

There is certainly a correlation between race and economics when it comes to communities within the United States. A moderate working class white community will change into an upper middle class Black community. It will be prestigious for a while and then it will be targeted by bad policy and over the years erosion starts to sit in and then crime invades its core. The crime gets so bad that property values start declining and the quality of life becomes pitiful.

In a few decades you have what is known as a “golden ghetto”.

The final act is drug infestation. Why does this happen?

As my relatives emigrated from Louisiana to Los Angeles in the forties and fifties I saw communities make the above transition. There was “Lovely Compton”. Two of my cousins integrated Fremont High.

Another cousin helped integrate Washington High.

My Aunt Mary and her clan integrated Inglewood.

Aunt Lula and her clan bought a house at Hoover and Florence across the street from a synagogue.

Decades later the Rodney King Riot would erupt three blocks down the street.

These once fashionable places are now just dots on a map of an urban area made infamous in the great film “Boys in the Hood”.

When I was discharged from the Army in 1974, Procter & Gamble assigned me to Detroit. Beautiful neighborhoods like Rosedale Park and Palmer Woods were heading south with a bullet – a whole lot of bullets.

It hit bottom with the eruptions of the inevitable drug wars.

The most prestigious county in the United States today is the DC suburb of Prince Georges County, Maryland. It has the highest Black family income in the nation which makes it a target

for bad policy to be followed by crime and drug infestation. Keep in mind this is the same place where pro-segregationist and presidential hopeful George Wallace was shot while addressing his base.

His base, white and very anti-Black, was set on preventing any race mixing and integration.

The Fair Housing Act and affirmative action for high paying federal jobs changed all of that.

Recently, I read a few studies that showed the General Services Administration (landlord for federal offices) had a systematic way of redlining Prince Georges County from any regional development. It's affect after decades was starting to take its toll. The majority of workers had to travel out of the county.

35% of all Beltway travelers are commuters from Prince Georges County.

A county that is overly residential and lacking in business vitality – retail, industrial and office space.

I told two Congressional officials based in the county that I feared a downward transition like Inglewood or Compton was starting to set in.

They both assured me that nothing of its kind would happen in Prince Georges County.

So let's take a quick look. My two sons go to the University of Maryland based in Prince Georges County. UMD consistently has one of the highest crimes rates among US colleges. Last semester a fellow athlete of theirs answered his dorm door.

A hit man pushed his way in and put a gun to his head and said "You didn't deliver the stash and now you have to go".

It took him ten long minutes to convince the assassin that it was his roommate or someone else he was after.

He moved out of the dorm but was never the same.

He is leaving at the end of this semester.

Two blocks down the street from my boys, a home was recently invaded by robbers. One of the victims called 911 as he hid in a closet.

The cops arrived and demanded the robbers to come out.

They chose to come out with guns a blazing.

Cops won – one thug dead, one thug wounded and one escaped.

There are so many burglaries in their neighborhood they and their roommates pitched in and bought a dog, Rottweiler/German Shepherd, to watch the house while they attend class.

Daily, and I mean daily, carjacking, rapes, kidnappings, home invasions, murders, etc. abound the news coming out of Prince Georges County. DC has nothing on it. In fact, the DC Chief of Police had his personal car stolen.

They found it abandoned in Prince Georges County.

A few days ago we hit rock bottom. A Board Member of the NBCC had his home invaded at night. They tied up his 3 children, struck his wife and demanded with a gun to his head “Cash, jewelry and drugs”.

This is horrifying!

It is happening with reckless abandon and is starting to get very personal. I am going to RING THE ALARM. Let's protect our communities.

Mr. Alford is the President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce.

Website: www.nationalbcc.org. Email: president@nationalbcc.org .