

How does a great city such as old Detroit come to a point of near distinction? It is a complete tragedy as it stands or crawls today. This is the city that kicked off the Industrial Revolution. At its best it was 4 million people strong and birthing talents like Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Jackie Wilson, Wilson "Wicked" Pickett and the singing moguls Barry Gordy and William "Smokey" Robinson simultaneously. If you loved making money, Detroit was the best place to be.

My personal memories of Detroit are sweet but also full of crazy adventure. I lived there in the 1970's. There was a major drug war going on and the manufacturing bubble had burst. However, it was fun. I remember going down to My Fair Lady's nightclub on Jefferson Avenue and assess the vast amount of pretty girls in the club looking to get "chosen". You could make three or four future dates within an hour. A professional brother was in demand and I took total advantage of it. It was such fun! My ego was salacious.

Crime and poverty started to grow at an exponential rate. The luster was coming off. Every family you knew had some kind of criminal tragedy. I had a few close calls myself. I remember getting into a slight oral spat with a female at a nightclub one Saturday night. I left and jumped into my car. As I was pulling out, the lady jumped in front of my car and fired her 357 Magnum. The bullet pierced my windshield and embedded into my dash board. A fragment of the bullet scarrd one of my knuckles and another rested into my afro. It was just another night in the city of Detroit.

Burglaries, robberies, car thefts were common. Sometimes it would get far worse and despicable. One female friend of mine became a victim, not to thugs but savages. While she was picnicking with her daughters at Belle Isle Park, a "crew" approached the family. They drew weapons, snatched her infant from her arms and threw the baby to another daughter and dragged her off into their car and they sped off. Her children were horrified. 5:00AM the next morning a police cruiser found her beaten and nude along a curb at the corner of 7 Mile and Meyers Ave. She had been brutally raped and beaten by these five savages. I don't know if she ever mentally recovered as she left Detroit and moved to her homestead in North Carolina. Those of us who lived or still live in Detroit have similar horrors to lament.

The biggest problem with Detroit is that it is just about totally unionized. This limits entrepreneurship as the moving out by Motown and the Auto Industry over the last decades illustrates. Jobs are few and are becoming less and less. The demise of Michigan results in the boon for the "right to work" states. The tax base for the city government has shrunk to being

ineffective. Imagine this - my nephew has been blessed with musical talent. When he decided to go for it, he realized he had to leave Detroit. Shortly after he moved to Los Angeles he got his chance. He is now with the band Bruno Mars. A musician has to leave Detroit to get discovered now. Who would have thought the great Motown would come to this?

Local politics in Detroit is as corrupt as a Third World nation. The infamous tenure of former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick is just an example of what goes on at the local offices. The FBI is as busy in Detroit as anywhere else in the nation. It would be laughable if it didn't mean school kids, families and opportunities are being denied in infinite proportions.

We have been trying to get a chapter of the National Black Chamber of Commerce going there for twenty years. The traction just doesn't take form. Next time, we are going to try a different approach. Instead of trying to find people capable of organizing and implementing such a task, we will first write a strategic plan with firm milestones. Then we will search for competent people, true at heart and devoted, to run a "phoenix" type operation.

Right now, Detroit is like the movie "I am Legend" starring Will Smith. The infrastructure of the city is built for 4 million people. Today, there are less than 700,000 residents of Detroit. Thus, you have numerous "Dead Zones" replete with decay, bush and strange animals. Coyotes roam these Dead Zones and eat off the rodents and deer. What will happen when the rodents and deer are over hunted? Will they turn on school children? Probably so, if we can save Detroit we had better do it now. Man! It is like a science fiction movie.

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