

Hood

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of it.

We were shooting the video for instance, there was a police officer who was giving us a little hassle, what are you guys doing, what's going on here? And so we said we're shooting a video about gentrification. And she said, don't use that word. I asked why? What's wrong with the word? I'm a black man, my director's a white guy; we went to high school together. What's wrong with the word? And she said, it means to black people that white people are coming to take your community away.

Well, that's not what it means to me. You know what I'm saying? There's so much more. There are racial implications – but it's not just about race. There's class, there's economics.

story earlier this month that said part of the reason economic inequality dropped in Seattle is essentially because of ethnic cleansing, pushing people of color to the suburbs outside the city. Did you see that?

Draze: In some ways it sounds good, right? If you're looking at the numbers I hear you. But the lens is important.

For instance in my community, my daughter cannot go to the bakery that I once went to. That matters, because when you're talking about leaving a legacy, and passing things one generation to the next, it's important. That's what community is.

You have a people displaced from Africa, if you will, here they are in America and they still cannot plant roots. That's huge. How do you leave a legacy?



Draze's new video, 'It Ain't the Same,' features many shots of Seattle landmarks that have been shut down, torn down or otherwise wiped out from gentrification, including his childhood home in the Central District, above.

tle?

Draze: You know to be honest with you I focus so much on the south and the central area. It was mind-blowing for me to sit down with the guy who directed the video, he's white, we went to high school together at Franklin High School. And we were talking about gentrification, for me I was seeing it through my own lens. And then he just started talking about Green Lake, and Capitol Hill, and I was going hunh? What do you mean?

And he said, gentrification is happening in all our communities. And I said, okay, let

er. I think some people in this country – we tend to be so consumed with what we want that we don't care who it affects. And so at the end of the day to solve gentrification, were all going to have to sacrifice a little bit.

For example with my music, I have watched people of other cultures – I'm talking about Zimbabwe – I've watched people of other cultures want to take it and do whatever they want to do with the music. But it's hurtful to me, as a person who is from Zimbabwe, to go, hey man, you're playing "The Little Mermaid" on a marimba. That's not okay with me. You know

The idea is, when you change these buildings you don't just change the buildings – you change the people who frequent the buildings, and thus you end up changing a community

TSN: How do you personally define gentrification?

Draze: For me it's the shifting of the community, like a ripple effect. Does that make sense? Behind the scenes, a shift in the class and the status and the values of the community, via financing – it's done economically — that inevitably drives people out. So I could no longer afford to live here.

And there are other factors that go with it. That, in the simplest form is how I view it personally.

TSN: What I've heard people talking about lately is that it's more than just a force of displacement, it's something that drives out the best and brightest people from the entire region. So it amounts to a significant brain drain. The Associated Press wrote s

Wealth in America is passed down from one generation to the next to the next. We can't pass wealth down from one generation to another, so in Seattle the numbers might reflect one thing, but realistically, we don't have our own radio station. We have no way to get our information out. There's no way to get our story out. There's no way to connect as a community.

And gentrification divides people. Yeah we're spread out in all the areas in Seattle. The numbers might look good, now we're out in Kent, some of us, and we might have a home that might be worth a little bit more, but our community is suffering. And if the community continues to suffer and our people continue to suffer, it's a problem.

TSN: Do you think are some other hotspots of gentrification right now in Seat-

me start to look at this through your lens, and if you look at it through mine — I think the journey he and I went on in creating this video was amazing, because I was able to see that, yes, Green Lake and in Capitol Hill, it's actually being gentrified but maybe not at the same rate, maybe not with the same intensity. But it's still happening.

TSN: What do you think is the most important thing to get into a story about this amazing project you just did that shook up the whole town of Seattle?

Draze: What I would really like people to take away from this is: Care for one another.

what I'm saying?

I love that you love the music, there's an appreciation there, but there has to be something on this side of the fence where you go, hey man, how do I do this a respectful way?

And I think it's the same thing with us living together, in community. How do I live in community with you and still be respectful to you? And that comes from conversation. But I'm determined my music is going to make a difference. I'm determined and I'm not going to stop until change is made.

For more on his work go to www.draze206.com.

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