

The Shocking Quote That Exposes the State of 'The Hood'

The quote was so shocking that I'm shocked it didn't get more attention.

When you hear it, you want to put your head in your hands and weep.

In biblical days, you would have torn your garments in mourning.

How in the world did this happen to our nation?

A 17-year-old Miami teen named Trevon Johnson, a student at D. A. Dorsey Technical College, was shot and killed by a female homeowner who encountered him after he had broken into her house.

But Johnson's relatives were very upset, saying he didn't deserve it. As his cousin Nautika Harris commented, "I don't care if she have her gun license or any of that. That is way beyond the law—way beyond."

She also said—and this is the quote that is so shocking—"You have to look at it from every child's point of view that was raised in the hood. You have to understand ... how he going to get his money to have clothes to go to school? You have to look at it from his point-of-view."

What a tragic indictment on the state of America in 2016.

Can you imagine another time in our history when words like this could have been spoken? And has there been anything quite like "the hood" that this woman describes, a place where the family is so shattered that burglary is considered a natural

way for a child to get money for his school clothes?

Of course, there's no excuse for this young man's actions and there's no justification for his cousin's words.

I state this emphatically, so no one misunderstands me.

At the same time, it would seem that Trevon was born into this world with two strikes against him, while his cousin's sentiments describe a world that most of us can't relate to. And it is that world—"the hood"—that I want to focus on.

Presuming that this young man grew up in a fatherless home (or, at the least, a broken home), the odds were heavily stacked against him. As my friend Dr. Frank Turek pointed out, children from fatherless homes are:

- seven times more likely to live in poverty;
- six times more likely to commit suicide;
- more than twice as likely to commit crime;
- more than twice as likely to become pregnant out of wedlock;
- worse off academically and socially;
- worse off physically and emotionally when they reach adulthood.

He also observed that children from fatherless homes account for:

- 60 percent of America's rapists;
- 63 percent of America's youth suicides;
- 70 percent of America's long-term prison inmates;
- 70 percent of America's reform school attendees;
- 71 percent of America's teenage pregnancies;

- 71 percent of America's high school dropouts;
- 72 percent of America's adolescent murderers;
- 85 percent of America's youth prisoners;
- 85 percent of America's youth with behavioral disorders;
- 90 percent of America's runaways.

Focusing on black America, Professor Walter Williams, himself an African American, noted that, "Today the overwhelming majority of black children are raised in single female-headed families. As early as the 1880s, three-quarters of black families were two-parent. In 1925 New York City, 85 percent of black families were two-parent. One study of 19th-century slave families found that in up to three-fourths of the families, all the children had the same mother and father."

How dramatically things have changed.

Now, to be perfectly clear, I am not here to ascribe blame regarding who is responsible for this breakdown in the family, although there are some who see the entire welfare system as another, intentional attempt by some white Americans to keep black Americans oppressed and enslaved.

My point instead is to say this: Whatever has caused this tragic state of affairs and whoever is to blame, this is our shared problem as Americans, and there is no government program or political party or presidential candidate who can solve it. We must solve it together, and the ultimate solution must be found in the church.

Somehow, through evangelism, discipleship, and holistic ministry these families must be rebuilt—and they include white families and Hispanic families and Asian families along with black families. (And we cannot leave out Native American families on reservations, where suicide, depression, alcoholism, and sexual abuse are rampant.)

This means that, rather than simply ridiculing the words of Trevon's cousin, we need also to hear them as a tragic wake-up call, a reminder that, right here in America, there are people who think that crime is the natural way for a teen to provide for his needs.

To repeat: There's no justification for Trevon's actions and his cousin's words are ridiculous. I also understand that some will read this account as yet another example of a young thug getting what he deserved, also providing a testament to the importance of people being legally armed.

But to do so is to miss the larger story of the destruction of the family in inner-city America and the tragedy of another life cut short by the consequences of crime.

Trevon's cousin said, "He was not supposed to die like this. He had a future ahead of him. Trevon had goals ... he was a funny guy, very big on education, loved learning."

But if young men like Trevon are to have a real future, it will require revival and reformation on a massive, national scale.

This is yet another reason why we need to pray with fervor for God to do what only He can do as we, on our part, do everything we can do to make a difference in our broken neighborhoods and cities.

A terrible tragedy has happened in our generation, and at the very least, we owe it to God and to our neighbor to let it wound our hearts.

A cry has risen from "the hood." Let's not stop up our ears.