

Brittany Battle (she/her): Hey y'all, so we are here for the fifth episode of The People's Report, really excited to have some really, really powerful work to be talked about today with these brothers on the call with us tonight, so, as always, before we get started, we are going to play y'all a little selection of some music to get us grounded in the conversation that we're going to have tonight. So the song we are playing tonight is "Land of the Free" by Joey Bada\$\$\$. I'm going to let the song play and then come right back to this conversation. Let me just tell y'all, if y'all have not seen that video- you definitely need to check that video out on YouTube. This video is fire, I'm just sitting here watching it this whole time. So thanks y'all for joining us, again like I said this is episode five of The People's Report. Y'all know we have these conversations to really get grounded in some of the issues that are happening both here locally in Winston and Forsyth County and around the country, right. We're really blessed and honored to have folks from outside Winston and outside Forsyth County on this call with us tonight. So we're going to get started talking about defunding the police and refunding violence interruption and violence prevention programs, right, we know that folks are in the community doing this work, that the police do not actually have any interest in ending violence, right, because that would put them out of a job, and so we need to talk to folks who actually do have an interest in making our community safer in the way that we want them to look. So we're going to get started with doing some introductions so y'all can get a sense of who's on this call before we jump into the conversation. So Brother Effrainguan Muhammad, can you start first with just telling us who you are, and some of the work that you've done in your community, please?

Effrainguan Muhammad: Yes, greetings- first of all Sister Brittany, I thank you for the invitation it's an honor to be a part of this discussion this evening. Of course, my name is Brother Effrainguan Muhammad, I'm a student minister in the local Nation of Islam here in Winston Salem. I'm also a facilitator of the Winston Salem Local Organizing Committee or LLC, which was established in 2015 to promote, organize, and mobilize for the 20th anniversary of the historic Million Man March, and when we came back, we came back with an action agenda. And we instituted that agenda through nine ministries, that we have set up- one of which is a Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Agriculture. These ministries are instituted to actually pull individuals from within our community together, who have specific skills in those areas, so that we are not dependent upon community, excuse me not dependent upon government, but pulling from community. And through the LLC, we initiated what we call Peace Walks, which is a grassroots strategy, where we go into the communities around Forsyth County to see what we can do to encourage conflict resolution and work with empowering the community to address some of the systemic issues in the community. So that's the, you know, the shortened form of what it is I do. In another life, I do have 22 years of experience in mental health and behavioral health, community-based services. So once again, I'm excited to be a part of the discussion today with these wonderful kings that are on here today and yourself.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Thank you, we jump to Brother Terrence, can you introduce yourself for folks who might not know about the work that you're doing in Winston? You're muted.

Terrance: My bad, rookie mistake. My name is Terrance and I'm a fourth generation Winston Salemite. My formative years- grew up on 26th Street- about 17 years ago I cut my teeth as a community organizer, coming out of the faith community. And since that time I've done youth development work, justice and peace work in the city. Relevant to this conversation, in our youth development work we started an initiative called L.I.T. City back in 2011 and we work primarily with Black and Brown youth, their parents, and their communities- doing mentoring, advocacy, sports and fitness, arts, music, and also leadership development. Then in 2014, my wife and I started a little ragtag collective of activists out of the Faith Community called Drum Majors Alliance and we've been trying to push church folk into the work of justice and peace here locally. Those two efforts, I think can be framed, at least in part, as peacemaking work, and so, whether that you know, through the youth development means mentoring, building with gang affiliated and gang adjacent youth in our city over the years, or that means trying to confront those systems with Drum Majors Alliance that traumatized and create conditions where the violence erupts- or that means simply living in our communities, living on Patterson, living on 26th Street and being a good neighbor and trying to do de escalation, whether that's around self-harm, domestic violence, or gun violence. So that's really how my work is related to this conversation this evening, and I wanted to say I'm honored to be here with y'all and I'm looking forward to the conversation.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Thank you. Brother Anthony Smith, can you talk about some of the work that you've been doing?

Anthony Smith (he/him): Sure, my name is Anthony Smith, I'm a lead Pastor and I'm actually two counties over- I'm in Rowan County, North Carolina, based here in Salisbury- but I've done coalition work with Brother Terrence, Brother Effrainguan over the past several years. And so, glad to be a part of the conversation that we're having today, some of the initiatives that I've been a part of, done work here with our NAACP- taking some elements of the Cure Violence model, with the Cure Violence initiative it's still in its incubation stage- we've done some kind of piloting of that here, of course, it needs to be more complex and more elaborate. I'm also one of the lead organizers for a civic engagement group called Rowan Concerned Citizens. The primary work that we've done is to do popular education, provide space for people to organize and mobilize around grassroots issues in our community. I'm also part of the local expression, the Poor People's Campaign, the same kind of work- just organizing and mobilizing people around justice- racial justice, ecological justice, around poverty, around various issues. And so a lot of work, primarily, has been what I call Faith Rooted Organizing, and that is, along with Brother Terrence, you know, to really kind of prod and push and provoke the religious community here, faith community, church community, into the realm of prophetic and social justice- prophetic work, and that's all I can really say right now. Oh, and I almost forgot, most importantly, a work that I'm very proud to be a part of- lead by my dear Brother Reverend Timothy Bates, called the Nightcrawlers. Brother Effrainguan and his group, they've come down and hung out with us several times and it's a Presence Ministry, where we literally walk the streets on certain nights of the week, primarily on Fridays, where we establish relationships with young people and keep up with people and point people to resources in the Community. The pandemics slowed that work down, but you know we've been talking about getting things

Anthony Smith (he/him): back up, but that's been a primary work. We've stopped all kinds of incidents of violence in this community, in advance of them happening and so yeah.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Appreciate that. Pastor Delonte, can you introduce yourself and tell us some of the work that you've been doing?

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): Sure, first of all, I just want to say thanks to each of you for what you've shared so far and for the kind introduction. I'm really encouraged because I feel like I'm with family for real for real this evening. I'm encouraged by each of the testimonies and the fantastic work that has already been done. So I'm based here in Washington DC as a pastor and an organizer, and so my work is primarily around the intersection of police accountability and gun violence reduction. And that work really started when I was in seminary in LA- started kind of leaning in and showing up with Black Lives Matter in LA, where Black Lives Matter movement was started- and started organizing with some local faith-rooted organizers, formerly known as PICO LA Voice is local version of it- now it is known as Faith in Action. I was brought on after organizing for several years around police accountability in downtown LA and Skid Row, in particular, to begin to try to build relationships between organizers and woke cops so that was very challenging work at that particular time. And it continues to be a challenge, of course, that is for a variety of reasons. Now for the last three years, I'm back home in the city where I was born and raised. My wife and family relocated here three years ago to lead a church. And we started organizing, really not because we wanted to, but because we had to- around the intersection of state violence and community violence- my nephew was almost killed, he was shot five times within a year of moving back home and so, I don't know, I had to do something, so I started calling Masjid and started started calling local pastor friends, who I knew growing up here in the city and we organized, much like my Brother Muhammad and the Nightcrawlers that Brother Smith is doing- we organized what we we now call Peace Walks DC. And Peace Walks DC is a, it's a coalition of churches, faith communities, and survivors of gun violence that we walk the streets Friday nights and we take with us partners from both nonprofit church community and leveraging some government resources, specifically in DC we have a department of behavioral health that goes out with us, we have a department of employment services that goes out with us to make referrals and unlike some cities in the country, we we actually organized to create what's called an office of neighborhood safety and engagement, which is an entity that is separate from the police department that helps to collect data and do weekly calls around around the violence and the supports that need to be put in place, and so we go out with with some of their outreach workers as well and it's been really it's been really impact impactful to hit the streets, but also to take the knowledge we gain to make our system work better and do the advocacy to build up even more resources really honored to be here.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Thank you. So, you know I want to jump right to this idea of Black on Black crime because whenever we have a conversation about violence or violence prevention or doing this type of work, and particularly when we're talking about shifting resources from inflated public safety and police budgets, right, to resources for the community- folks from all backgrounds, right, including folks from our own background, right, say well, 'what about Black-

Brittany Battle (she/her): on Black crime? They out here shooting each other' And really just painting this picture that, you know, Black folks and young Black men in particular just out here, acting like savages which we know to not be the case. So I really just want to first have y'all speak to that, that myth right and that idea and the damage that does to both the work that you're doing, but also us being able to even, you know as a community, as a collective, as a country- being able to approach this work in a way that makes sense. So anybody that wants to jump in on that.

Anthony Smith (he/him): It's not true

Brittany Battle (she/her): Right, Period.

Anthony Smith (he/him): You know, as much as we can trust government statistics, when we look at the FBI most recent report around intraracial violence, it happens at the same rate across racial groups. So when I dropped that fact on folks, especially in my own Black Community here, that mythology even travels in our own communities, even in Black Communities, and so, when I dropped that and I give that link, people are like 'oh I didn't know'. So yeah, I'll just let the other brothers take that, I know they got some really deep things to say about that.

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): Nah man, you said it, I mean look, I mean it's just a myth. First of all, we need to know that anybody who's organizing at the intersection of state violence and intercommunity violence, knows and believes that all Black lives matter, knows and believes that we are about, I'll speak for myself about the collective liberation of all Black people. And what that means is not only the liberation from the institutions of white supremacy and the slave catching, slave holding systems of state violence that we're fighting to free ourselves from, but we're also fighting a spiritual battle, a battle of spiritual warfare for the minds, hearts, and souls of people who have been told, for so long that you're worthless, who have been told for so long that your schools shouldn't be invested in, your community shouldn't be invested in, you shouldn't have any kind of health equity and healthcare, and we need to pack you up in the back of a squad car in the back of a Paddy Wagon or police van and heard you up like animals. Right, so if you've been told- since we had Black History Month, right, let's talk about Carter G. Woodson for just a moment. In the *Miseducation of the Negro*, he said, he puts it like this, I'm paraphrasing, he says, if you build a house and you tell the Negro (in his language of his day) to go around to the back of the house, then when you build a new house, they will then demand that you build a house with a back door. All right, let's just sit with that for just a minute, okay. So 50 years ago, 60 years ago, Dr. Woodson, more than that- seventy years ago, Dr. Woodson is identifying what is essentially internalized oppression. Once you've been told, over and over again that you're worthless and valueless, when you look in the face of another Black Queen, King, Prince or Princess, all you can see is what's around you, which is clear in our communities. Our communities look and feel like we have no worth, we have no value. So therefore, what does it mean for us to engage around this, this issue of intercommunity violence? It means we have to do the work of building up our sense of identity. For me, as a preacher of the Gospel that means primarily, building up a sense of a person's-

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): identity in Christ, a person that is made in the image of God, who was made beautiful. So when we go out and when we do rallies-and we do have protests, we are, we are yelling, "Black is beautiful!", and the kids are in the street and they're like 'yeah that's right, Black is beautiful! Black is beautiful!' Right, and the same communities where we also are stopping at the sites where people have lost loved ones and counting that, that ground as sacred ground, as holy ground. And so I would just say yeah, what my Brother Anthony said is absolutely, Reverend Smith, is absolutely right. And the data just bears out that people who are traumatized or hurt, just traumatize and hurt other people- white folk, 84% of white crime is done by white people. If you look within the Brown and Latinx Community, the same numbers exist, sadly, if you look within Queer, LGBTQIA communities, in terms of domestic violence and partner on partner violence, the numbers just bear out the same evidence. Why? Because if you're hurt, you tend to hurt. And so our goal is to get into the deep aspects of the wounds and heal, and heal the wounds there so that we can put up a real stop gap around some of this violence.

Effrainguan Muhammad: I just wanted to add, if I may, in terms of the myth, that there is a uniqueness to the nature of crime that does go on in the Black community. And I'll come back to that- but the myth part is that there is a myth rooted in the etiology of white supremacy. And a part of that etiology tends to believe that Black people and Brown people have a genetic predisposition towards aggression and violence. And it is that sick, perverted etiology that undergirded the concept of the 'Super Predator' that became later policy that morphed into a crime bill. But that's a myth, because there is no gene for violence in Black people, particularly Black males, but there were those who proposed that idea. However, in terms of the uniqueness, much of what goes on in our communities is socially engineered, right. So of course there are structural reasons for crime and violence as I think it was pointed out, much of the violence is based on proximity. Most Asians are killed by other Asians, most whites are killed by other whites, most Hispanics are killed by other whites, but there is something that uniquely happens that we have found in our communities, as I stated that there are of course structural and systemic issues, but many of these issues are instigated by outside forces, and that is what is unique, in some aspects, about the Black Community. We don't see this in the Asian Community or the white Community. But, for example, you know, a lot of this is instigated and sometimes it's instigated by rogue elements within law enforcement. My brother is from California, of course, if you're familiar with what happened in 1998 with the Rampart police scandal, where the gang task force was involved in extrajudicial killings of gang members and drug dealers- taking Crips, dropping them off in Blood territories- taking Bloods dropping them off in Crips territories. And if we come more recently, CBSLA had an article called, "LA Sheriff's Department Has Several Secret Deputy Gangs"- literally gangs, within the LA Police Department! And closer to home, to the good pastor in DC, right outside of Baltimore, of course, in 2015 there was the Baltimore Gun Trace Task Force. This was a task force responsible for taking guns and drugs off of the streets of Baltimore, but what happened is that you had off duty police officers confiscating cocaine and drugs, but then taking some of those cocaine, some of those drugs, some of those weapons and actually selling them back on the streets. So that's the reason why I say it, there is something unique about some aspects of-

Effrainguan Muhammad: crime and violence in Black and Brown Communities, because it is oftentimes instigated by outside forces and rogue elements within law enforcement themselves.

Terrance: I'll try to chime in quickly, I was having some bad problems, maybe like four years ago, and I was counseled to go to the chiropractor. I go to the chiropractor and they do an X Ray on my back. After the X Ray comes back, the doctor is like, 'look at your stomach right there', and he's pointing at this like, black mass in my stomach. I'm getting kind of nervous. He's like, 'what do you think that is?'- I said, 'I don't know doc, you tell me' and he says, 'that's poop'. I was like, 'what?' and he was like, 'yeah that's poop'- and I was like, 'well doc, let me tell you right now, I'm on this really aggressive health kick, I'm eating clean, I'm working out, so I'm sure like as I continue to move forward, that will be dealt with.' 'I know, in the past, I wasn't taking care of myself like I should, but right now I'm on a diet.' And the doc looked me in the eye and he said, 'listen, it doesn't matter if you do an organic cleanse, it doesn't matter what you do- there's a structural reason for that poop'. He said, 'you have what's called a Stair Step Back' and basically, my spine was misaligned. And he said, 'until that gets aligned, the poop is going to remain'. And I think one thing we have to begin to help our people understand, and help people across the board understand is that many of the issues we see are due to structures, and until we deal with those structures, the symptoms will remain in place. Yes, there's soul work, all those things are necessary, but there are structures that create much of the problems we see. And I'll close with this little quote from Martin Luther King since everybody loves to quote Martin Luther King. He says, "If there is a cultural lag [this is his language] in the Negro Community, the lag is there because of segregation and discrimination, it's there because of long years of slavery and segregation. Criminal responses are not racial but environmental- poverty, economic deprivation, social isolation, all these things breed crime, whatever the racial group may be, and it is a torturous logic to use the tragic results of racial segregation as an argument for the continuation of it". And so many today use the tragic results of white supremacy as an argument for why we keep on locking up our folks and not provide any kind of public health policy that gets to the root causes.

Anthony Smith (he/him): Man, which King is that?

Terrance: That 1967, *Where Do We Go From Here*, chapter 4- the King they don't want us to know about.

Anthony Smith (he/him): That's pre-McDonald's King okay

Brittany Battle (she/her): It kills me how many public officials quote Dr. King throughout Black History Month and on his birthday, and I'm like y'all, he wasn't for none of this stuff that you're talking about- you're literally taking two sentences and putting it on your Facebook profiles. And I'm just like man, like the audacity that you really have to have- the audacity. But I appreciate y'all framing it and giving us an understanding of how this violence works, I mean, especially like Brother Muhammad said, there so much of this has been socially constructed, right. The fact that we do not even talk about the Iran-Contra scandal anymore like, that was-

Brittany Battle (she/her): so wild that happened, that they literally just were allowing cocaine to flow freely from Nicaragua into this country, and then to turn around and pretend, as if Black communities were just so addicted to drugs, when we know that white people and black people use and sell drugs, at the same exact rates- and for youth, white youth actually use drugs at higher rates than Black youth. But to pretend, as though that was something that was, you know, unique to our communities when they were allowing those drugs to flow here- it's just amazing to me the amnesia and how fast that comes. But I really want to talk about how you know this idea that police are the answer to violence and to "crime", right, and I put crime in air quotes because what we consider criminal is definitely socially constructed and definitely racialized, right. What is considered criminal for Black Communities is not considered criminal for white communities, right. But I want to talk about the way that it just becomes a taken for granted notion that, of course, more police is going to mean there'll be less violence right. As if you can have a police officer just walking along with every brother in the community, all day and that's going to solve the problem. So can we kind of have that conversation about the ways that we can approach you know, responding to violence in a way that's more grounded in the community?

Effrainguan Muhammad: May I speak to that just briefly. You know this is Black History Month, of course. And Brother Malcolm, I think it was in 1963 he stated that, you know, the Black community is one of the most policed communities in America. Um, you have large areas of the country, such as Chicago or you know certain parts of California, that the police departments have multibillion dollar budgets, but yet the crime and the balance continues to escalate. You know, and it goes back to the narrative, that is once again, I have to stay on white supremacy, that believes that Black and Brown people are inherently violent. And so, if you believe that, then of course you don't want less police on the streets, because who is going to corral these animals? Who's going to make our streets safe? And so many will call for community policing. I think we have to re envision what that looks like in terms of community policing, not more police on the streets, or law enforcement on the streets, of course, law enforcement has a place to play right, good law enforcement. However, we have to re envision community policing from the community policing itself. In East New York, they are members of the Hasidic Jewish Community, they literally police their own community, of course, if there's a need, they reach out to the NYPD- if there's a situation, but they have taken on the responsibility to make their community a safe and decent place to live. And that's why grassroots organizations who are involved in the community, we know our communities better often than sometimes law enforcement, because we have a relationship. So, all of a sudden, Officer Mcilcudy, who lives out in Lewisville may not have the same relationship with a Brother Terrence, you understand what I'm saying? And that's where community policing I think comes in to where we stand up within our communities and go out and offer our brothers and sisters services because a lot, and I'm sure everyone knows, a lot of the issues that are not really a need for law enforcement. It may be, you know issue of hunger, an issue of mental health, an issue of just basic lack of how to communicate with one another, that escalates out of out of hand. And so I just wanted to add another article in terms of, you know, law enforcement and this gets missing in the discussion, you know, my teacher the honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, said that when we go out into the streets, they are two elements we're going to find and one of those elements-

Effrainguan Muhammad: were rogue elements within law enforcement. Or we talk a lot about the gun violence in our community, um but for example, I think it was ABC Fusion, had an article from 2014, that talked about military grade guns missing from police departments. This was when the 1033 program went out of the Pentagon, was sending surplus weaponry to law enforcement all over- the country, law enforcement, that was being trained by the mercenary group Blackwater out of North Carolina at the time as well. But what this report found is that many of those guns that were in the possession of law enforcement, were going missing. How does a 45 walk out of a police precinct? How does an assault weapon walk outside of a law enforcement precinct? And it was so bad, the article points out, to where there were several states who were totally suspended from the program and one of those states was the state of North Carolina. So that makes our work very difficult when those who are supposed to be peace officers, are actually involved in breaking the peace. So just as the community and law enforcement call for the community to end the no snitching, we also have to make a call for law enforcement to end the blue code of silence- so this is a time for good law enforcement, who really want to protect and serve to stand up and you know, purge from within their ranks, those rotten apples, and so I think that becomes difficult when those departments with those rotten apples have inflated budgets because those budgets, you know, just make those rotten apples get bigger.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Rights, and we know that the opportunity for those types of rogue elements is happening right here and Winston in Forsyth County, so we know currently the city and the county are in a collaborative relationship to have a Drug Task Force, right, and they have just entered into a 10 year lease for warehouse that was described publicly during a council meeting as being located in "The Cloak of Darkness" and that is the quote- being located in the "Cloak of Darkness", right, as if they're playing some video game and they think that, you know, policing in a military style is just you know, like a fun project. And so, you know, as I spoke to Brother Muhammad about this the other day, what do we think they're putting in that warehouse, right? What do we think is going into that warehouse? And what do we think are the types of opportunities that provide for police, for law enforcement, sheriff's deputies- to have access to guns and drugs, right, in the cloak of darkness in Winston Salem? So our tax dollars are going to pay for something and we can't even know where it is, where it's located, right, or what the bounds, the scope of this project is in this community. Does anybody else want to jump in on that?

Anthony Smith (he/him): Yeah, I was just going to add that, even in my community this may have happened in Forsyth, one of the things that I've noticed is whenever there is a crisis, especially around drug use, white supremacy reveals itself overtly, and I can think of a way that its revealed itself most overtly- was when people were at a heightened alert around the opioid crisis, I don't know if some of y'all remember that. And in our community, when that began to hit, when white folks were showing up driving cars, ODing and open public in the middle of the day, dying right there in front of children and families, and then they will begin to say we got to have a systemic approach- a system of care around, we got to have wraparound services, right, we can't criminalize these people, we got to bring in social services, we got to bring in the county, we got to bring in a city together- then they began to have these conversations-

Anthony Smith (he/him): around holistic care, around those who are caught up in that. That conversation did not happen in the 80s, didn't happen in the 90s, and it's hard to even have that conversation now. Even with some of us, you know, those of us who are in an activist circle around abolishing the carceral and defunding the police. Is they were engaging in actions that we've been calling for within our own- community for decades. Don't criminalize us right, you know, but so this is something that speaks to the fact that institutionally, part of the challenge is and I'm just going to say it, some of this stuff won't be addressed until we seize political power in our communities. Right, there's ways that, you know, we've been talking about taking about, you know, dismantling the carceral state, addressing the way funding is allocated in our community- if there's no political will there for that, right, that's not going to happen. And so literally what needs to happen is the structural change and part of that is literally changing the political algebra in your own community.

Terrance: If I could jump in, and just one local example, Brother Effrainguan Muhammad will immediately know what I'm talking about, I can't think back to the exact amount of years it's been, however, there was this practice of these random traffic stops where the police will be posted up strategically, in certain communities to do license checks and all that kind of stuff- registration checks and all that. And we know they were basically fishing to find, you know, more than perhaps a suspended license, more than an expired registration card, they were fishing in specific neighborhoods to hopefully find drugs, guns, things of that nature in cars, to find folks warrants that are driving. And I got caught up in that quite a few times, you know going down Martin Luther King Drive- got caught up in it plenty of times. A lot of times it'll be you know expired registration, license expired, because my registration expired and I didn't have enough money to fix all of it. So you see, this like a long winding road that poverty and all these elements put somebody in, and then the police show up and they are not a system of care, they're a system of punishment, they're system that's designed actually to make things worse, and so you know it didn't matter if, you know, Johnny, you know, put on his badge that morning and had the greatest intentions of being a quote on quote, peace officer- he was a part of a system that was sending him out to do specific things that disproportionately impact Black and Brown Winston Salem. And I will say policing as a system is violent and it's not designed for healing or care or restoration, reparations or any of those things. And so it's important as Brother Effrainguan was alluding to, that on the ground in our communities, we do relationally base work that gets down at the roots of some of these conflicts, that gets down at the roots of some of the drama and things that pop off in our communities. And we can do that better than anybody else. I think violence interruption works shows, has demonstrated, it's got the numbers to demonstrate when grassroots community folks are given the resource, and even when they don't have the resources, and they're able to build within their community and get information on things that are going down, and to do follow ups, and to be a bridge towards resources, you see crime go down drastically. Whereas when police come, all they can really do is handcuff and cage, they are not equipped or designed in any way, shape or form, to bring healing, care or restoration. So I think we have to think beyond this whole institution of policing to our own systems of care.-

Brittany Battle (she/her): So someone is asking in the Facebook comments, “So what do we do?” Right. “And how do we do it, what are the new ways that we can address these issues in our communities?” - and y'all are all doing this work in some type of way. So can we jump into more talking specifically about, like what these policies look like, what these programs look like, what the actual work of doing, you know, violence prevention and intervention looks like?

Effrainguan Muhammad: So one of the things that we did through the LLC, beginning several years ago, actually, we began through the Mosque because every Monday night, we have a manhoods training program called Fly and the honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan called us out of the Mosque, and he said, we have to come out of our Mosque, come out about churches, and get into the streets, where the despair is, where the hopelessness is. And so beginning in I think 2012, 2013 we began to go through various areas of the city, but we wanted to extend that, beyond the Mosque, and through the LLC, we invited the greater community to get involved with our 10,000 Fearless. And within that 10,000 Fearless, we offer, the only requirement is that you have to have a love for Black and Brown people, right, you have to have a love- that's the first requirement, you have to have a love for our people, right. And so we offer training in conflict resolution, self improvement of course, we can't hope to affect any change in our community, unless it starts with self improvement, which is the basis for community development. So we offer conflict resolution training. We wanted to make sure anyone that was going out on the Peace Walks had basic, first day understanding of CPR, basic self defense- and so we began to go into areas, and we would get data, and we still get data, because every community has this unique set of circumstances, right. So if we go into an area and there's a lot of break ins, there's a lot of burglaries, armed robberies- so what drives our conversation is thou shalt not steal. So if we go into another area and there's a lot of homicide, a lot of killing- what drives our conversation is thou shalt not kill. But what we strive to do, is to go in and to empower the community, because in every community generally, there is a big homie that everybody else looks up to, right, or there may be a big mama on the block or a big uncle on the block, so finding those individuals and encouraging them to get involved in their community. And so our desire has always been to set up conflict resolution centers, so whenever there are issues that happen in the community, as opposed to getting on the phone and calling 911, you can call those individuals within your community, who went through the training to de escalate that situation. We started a squash to be hotline where if there were incidents in the community, individuals could call in and we could try to mediate the beast before they got out of hand. And so we're getting prepared to revamp some of those services that we offer as we go into the spring and the summer months. So I think, you know, COVID 19 has made it challenging because you have to socially distance, but I think there are ways that still can be creative in one, empowering the community- because once the community begins to hold itself accountable, then there's no need for law enforcement to come into our community to risk these hostile interactions between citizens and law enforcement. So those are efforts that we've done over the years, there's another brother that I work with, Brother David Alotta, and we just initiated several months ago, we were blessed to initiate a gang truce on the South side between certain Hispanic gang members, and we believe that it definitely impacted some of what was heating up, you know, throughout the city. If you recall, going into June or July, you know we were having killings of young people, almost like every day in-

Effrainguan Muhammad: Winston Salem. And so we got together and said look, we got to put boots back on the ground. And so what we need, and I'm sure Brother Pastor Delonte can testify to this- it works, but the problem is, is that we need more funding and resources to expand the training and expand- the man and woman power. It's great for people to say, 'Hey that's a great Brother Muhammad what you all are doing' and get a like on social media, no we don't need that- we need for you to get involved, or if you're not going to get involved, support us by writing a check, so that we can get the type of equipment we need, so that we can get houses and rehab them within those communities, turn them into a resource houses, there right in the community and then moveover, to the other side of town and duplicate and have that community responsible for it, so it can be done. In 1988 and 1999, just real quick, at the height of the drug war, brothers from within the Nation of Islam The fly, went into one of the worst areas of Washington, DC Mayfair Mansions right, and unarmed and because of our respect, because of the love from the community, we were able to essentially eliminate crime in that area, so much so until many of the Black local politicians say, you know, 'when the brothers come it's peaceful, the elderly can come out on the porch, the children can go to the park, but when you all leave, then the violence comes back'. So the brothers created private security companies and the citizens pushed for them to get contracts through hood, and it was a model program but once again, there are forces from the outside who interfered with that model because, of course, when crime goes down- you're now affecting someone's budget, right. So I just wanted to say that some of the work that we have been doing, striving to do in Forsyth county, but you know as Brother Terrence and Brother Anthony can attest, we just need a little bit more help in terms of resources, I mean putting checks and finances behind it. You know, there are a lot of nonprofits that get inflated budgets, but to be honest they're not doing a damn thing, but yet there are people on this call, who have boots on the ground that if we received a little bit more love, we could do some wonderful work and that's outside of what law enforcement does, in fact, that would make their jobs easier, right.

Anthony Smith (he/him): Yeah, I'm just going to add that, in connection with what Brother Effrainguan said, some of the work that we've been doing, especially the last couple years- we've been very intentional in creating a seedbed for young, thoughtful, conscientious political leaders, budding political leaders, those who want to go into the world to change policy in our communities, because, quite frankly, when people say 'what can we do?', one of the things you can do is change the weather, and by change the weather what I mean is, I noticed when Brother Delonte was talking about some of the services that the city and even these really innovative programming around, even the way they were framed around safety, there had to be political leadership at the table to change that and so a lot of us in our context here in southern cities- people are going to have to be very intentional in electing public officials who have a frame, who have an understanding, a more systemic understanding of poverty and violence in our communities. We have too many political leaders in our own communities that have a very individualistic, a very status quo understanding, a very ill and warped understanding of how communities work and the relationship between violence and wealth inequality and all of that. And so part of the work is you're going to have to create a seedbed, you're going to have to groom, create a pipeline to cultivate young people or leaders in your community, to seize political power, to change these budgets and reallocate resources in-

Anthony Smith (he/him): the community in a way that addresses the issues. Until we deal with that, and until we change the weather, it'll be like going outside, you see a tornado coming down the street that's like going outside and saying let's pick up the lawn chairs, right, and that ain't gonna and stop the tornado. So we've got to literally seize political power- so part of that work is to make people aware, to raise consciousness too, let people know you have power in your community- we don't have an absence of political power, it's just a lack of use of political power in our community that's what needs to happen, that's one of the things that needs to happen and we got to talk about that and I don't care if they Black and they call my community, and say I want to be able to see the council, how do you think about the cause of violence in your community? Are you into defunding the police? Are you into allocating resources to create systems of care? Well, I think that poor people need to make better choices and they all need to go to church and read the Lord's prayer to become better moral people. Then no, we are not voting for you.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Period.

Anthony Smith (he/him): Just because you pray in Jesus name and because you look like me, we're not gonna vote for you, we are gonna vote for the person, whoever that is there's talking right.

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): All right, Reverend. I'm sorry, I don't know what else I can add, I would say, I guess, the only frame I would offer is, we need to recognize and realize that either or thinking is white supremacist thinking.

Brittany Battle (she/her): Yes.

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): And I guess, one of the things that I feel like movement work has been deeply paralyzed by is this notion that if I get engaged in the political process, that I'm somehow tainted- I'm too woke to get involved while our people are being killed, I'm too woke to get involved in the political process while people are dying on the street. Now, unless your like my brother over here, Brother Muhammad and is actually organizing a literal army from fly to do security in our community, you need to shut up and get somebody elected who can get resources to our communities that could actually help us keep our folks safe. Because if we don't have the capacity, the capacity has to come from somewhere and it's got to come from the government because that's our money, that's our tax dollars, we're paying- it's got to come from the nonprofit sector again, that's that's us. All right, and if it needs to come from business, it has to come from wherever it needs to come from, all right. I'll take the Bezos, I don't care how they made it, you know, okay, it needs to find its way onto the streets to impact our communities. That doesn't mean that we need to be, you know, I want to be careful with the language I use, that I mean we need to be out here, you know, street hustling out here like we, you know, reinventing capitalism- that's not what I'm talking about, but the work must be funded. So number one, we need to get out of this either or thinking, this way to woke to actually get engaged. Number two, I was saying, we need to do some research, we need to understand that if there was a war on drugs, if the war was the problem, right, then peace has-

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): got to be the answer, right, if the problem was a war on drugs, then, then the cure has got to be, I use the frame from warfare and healthcare, that we have to use a public health approach to ending gun violence. And so, we need to do some research. What does it mean for violence to be a public health issue? What are the social determinants of public health? Roll up your sleeves, open the crack, open a book, go online, look on the internet, Google public health, you know and figure out, what are the determinants? You know, I'm saying, how do we deal with poverty? How do we deal with employment? What do we deal with housing? How do we deal with education? How do we deal with mental health? How do we deal with trauma? We got to, you know, do a little bit of this work in understanding what actually causes violence. But then the third thing, I guess, is we got to organize. We got to organize and the vision that I really stand behind as it relates to organizing is getting an Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in your city that can really begin to get the data and get the resources, out of the police department, and then at least you have somewhere, for it to go to, right, can start to do that coordination and mobilization in the community. So, I'm hoping that those are some, I don't know, some practical way- change your mind, your ways of thinking, do some research and find yourself an Office of Neighborhood Safety Engagement. We call it ONSE, whatever you want to call it, at least one target to kind of push for in your city as you push for a reinvest, reimagine platform.

Terrance: And I would just say, you know, we have to understand the difference between peacemaking and peacekeeping. As many would say, peacekeeping is about sweeping the problem under the rug. The carceral state is about sweeping problems under the rug, sweeping people who are viewed as problems into a cage. I call it the devil's lair- and nobody gets healed in the devil's lair right. Peacemaking says let's pull up the rug and confront the ugliness so that we can actually heal and overcome. And so violence interrupters are doing peacemaking work, they're literally showing up on the ground where there is a heightened potential for violence and de escalating, letting cooler heads prevail, getting down to the roots of what's going on in an individual's life- so instead of handcuffs, okay, come with me let's go eat and let's get you linked up with some health care, with some mental health care, let's get you linked up with a job, let's get you linked up with a community that's going to come alongside of you. And you'd be surprised how often that literally will revolutionize someone's life. Michelle Alexander said that when you look at violent crime and you compare the data for joblessness- Black, Brown and white, purple, orange folks commit violent crimes at roughly the same rates. So what would it look like to create job programs with livable wages, right, with mentorships around that? Those are just some of the kinds of things that we can do that really get at the root. And the last thing I'll say as someone that does youth development work, is support youth workers, support the organizations, not these white savior organizations that come in and individualize the problem and look at our people as problems to be solved versus like, wonderful image of God-bearing people who have gifts the need to be nurtured. But fund those that are on the ground in a community, have a political analysis, and also understand the soul level work and they're trying to weld those two approaches together because, like Brother Delonte said, it's not an either or, it's the both and soul systems, it's policy change and individual change, it's political organizing and mental health, all of these things need to be brought together- and if we had the money, we could do it in a way that legit could transform our city.

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): Just very quick, I would just add make sure you take care of your interrupters, they need to be paid well, they need to have mental health breaks, they need to have therapy, they need to be, they need to be taken care of and don't over romanticize violence interruption work as though the people who are going into violence interruption work are somehow infallible people- because here's what will happen: the moment that you have an interrupter get arrested, the moment that you have interrupter get shot, it'll eat into the credibility of your work. It's going to happen, okay, because it's vulnerable people trying to police vulnerable people, so we have to make sure that we are building up capacity within our interruption spaces and interruption circles and also just creating an honest narrative around the fact that, just because people are credible in a community doesn't mean that they're not invulnerable to issues any more or any less then cops slip up every now and then, you're going to have an interrupter that is gonna have an issue- call them in before you call them out- and just work, you know work with them is what I'm saying. I don't want us to end this conversation and over-romanticize interruption work as a panacea, as though they are perfect because, again, the perfectionism is also a white supremacist thinking so let's just be kind of clear about that and know that these brothers and sisters, they can do amazing work but it's going to take a village, it's really going to take that village to hold all of us into account when we do slip up and we do fall, you know, get back up again and keep the work moving forward as well, I just wanted to make sure I add that piece, that's a really important piece.

Brittany Battle (she/her): I think what y'all just pointed out, with talking about how we can like, how this work can be done, is that the movement is multi-dimensional and folks who are with us on the ground during OccupyWSNC this summer have heard me say this a million times, right, the movement is multidimensional in that, what can you do? You have to figure out what you want to do first, right, because there's so many different directions that you can get involved in this work. From the individual level doing work like the violence interrupting type of programs on an interpersonal, one on one level. There's also work that needs to be done on the systems, right, and attacking those issues, like Brother Smith pointed out, from the root, right. We have to build political capacity, right. We have to be making sure our voices are heard on city council and county commissioner meetings, right- at the local level it's so- I mean even me up until a few years ago- you don't realize how crucial local politics are. They are making the decisions about how your neighborhoods are policed. Literally, they are making those decisions- the decisions that are made in city council meetings can determine whether or not your little brother gets picked up for smoking a blunt, like literally, that's the way that those decisions can impact you on an individual level. And so folks have to really just figure out how they want to get tapped in, right. And so the Forsyth County Police Accountability and Reallocation Committee is working on a bunch of ways for folks to get tapped into doing this work. We are consistently speaking to city council and county commissioners, matter of fact, tomorrow we will be back at the Public Safety Committee Meeting for Winston Salem City Council talking about the demands that we have around and police accountability reallocation and one of the things that we're calling for is for the grassroots organizations, the folks who are on the ground in Winston Salem and Forsyth county doing this work to be funded. There's no reason that police should be making 70, 80, 90,000 dollars and they are supposed to be fighting

Brittany Battle (she/her): -crime, when there are folks who are doing this work for free, right, and not being taken care of as Pastor Delonte just pointed out, right, like not getting that support and those resources, so we have to make sure our voices are heard. So make sure, y'all if this sounds like things that y'all can get behind- make sure you sign this petition that we have, that we've been working on for the past several weeks around our five demands. One is reallocation, the city council- excuse me, the WSPD budget is \$78 million dollars. That's a lot of money, y'all, that's a lot of money to not really be making big changes that they claim that they're making, right, when we have folks who are doing work for free, right, arranging truces- that is drastically reducing violence in our community and they're doing that work for free. So, that's important. The reallocation piece is important. We are also calling for the demilitarization of the WSPD and the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office. We should not have law enforcement, who are entering our communities with military style weapons, nor should they be approaching our communities in military style combat thought processes, right. So part of what we have to do is abolish the police inside our own minds that think that it's appropriate for our communities to be engaged in such a brutal manner, right, for no reason all of the time. And we saw that happening in Winston Salem when this young 15 year old girl was slammed to the ground, right, for trespassing. And so you know, we're working on things like ending cash bail in the county, getting a mental health crisis intervention unit that would call for mental health practitioners to respond to 911 calls when there's issues around mental health and not have the police show up because we know police with guns, who are trained to be violent, escalate those situations and we don't want to wait until someone gets hurt or killed in Winston Salem Forsyth County to make those changes. So definitely make sure y'all show up to the public safety meeting tomorrow, it's at six o'clock and it live streams on the Winston Salem Free Access Channel. Sign our petition, I'm sure folks are dropping that in the chat right now, and if you really are looking for more ways to get directly involved, send us an email, and we can say, you know as Pastor Delonte said, research has to be done, right, and that's one thing that we're heavy on trying to do with the Forsyth County Police Accountability and Reallocation Coalition- is making sure we have those numbers, right, and have the dollar figures, the the statistics around what it would look like to do some of these programs in Winston Salem. So a lot of that work has been done, we have all that information, we've shared it with city council members, with county commissioners. And now it's the responsibility of the community to say, 'Hey, y'all are not going to continue to ignore us'- right and 'y'all are not going to continue to pretend, as though we want to be policed in this way.' You know, they will kill us and say we enjoyed it if we don't speak out against it, right. So we have to make sure that we're using our voices to be heard. So I just appreciate y'all for being on this call and do y'all have any final words that y'all want to share, about the work that you're doing or calls to action for folks who are listening?

Anthony Smith (he/him): Just one thing I want to add: a lot of this work also comes down to the work of the imagination.

Brittany Battle (she/her): That's right.

Anthony Smith (he/him): That work is about shifting the narrative in our own communities. One of the things that we began is we began this practice of having a mock city council meeting

Anthony Smith (he/him): -in our community where we literally have people who play the mayor, Deputy, Mayor, what we call Mayor Pro Tem here, city council members, and we, the last one that we did, we imagined the congressional bill that Congressman John Lewis was trying to put forth with many others around reparations. We imagined a world where that had passed and we imagined a City Council who was trying to bring forth progressive policy and distribution of resources in the Community to fund the very things that some of y'all are talking about. And so we begin to engage in this practice because a lot of times people just can't see like they do, you know, what would it look like, then, we have all mostly young Black folks who are city council- we had a young Black, we had a sister, who was the mayor, who was 20 years old and they're leading and they're making, their passing policy and laws, not laws, but policy to shift distribution of resources in a various institutional structural way. And so part of that work is- we're going to have to get creative and challenge people's imagination- just given facts alone, just given a straight theory is good, but we got to find ways to engage in theatre, arts, music to shift the imagination.

Effrainguan Muhammad: First of all, I just wanted to say in conclusion, I want to thank you Sister Brittany, for the work that you have been doing over the last several months in the City of Winston Salem, the young people with you and the team that's with you and the coalition of organizations- that's inspiring because a lot of us, you know, we have few gray hairs or less hair and so we've been in this for a while, so it's always good to see younger people get into the battle- and so keep in that fight, because you're fighting a righteous fight and if you're fighting the righteous fight, God is on the side of the righteous, so I thank you. And it's, I think we all have to stay connected- that you know no little I's, no big you's- and I'm inspired by every brother and everyone on the call and we have to stay connected and learn from one another- lower our egos and learn from one another. Pastor Anthony came down and observed what they were doing- the wonderful work of the Nightcrawlers. What you know the Drum Majors Alliance is doing, Brother Terrence, I love him, that's my other brother. And then meeting Pastor Delonte to know he's doing Peace Walks in DC as we're doing peace walks here. So we can learn from one another and definitely connect with the brothers in Baltimore, Brother Andrew Mohammed and the group that they are working with, you know, an interfaith group of Black men and those who don't have any faith at all, but have a love for our community, so we have to stay connected- and I thank you Sister Brittany, for bringing us together, and you know this is Black History Month and we, as I think Pastor Anthony said or Brother Terrence said we have to read, and if you know me I'm gonna plug a book, and this is a book written by one of my brothers he's a part of our historical research department, his name is Demetrius Mohammed, you can go to researchminister.com and this is a book of information called *How To Police The Black Community*, in fact I'm going to send this, God willing, to Chief Catrina Thompson and Sheriff Kimbrough, but I think it's something that serves as a good model, to see some of the work that has been done in the community, and what good community law enforcement relationship can look like, especially without Black law enforcement officers. So I just wanted to plug that, thank you.

Terrance: There's this quote I stumbled across, I don't know its origin, but the person said, "Let everyone work for liberation in their own way, I would help all and hinder none".

Terrance: And so, all of us have a unique role, a unique piece to add to the struggle and let's just support one another, love one another, and continue to spur one another along towards freedom and flourishing in our communities. To that in, around imagination and political education- Drum Majors Alliance is doing a series of events for Black History Month, we're calling it "A More Beautiful and Radical History". Two things I want to plug real quick- on the 19th, we're doing a showing of the film *Judas and the Black Messiah*, which chronicles COINTELPROs infiltration into the Chicago Black Panther Party and the assassination of chairman, Fred Hampton, an incredible organizer. And so we're going to do that showing and our city is blessed to be the first Black Panther Party Chapter of the South and so we've got two so far, former Black Panther Party Chapter Members who will be there and sharing their thoughts, not only on the film, but what we can do to organize in the present. And then on February 28, we're doing Freedom Ride. Normally our Freedom Rides are like on a bus, but you know Corona is wreaking havoc, and so we can't do that- but we're going to do a virtual Freedom Ride, which basically tells the story of our city, from the perspective of Black folks- starting with our interest into this land, now known as Winston Salem, as enslaved people to the present. And so, if you check out Drum Major Alliance, I'll post the link in the chat. And, yeah thank you all, thanks Britt, thanks to the coalition- it's an honor to work with y'all, thank you.

Pastor Delonte Gholston(he/him): This was such an encouragement to my heart and to my soul, this is hard work and it's just always good and refreshing to know there are others doing the work and are serious about it. There's a passage in the Bible, the Book of Philemon, it says "You refresh my heart" and the Greek word that is used is this word, Splanchna, and it actually goes back to what Terrence was saying, because the word for heart, and Splanchna- that word it means gut, like you, this conversation has literally got down into my gut and it's refreshed me and so I'm just so grateful. Anything y'all need, I don't have all the answers, I forgot to tell you I do serve on a Police Reform Commission in DC that's putting together a series of recommendations that we're coming out with in March, so if anything that I'm learning here, I can share- DC actually is a bit farther along than a lot of cities as it relates to a transformation agenda- we're by far not there yet, there's a lot of work to be done, but if there's anything that I can do, I don't mind coming down, I got my brother lives in Rocky Mountain, you know what I'm saying, I got family in Durham- so it ain't nothing for me to be on the road- so just let me know and I'm there.

Brittany Battle (she/her): I appreciate y'all, I appreciate this conversation. Folks if y'all are watching, you'll see us back in a couple weeks with another conversation, stay tapped in, follow Hate out of Winston, Drum Majors Alliance, Triad Abolition Project- I'm on social media Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, to keep up to date with what's happening with the coalition here in the county and definitely, you know as you've been encouraged, find a way to get tapped into the work, there's a way that we all can, you know, move from the way that we're called and lead to contribute to Black liberation because it's going to take all of us to make this this load lighter and to make the goal actually achievable. So I appreciate y'all, take care and y'all have a good night, be safe.

