have occurred throughout my life. Shipyard layoffs, every two or three years it's going to happen. We know it's inevitable. It's a part of what they do. Um, but, um, as we're seeing now, um, Of course, because they moved the people out, this crime is down, um, in these particular areas.

Um, but I think we're going to see more of a mixture of community, like the culture of the community is going to change. Um, and it's not purposeful, but when you, when you're building upscale, you're going to bring in upscale. Um, And keep in mind this, this area that we're talking about was a food desert for like six years.

Um, so that within itself is a whole different topic, a whole different story. Um, but um, they now have, I want to say it's the Piggly Wiggly. Um, so they have a grocery store, so it's not considered a food desert anymore, but it was for a while.

Um, and there's just so much land down there, like, where Harbor Homes, Dickerson Court, I mean, like, again, we're talking almost ten blocks of just open space that they're not doing anything with. But, of course, with anything, it has a plan. I know they said that they were going to industrialize the area, but then they put up apartment complexes.

So, you know, the, the, the, what, what is being said and what is being done is kind of like a up and down. It's kind of like a, you know, um, We're not certain

if they're going to, you know, go off of what they're telling us. Especially initially, like I said, with Huntington, they said that they were going to gut it and just, you know, revamp it from the inside.

And two years later, three years later, four years later, five years later, they decided they were just going to knock it down.

Adrian: Do you think that they might try to do more to mitigate the coal dust with new people moving in?

Lawrence Turner: Honestly, I think that's where we started. This whole project is a start to a movement.

Um, and I think that, um, of course the more people that are informed and aware of it, the more people that understand the agenda and the objective of the Toxic Tour, the Cold Dust Tours and these type of interviews and things of that nature, um, to get the word out.

Um, but I just think it's just, it's, it's, it's, and this, of course, this is just my opinion. Um, I think it's just kind of tough to kind of rid those companies out. Um, due to the impact, the economical impact, first of all, but also when we're talking about coal again, this is a demand. Um, and I don't even know what is called. It's just amazing because you, if you look at it, it's like, it's, it's, it's mountains and mountains and mountains of coal.

Now I've been around, I'm well traveled. I ain't gonna say I've been around the world, but I've been a lot of places in the United States. And this is the only place that I've seen this particular, whatever you want to call it, like I've seen it nowhere else. Like, I didn't even, and then again, growing and knowing and, and, and seeing.

I didn't know that Norfolk had a coal. No idea. No idea. You know, and I went to Old Dominion. No idea. So, you know, it's one of those things where if it's not impacting the masses, they don't care. As long as they can continue to make their dollar, and they're going to continue doing what they're doing. Um, I didn't speak to this, but in 2000, I want to say [00:50:00] 12 or 13, we had a forum with the executives and things with the coal companies and things of that nature at the Boys and Girls Club on Hampton Avenue.

Um, in this meeting, of course, you know, you have people expressing to them, you know, what they're doing to people, what they've been doing to people when we're talking about the coal, how it impacts the body and things of that

nature. Um, you had commitments from these executives that they would work to find solution -oriented, you know, for um, condensing and lowering the impact that the coal may have on the community.

Um, that particular forum was that, and to my knowledge, no other follow up had been done. So there was no oh, let's check back and, and, and see what you, you know, what you, what, let's update us. There was no update from the companies on what they've done from the, from the naked eye, everything looks the same.

You know, um, I know they were talking about potentially put like a blanket up over it. Um, I don't see a blanket.

Um, so, you know, it's one of those things, um, but it's just so hard because these companies, they understand the industry. They understand lives are important, but the industry is going to be around longer than me and you. And I think that's where the disconnect comes in, because it's, it's not that they don't care about our lives, but to the detriment of the penny, we're just a casualty, in the bigger scheme.

Adrian: What would you say to the head of the coal terminal, if you could talk to him right now?

Lawrence Turner: If I could talk to the head of the coal company, I would first ask him where he's from just to get an idea. Of, you know, his way of living and his culture and that's, that's, you know, cause I like to meet people where they are, um, so I don't want to assume that he knows nothing about what's going on, cause he may come from a small coal town in Pennsylvania, you know, I don't know. You know. Um, but then, you know, I would, you know, kind of ask him, is he aware of, you know, what the coal does?

Is he, um, is he aware that many people have died due to the coal and it's not his fault. I don't know how long he's had his stay in his position, but this again, we're talking about this has been around for 200, hundred years. Um, but I would, I would definitely ask him, do he, does he have kids? Do you have children? Um, how would you feel if your child had to grow up under these circumstances? Um, if you were in a, if your foot was in another shoe, would you want at least the people, can we even know who you are? You know, like we get it. The coal is everywhere, but we don't even know who's in charge at this particular point.

Um, so, you know, I would ask them those different types of things, but I would definitely follow up from that forum and ask them, hey, you know. Things were said that they were going to be, I'm not going to say done, but you guys were going to work towards these things. Nothing has been done. Um, and now that I'm learning now, it's like, why wasn't there, um, air monitors put in place then?

They were available. It's not new technology. At least monitor what you got going on.

So you can speak to it if, you know, you ever run into a situation like, hey, we're, we're, this is a. Cause, cause we don't know. So it's like, we don't know what's high with air, you know, monitoring. We don't know what's low. We don't, we have no knowledge of these particular, um, technologies that are out here in the world, um, that can impact and help in our community. Um, so it's a good thing to know that you guys and, um, are working to get those out here. Cause that's, that's so like, that would be a way to, um, monitor.

Adrian: Mm hmm.

Mm hmm. To have more of a sense.

Lawrence Turner: Right.

Adrian: More information.

Lawrence Turner: And, and then you can, not like me, I'm just saying, you know, well, I think this and I think that. You actually have data.

Adrian: Mm hmm.

Lawrence Turner: And we know data is the root of everything when we're talking about [00:55:00] making factual, concrete points. You know what I mean? Um, so with that, that gives, um, that gives us, you know, more, um, I would say respectable, um, influence when we're talking about trying to change the narrative of this whole coal and the relationship that the coal company has with the community that it's been impacting over the years. Um, and of course they're gonna say "well that community hasn't been there for the last..." But coal is in the air. So i'm give or taking 40, 50 block radius, maybe even further um, you know, that you guys are impacting not just this one particular, you know, these two apartment complexes that are right here. No, it's impacting these people that live across the street. It's home still there across the street from

Harbor Homes. Their homes are still there. They never move those people. You know.

Adrian: Tell me about how what your interactions have been like with the DEQ study. The TAME study.

Lawrence Turner: So it's been very informative for me. Um, again, this, my field was dealing with people in terms of mental health, um, in terms of, um, reaching goals and, and, and things of that nature. So, um, to get a sense and a feel for the DEQ, um, it's still the same agenda to me.

Um, because at the end of the day, health is wealth, you know? Um, and the wealth of knowledge that I was able to give to others, and then the wealth of knowledge that I'm gaining through understanding of this, um, is crucial. Because, think about those thousands of people that were living there and about what we're talking about.

I'm one in particular. And the only reason why I'm knowing about it now is because I'm, I'm involved and I'm, I'm, I'm here. You know what I mean?

Um, but, um, it's just a, it's just an eye opener. Because even as I'm outside looking in, well, more, you know, kind of working my way in now, because I understand the importance of the work. Um, but as I'm outside looking in, when we're going around, we're canvassing. And I'm, I'm asking older gentlemen or older, you know, females for their input on our topic, you realize that people just don't want to talk about it. People don't want to talk about it.

Do you think its like,

Adrian: why do you think that is?

Lawrence Turner: Um, as I was having an interview with, um, a young lady, she expressed that, um, her father, I want to say, uh, was a railroad worker.

And they made him sign something in like '70 something, or something like that, and she was trying to get money because she was working over there. They had cut it off or something, so she couldn't get the money, but she couldn't sign it either. So, hence, that's why she was talking to me. You see? So, it's one of those things where we don't know who signed what. We don't know who agreed to what. We call it- nah, I'm not even gonna go there.

But, we don't know. So, as we peel back these layers now, I'm starting to hear stories. And, like, oh people signed off to be quiet. But then you have, again, that population that just doesn't know. They don't know how to speak to it, because they don't even know what's going on.

You know, um, and that's a big portion of it. Um, and then you think about that community, where are those people now? A lot of them are uptown. A lot of them have moved away from this community. So, even to get a beat on them, You have to canvass the whole Newport News, you know, Hampton. People went from Newport News, moved to Hampton, and never thought to come back.

Um, you have a lot of families that intertwine Newport News and Hampton, you know. Um, you may have your grandma may live in Newport News, but your whole family lives in Hampton. Everybody's gonna go see grandma, you know. Um, so you have that aspect of it, um. But, this,

Adrian: Do you know anybody who works at the terminal?

Lawrence Turner: No. No.

Adrian: Do you know anybody who knows anybody?

Lawrence Turner: So I was told that Mr. DeBrew from the Moton House used to work at the railroad company. But that would be the first and only person that I would know. [01:00:00] And I was born and raised in the community. So that's another thing, like, who's employed over there?

Adrian: This is weird.

Lawrence Turner: Along with the shipyard. You know?

I

Adrian: haven't met anybody there yet.

Lawrence Turner: You see?

Adrian: Yeah.

Lawrence Turner: So it's an interesting thing, and it's like, it's so close, but it's like so far away. Because the closer you get, the more people are going to put

layers on it, you know? For you not to be able to figure out who they are or what is really going on.

Um, so I thought that that forum that we had, when we had it, was so powerful. Um, but that was also during a time where the city was on edge. Um, and it was a turning point. Um.

Adrian: So you were there in person?

Lawrence Turner: Yes.

Adrian: And what, like, were the city council members there? Like Ms. Thick and um?

Lawrence Turner: Um, from my understanding, no.

Adrian: Okay.

Lawrence Turner: Um, just a lot of community.

Adrian: So it was community members. Community members. And terminal executives.

Lawrence Turner: Mm hmm.

Adrian: Interesting. And so it was just like a public forum?

Lawrence Turner: Yes, just a public forum.

Adrian: Just the dust or anything else?

Lawrence Turner: Whatever you wanted to ask them. Of course, you know, the toxic was a big portion of it, but if you wanted to ask a question, you were more than welcome.

They answered to the best of their abilities, they didn't shy away from it, which was powerful because, you know, you're going to protect your company. But they were straight up, you know, we understand. We're working on things, of course, that's something that we expect them to say. But, um, yeah, I don't know too many people. Shipyard? Oh, man, you can, the list goes on and on and on, you know, but as far as the railroad company, no.

Adrian: Interesting. Cool. Um, yeah, what do you, what do you wish were different about the dynamics, specifically the dynamic between the coal terminal and the southeast community?

Honestly,

Lawrence Turner: I feel like the information that we have now, besides the air monitors, was readily and available for years.

Um, looking back, I just wish that they wouldn't have never built that community in that area.

You know, um, Newport News is an interesting place, downtown Newport News in particular, and this is kind of off topic, but it's not because it pertains to the USA. So in the USA, you can go anywhere in the USA, and you can go to a waterfront, and what you gonna get?

You're gonna get high maintenance, real high maintenance. Miami, New York City, you know, we can go on and on and on, DC, you know, you're gonna get a lot of wealth.

Um, Newport News. You're going to get poverty. You got industry that's right there with billions, trillions of dollars, and you're going to get poverty. There's an apartment complex that they're, like, as we speak, they're down there right now, renovating this apartment complex. And this apartment complex sits on the cliff. Their view is the bay. Stuart Gardens view is the bay.

Now it's a gift and a curse. Cause it's a beautiful thing, you know. We grew up near the water. Some people never experienced water. Landlocked. Iowa, places like that, you know. Um, but here we, we, we're sea people, you know. We fish, we crab, you know.

We get on boats and we go out in the water. Like that's a part of our culture and our heritage. Um, but we, it's poverty stricken. Um, it's, it's just amazing, like I said, when, when we're talking about trillion dollar industries, how is this neighborhood, for, for five or six years, a, a, a food desert? Like, how does that even translate?

How does it make sense? Like, um, and, you know, and of course, you know, we can get into different things as far as how this even came about. We can blame it on this person, this person, that group, that group, but all in all, it's like.

This community, this particular area of the community was always, you know, um, looked at as "we'll stay away from there," you know.

Um, we're good on that end. Growing up, when I was in school working at Woodside on the other end, and I told them, hey, yeah, I'm from, I went to Heritage, I'm from downtown. It's already the stigma. It's a stigma attached to it, just off of you saying that one simple phrase. Um, and I think that's [01:05:00] been going on for years, of course, but, but I'm not going to say that my, you know, in the 1940s, 30s, 20s, that this wasn't a place to be.

Even when I was coming up, it was a place to be. It just was the stigma attached to it. You know what I mean? We had fun. We did all types of things. We could go freely. We can roam and not worry about, you know, somebody, um, doing harm to us or, you know, things of that nature because it was a community. Yeah, you know, you got drugs and violence.

That's in every community. But, um, it was a safe haven for us because we were from here. This is, if, if, if they don't know you, you look like your dad or your mom. You know, like they can make that distinguish, distinguishment. And they can say, hey, you, for me, it'll be like. You George Miller's, you know, that's my dad and it's like yeah, that is my dad, you know And I dealt with that all my life, "you little Lawrence", you know, and it was like, yeah, I am So that was a beautiful thing when we're talking about, you know the community but I'm like back to the question I just think you know, if they would have never put it right there.

Um, I just see like a different trajectory, maybe, sort of. And I'm not saying that good people don't come. Like, I come from a family. They made it out just fine. You know, everybody owns what they have, and everybody's well off and, you know, good to go. Um, but, um, think about the, the, the the child and the children that didn't have older siblings or, you know, an uncle that was doing, you know, positive.

So you're surrounded by a lot of, you know, um, what we would look at as doing the right thing because you're taking care of yourself, but is it really the right thing? You know, so you run into a lot of that. Um, but downtown is just, it's, it's no place like home. Um, because when you learn about history, you learn that this is where everything started.

Um, this whole James River Bay, all of this is, this is where they came. Um, and we're talking back before Christopher Columbus and Jamestown and things like that. This was already colonized, you know.

And it's, it's, it's, it's, it's just so much, it's so rich in history, you know, and as I get older, I'm just learning and just want to continue to learn. But, um, Newport News, downtown Newport News has the potential to be, you know, just as impactful and, um, just as impactful and, um, like, you know, influential as a New York City.

Because people here are just as strong minded, just, you know, creative and so on and so forth. But you just have so many obstacles that you gotta overcome just to get to that particular place that you're trying to go. That it's kind of like, you know, I don't know. It gets frustrating. It gets overwhelming.

It gets to a place where you're like, hey, you know. Maybe I should, you know, indulge in what they got going on. And that's where we get the, the whole, the "bad news" name. And, you know, doing things, you know, that, that, you know, you know, growing up, you knew your grandma, your grandparents told you not to do that.

But, you know, when you see what you're seeing, you're growing up. And like I said, it was concrete. So it's a concrete jungle, New York City. Um, but, uh, you're growing up and this is all you know. Some people don't leave. Some people, this is all they see. Um, I just think that they didn't do a good job of putting enough around it to stimulate the minds and, and, and, and things of that nature to do other things.

Um, so like I said, because of sports, and of course I had a strong mom and family, that I was able to experience different things that I wasn't content and complacent with just, you know, this is where I am, this is what I'm doing. I wanted more, you know, um, so I mean, you know, all in all, uh, Newport News, I wouldn't rather be from nowhere else, um, in the world, um, because it made me who I am today.

Adrian: I'm going to ask you one more question.

Lawrence Turner: Okay, go ahead, go ahead, I'm sorry.

Adrian: Um, what, what gives you hope?

Lawrence Turner: What gives me hope?

Uh huh, that's a good question. Um, I will first say waking up, hopeful that today will be better than tomorrow. Um, but what gives me hope is knowing that, [01:10:00] um, this city has withstood a lot. Um, we've gone through a lot

last couple of years. Um, and we continue to go through a lot, but but still we rise. Um, Maya Angelou, Still I Rise. Um, but still we rise, you know, and uh, we've seen good days. We've seen bad days, but all in all, you know, we're still like, I can go walk down the street right now and running to somebody I know. You know, we're still a community that loves each other, you know, even through, you know, your family might be quote unquote beefing or having a difference, you know, differences.

But because I know you, we understand that there has nothing to do with us. We can continue to move forward. So just knowing that, you know, um , even with that, you know, my, just say like my little cousin or something and you know that's my little cousin, you're going to, you know, you're going to steer him to do what he's supposed to be doing versus not just because of the relationship that you have with me, you know?

Um, so I just think that that is something that plays a big part in our community because we are very community- oriented, but it's just, it's overshadowed with all of the violence. Because it'd be like, wow, you know, they're going against each other and their family's been tight for years, you know, and it's just one mixed thing. And now it's like, okay, now everybody has to go their own way.

Um, but that is what gives me hope, knowing that this community has been here, withstood a lot of, a lot. And that we continue to come together. And having this conversation right now shows me that we're moving in the right direction. This is hope.

Me getting this out here is hope.

You know, you being here is hope.

Um, the Toxic Tour is hope.

Uh, us canvassing is hope.

That we can influence someone to influence another to influence another. You know, the chain reaction thing. Um, but, but. You know, like they say, you know, all you need is hope, the size of a mustard seed, you know.

Um, so, um, like I said, waking up is hope for me because I know in my heart that I'm going to do what I can. Um, even if, you know, it's feeding a homeless man today, you know. Even if it's, "hey little homie", you know, little kid in the neighborhood, "hey little homie, come here. You shouldn't be doing that." You

know, something like me going to a basketball game for high school, seeing them, you know, um, every year seeing students that I dealt with graduate from high school, seeing them graduate from college, you know, go on to be productive citizens in, in their community and in the world.

Um, just recently, um, one of my students, he got a scholarship, um, from Biden. He got the White House scholarship. He goes to Norfolk State. He went to Woodside High School. He was one of my babies. And to see him flourishing, you know, that's hope, you know.

So you just, you know, you try to take the small things. Um, and just, you know, because it's a lot of, it is like a dark cloud kind of soared over our city that has been there. It'll go away. But it'll come back, it'll go away, but it'll come back, you know. Um, and to still be here at 32 years later shows me that, you know, I lost a lot of friends along the way.

You know, this, this community, we lost, we lose a lot of people. Um, and again, when I say we lose, we lose not to natural causes, we lose to different things and it's, you know, it's, it's, it's, it's become a norm. You know, but it's hope that, you know, we can change those things. We could turn those things around.

We know it's not going to happen tomorrow. It might not even happen when I'm alive. But just to know that we're going to continue to push for that.

It's all the hope I need.

Adrian: Thank you.

Lawrence Turner: Thank you. Yeah. Thank you.