

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE EMERGENCE OF A LOCAL MEMORIAL LANDSCAPE IN THE AFTERMATH OF VIOLENT TRAGEDY: A STUDY OF BALTIMORE'S DAWSON MURDERS, 2002-2005.

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Memorial landscapes are inextricably linked to the processes of national, regional, local, and individual identity formation; and are tightly bound to notions of place and space. A rich body of literature exists in the social sciences on the structure and function of national scale memorial landscapes. A nascent body of literature on informal memorial works and landscapes is emerging in the social sciences. The current study bridges these bodies of literature by investigating the collection of memorial interventions as elements of a single memorial landscape and by focusing on local, human-scale remembrance over a three years period. A triangulated, multi-method, qualitative research design has been applied to the investigation of the material, discursive, and representational components of the memorial landscape which has emerged in Baltimore's Oliver neighborhood in response to the murder of all seven members of the Dawson family on October 16, 2002. The memorial landscape is viewed here as the manifestation of the community's negotiation

between the production of space and the making of place. The data reveal that the initial years in the formation of a local-scale memorial landscape are bound up with complex sociopolitical processes. The outcomes of this research are that the formation of the local-scale memorial landscape is a complex and dynamic expression of sociopolitical identity and power; that memory work is transformative with regard to space and place; that there is merit in a more inclusive definition of the memorial landscape; that multiple geographic scales produce the memorial landscape; and that participation in local-scale memory work diminishes over time. Future research should focus upon the variability of memory work across race, class, gender, faith and geography at the local scale. Such an investigation has the potential to yield greater degrees of understanding of complexity and ambiguity of local-scale identity formation..

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By

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Dedication

To the memory of:

Angela Maria Dawson (1966- 2002)

Carnell Dawson (1959-2002)

Carnell Dawson, Jr. (1992-2002)

Juan Ortiz (1990-2002)

Kevin Dawson (1993-2002)

Keith Dawson (1993-2002)

LaWanda Ortiz (1986-2002)

and

Jermaine Jordan (1983-1998)

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Chapter One: Introduction

This is a study of an emerging local-scale memorial landscape. The *raison d'être* for this landscape is the October 16, 2002 arson murder of all seven members of the Dawson family in the Oliver neighborhood of East Baltimore. The Dawson family was murdered in retaliation for their defiance of local drug criminals for calling police to report crimes. The murders touched off international outrage and persists as an intense topic in Baltimore.

This study employs a multi-method qualitative research design to document and analyze the memorial landscape which has emerged in the wake of the violent tragedy. Primary and secondary data reveal the complex cultural, political, and social words and deeds directed at constructing a fitting meaning and legacy for the lives and deaths of the members of the Dawson family. The material and representational acts which have occurred through the close of 2005 constitute the memorial landscape. The study shows how a neighborhood which was formerly a forgotten inner city space became a place obsessed with remembering. The study reveals how the Dawson murders delineated a tolerance threshold regarding the degree to which law-abiding citizens would accept the occupying force of drug criminals.

Central to this study is the relationship between the concepts of space and place to explain the emergent landscape. The “way of seeing” employed here is that landscapes are the outcomes of the negotiation between the production of space and the making of place. In specific terms this means that the process of wresting power from space-dominating drug criminals and making place through attempts to honor the Dawson family has yielded the memorial landscape. This is not a landscape set in stone, but a

dynamic landscape which evolves as a reflection of Oliver's efforts to incorporate the Dawson murders into its identity. The necessity for an enabling force for place-making has promoted "remembering the Dawsons" to the position of an anchoring community goal. Just as goals such as adequate housing and economic development are promoted in some neighborhoods, Dawson remembrance is promoted in Oliver. Residents, local activists, clergy, politicians, and others have used the Dawson murders as a source of social and political will to reclaim a place and a voice in the future of their neighborhood. This process of building the memory of the Dawson family into the place has transformed the ability of criminals, police, and other officials to control Oliver's space. The relationship between the incorporation of memory and the control of space has yielded renewed geographical ambiguity in Oliver. Prior to the murder, the space of the neighborhood was easy to understand as one administered by an illegitimate drug market. The period following the murder has animated the neighborhood with the place-enabling work of remembering.

1.1 Research Frame

A rich body of literature exists in the humanities and social sciences on the structure and function of memorial landscapes (Harvey 1979; Foote 1997; Till 2005; Bodnar 1993; Marling 1988; Young 1993; Sturken 1997; Linenthal 2003). A broad set of disciplines value the concept of landscape for its role as both a container for memory and as a force in the production of memory. Such scholarship focuses on the study of formally sanctioned mourning and memory works and is typically national in scope and

scale. These studies usually take the form of analysis of a single memorial work or memorial landscape that refer to a particular topic such as war remembrance.

A nascent body of literature on informal memorial works and landscapes is emerging in the social sciences (Sturken 1997; Kear and Steinberg 1999; Azaryahu 1996, Doss 2002). These informal memorials are numerous in kind and have been called spontaneous memorials, peoples' memorials, and makeshift shrines. Examples of such works include: tragedy site memorials, yard shrines, indoor shrines, roadside memorials, memorial wall art, community gardens, public epitaphs, and the appropriation of public space for performances, vigils or other ceremonies. Informal memorials often stand as visual metaphors which refer to tragic events in print and electronic media. These informal memorials are often precursors to formally sanctioned memory works.

Memorial landscapes permit insight into the socio-cultural meaning of death, grief, mourning, and memory. Memorial landscapes are inextricably linked to the processes of national, regional, local, and individual identity formation; and are bound to notions of place and space. Across geographic and temporal scales, group identity and integrity is rooted in and maintained through the collective memory which is embodied -- materially and imaginatively -- in landscapes.

Duncan and Duncan (2001) suggest that "landscapes are integral to the performance of social identities. Collective memories, narrative of communities, invented traditions repeated, performed, and occasionally contested; more often they are stabilized or fixed in artefactual forms" (390). Public historian Dolores Hayden (2003) suggests that memory introduces an ambiguousness in the relationship between space, place, and landscape: "places make memories cohere in complex ways. People's

experiences of the urban landscape intertwine the sense of place and the politics of space” (133). The tension, cohesiveness, and multi-directional discourses in Hayden’s comment suggests that landscapes are embodying mediators. In general, the literature suggest the embodying, mediating, contested, and tensive relations between landscape and memorialization.

The underlying notion which enables this intersection is the diaphoric nature of landscapes and of the pairing of space and place as expression of synthesis through juxtaposition. Tuan (1978) offers a useful explanation of diaphor:

Take the word “landscape.” It is a diaphor in the sense that it derives its tensive meaning through combining two dissimilar entities, “domain” and “scenery.” Domain belongs to the vocabulary of political and economic discourse. A domain or an estate can be surveyed or mapped; it can be viewed objectively from a theoretical point high above. Scenery, on the other hand, is an aesthetic term. It is an individual and personal perspective from a position on the ground. The diaphoric meaning of landscapes lies not in one image (concretely known) pointing to another, but rather in both – equally important – imaginatively synthesized. (366)

I assert that the compound parts: ‘land’ and ‘scape’ -- are easily exchanged with ‘space’ and ‘place.’ Broad conceptions of space as an objective domain and place as a subjective scene are accepted by geographers and others. The synthesis represented in the word landscape is possible and necessary in conceptions of space and place. As Tuan states, the meaning “lies not in one image” but in the imaginative synthesis of both (ibid). The “tensive” relationship embodied in “landscape” is also present in the relationship between space and place. The authority of the surveyed and planned space is in a tensive relationship with the mobility of the contingent, vernacular place. Tension in this sense refers to stretching of bodies rather than conflict between bodies. The outcome of the tensive interaction of space and place, I argue, is the landscape. The concepts of space

and place are useful as the constituent parts of the embodying concept of landscape. Therefore, a central theme of this dissertation is that a landscape is ceaselessly formed as the mediating embodiment of the tensive relationship between space and place. An objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate the value of this way of seeing through the documentation and analysis of the emergence of a local-scale memorial landscape.

1.2 Research Questions

This dissertation addresses the following questions:

Question 1: How does the local-scale memorial landscape emerge in the years immediately following violent tragedy?

Question 2: How are memorial interventions into the built environment in the aftermath of violent tragedy implicated in the formation of the memorial landscape?

Question 3: How are the discursive and representational responses to and representations of violent tragic events implicated in the formation of the memorial landscape?

Question 4: Through the lens of social memory, how is the sociocultural landscape revealed as a manifestation of the relationship between space and place.

Question 5: How is the power of collective memory employed as an enabling force of place-making? Specifically, in a setting with few discernable qualities of place, how does the memorial response to violent tragedy perturb disabling forces of space and project enabling forces of place?

1.3 The need for this research

This research addresses a gap in the literature on memorial landscapes by focusing attention at the local scale over a three year period. A focus on local, human-scale remembrance contributes a level of analysis not often seen in the literature. The majority of memorial landscapes literature focuses on national scale remembrance of people and events long passed. Valuable as these studies are, they tend toward a view of

memory as requiring a certain temporal distance in order to carry meaning. This dissertation also addresses a gap in the literature on social memory in low-income, inner-city, African American communities. While this study does not address the topics explicitly, race and class are the dominant social forces governing everyday life in Baltimore and other cities. The murder of the Dawson family is seen by some as a symptom of the neglect of inner-city African America. The manifestations of historical race and class based injustices are evident in neighborhoods such as Oliver. Some believe that the murder of the Dawson family is such a manifestation. I do not dispute this claim, but I do not address it here. This dissertation is the study of how a people responded to a violent tragedy, and not about the forces which lead to the tragedy. The documentation and analysis of an emerging local landscape serves as an important contribution to future studies of the Dawson/Oliver memorial landscape. This dissertation will serve an important role if I (or someone else) return to the topic twenty years from now in 2026 to examine the Dawson legacy.

The research presented here contributes to the literature on landscapes in human geography. This study demonstrates how a landscape may be seen as the mediating embodiment of the relationship between space and place. The notion that the human geographer must focus on space or place does not comport with my view of either concept. I believe in the value of the relationship between the concepts and the role of landscapes in reflecting that relationship. The diaphoric nature of the landscape concept lends itself to space and place as a body through which their force, function, and character may be revealed and experienced. Landscape is the material, discursive, and imaginative assemblage of the forces of place and space.

1.4 The organization of chapters

The following chapters proceed through the presentation of: a theoretical framework, research methods, site description, data, discussion and conclusions. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature on sociocultural landscapes, landscapes of memory and death, and ties to the concepts of space and place. The chapter establishes the connection of landscapes as the mediating embodiment of the relationship between space and place. Chapter Three presents a description of: the research methodology, primary and secondary data, field work experiences, and research motivations. The second part of Chapter Three presents the economic, political, and social context in which the Dawson murders occurred. This section includes physical and social descriptions of the Oliver neighborhood. Chapter Three closes with the presentation of an event which serves as a qualitative baseline against which to judge the responses to the Dawson murders. The event, the Jordan-Simms affair, reveals a neighborhood environment in which elders were pitted against children and youth in a battle for the protection of space. The event reveals how Oliver residents and the City of Baltimore were unable to incorporate the murder of a young person by a senior citizen due to a lack of place attributes.

Chapters Four and Five present primary and secondary data on the life and death of the Dawson family, the immediate response to their murder, and the response in the neighborhood and around Baltimore through the end of 2005. The data reveal three narratives which emerged in response to the murders. The first narrative is the need to keep the Dawsons themselves in the hearts and minds of residents. The second narrative is of the Dawsons as exemplars of law-abiding citizens who stood up for their right for a

peaceful place to live. The third narrative is of the Dawson murders as a symptom of decades of neglect of inner city Baltimore. Chapter Six presents a discussion of the transformations which occurred in Oliver from 2002 to 2005. The chapter closes with a discussion of the findings of the dissertation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Through the lens of the socio-cultural landscape this dissertation examines the formation of local memory in the aftermath of violent tragedy. The memorial landscape is viewed here as the assemblage of the negotiation between the production of space and the making of place. This framework is applied to the investigation of the material, discursive, and representational components of a local scale memorial landscape. The chapter begins with the introduction and critique of the socio-cultural landscape as the embodiment of, and mediating field, for the material and imaginative landscape which results from the tense relationship between place and space. The chapter then proceeds by framing the relationship between landscape and memory. This is followed by a review of the memorial landscapes literature in geography. The chapter closes by connecting the conceptual framework with the Dawson murders.

2.1 The Socio-cultural landscape in contemporary human geography:

The study of cultural landscapes in geography has undergone considerable evolution since Sauer's (1925) definitive work and the resultant birth of the Berkeley School. As Mitchell (2003) states, Sauer's "overriding goal was to use the landscape as a heuristic tool to get at an understanding of the culture that made the landscape" (238). In the period marked by the humanistic turn in human geography the dominant approach to landscapes were as the "unwitting autobiography" (Lewis 1979, 12) of people groups to be interpreted by geographers. The wider introduction of social and cultural theory into geography in the 1980s and 1990s allowed geographers to mobilize theories of culture in

ways not previously practiced. Several geographers have noted that the cultural landscapes concept in geography may be “waning” (Mitchell 2003) and “may be as good as its going to get” (Henderson 2003). Each of these authors, as I do here, presents directions and ideas for the future “growth and adaptation” (Cresswell 2003).

There are several key treatments of the etymology of the word landscape (Jackson 1980; Olwig 1996) and genealogy of the use of the landscape concept in geography since Sauer (Meinig 1979; Schein 1997; Mitchell 2002; Henderson 2003). These authors trace the word and concept from its Germanic roots through to the current meanings and applications in contemporary human geography. I refrain from repeating the lengthy genealogy of the concept and opt to present a detailed look into contemporary conceptions. This section frames a conception of socio-cultural landscapes, how landscapes are constituted, the purpose of landscapes, the value of landscapes, and the relationship landscape shares with the concepts of space and place. The goal of this treatment is not to forward one position (i.e. Marxian, post-structuralist, humanist) but to carefully draw from each of these traditions to compose a critically sound conception of landscape as an integrative and mediating embodiment. The spirit of this approach to conceptualizing landscape is read in Matless’ (2003) suggestion that:

Landscape is not the exclusive property of cultural geography. Landscape becomes a matter of political, economic, and emotional value, and its capacity to move through different regimes of value lends its committed fascination, makes it an object of argument and care. (227)

2.1.1 The socio-cultural landscape as embodied moment

Defining a concept such as landscape which is used so freely in common parlance and in myriad disciplines is a slippery proposition. Let us allow the prescient advice of landscape historian J.B. Jackson (1984) to guide the endeavor:

Whatever definition of landscape we finally reach, to be serviceable it will have to take into account the ceaseless interaction between the ephemeral, the mobile, the vernacular on the one hand, and the authority of legally established, premeditated permanent forms on the other (148).

While structuralists, post-structuralists, and others may differ with the particularities of the quote above, it remains a reasonable guideline as a way of thinking about landscapes in contemporary critical human geography. Jackson's counsel also resounds with regard to the relational dependency of the concepts of space and place.

Most contemporary conceptions of the term agree that landscapes involve some sort of collection of material and representational elements. From a political economy perspective a landscape can be viewed as "the social embodiment of the relations and struggles that went into building it" (Mitchell, 2003, 240). Landscapes are the "concretization" and "reification" of the complex social relations which occur at scales from the local to the global (ibid). As Blomley (2004) notes, landscapes should not be considered as a field between two political, economic, or other poles, but as complex embodiments of "articulations, flows, and heterogeneity" (53). Refuting previous conceptions of landscape as scene or backdrop to contests over power, Blomley asserts that landscape "is itself created through that contest, serving in turn to become a vital symbolic and practical component in future contestations" (54). Duncan (1999) affirms landscapes as a means for the practice of power (233).

From an ontological perspective, landscapes can be conceived of as the “presented layout of a set of places” (Casey 2001, 405). Casey (ibid) juxtaposes landscapes with space and place as “a congeries or a composition of places, their intertangled skein” (417). Consistent with Massey (1994), Casey’s conception highlights the notion that landscapes are composed of the complex and somewhat messy intersections of the socio-cultural forces. Casey’s description suggests landscape as a woven composition. This conception of landscape as a “matrix of places” connects scales from the local to the global. Landscape’s relationship with space, however, has scarcely been investigated. The current research contributes to bridging this gap.

The notion of landscapes as the real and imagined embodiment of intersecting socio-cultural forces is accompanied by conceptions of landscape as nexus or moment. Olwig (1996), who has been influential in his argument to recapture the substantive nature of landscapes, suggests that landscapes are a “nexus of community, justice, nature, and environmental quality” (630-631). As each of these components are dynamic, the character of the landscape as nexus varies over time and space, and in place. Such variability is consistent with Mitchell’s (2003) argument that a landscape is a “complex moment in a system of social reproduction” (240). As a moment, Mitchell highlights the potential for landscapes to become site of struggle as fixity in the landscape is not assured: “[l]andscape is thus a form of social regulation. The structured permanence that is landscape both shapes and regulates social contest at the same time as it is shaped through and regulated by social contest. Duncan and Ley (1993), focusing on the pluralism of landscapes as text, suggest that landscapes themselves exist in moments defined by greater or lesser degrees of fixedness.

Schein (1997), in a seminal paper on landscapes, suggests that a landscape “becomes one moment framed by and constitutive of larger discourses” (676). As discourse materialized, landscapes are activated into dynamic representations of competing socio-cultural narratives, concepts, and ideologies. The work of the cultural geographer is to interpret and interrogate the landscape at a particular moment to uncover that landscapes “position within a number of discourses” (ibid). The cultural landscape normalizes socio-cultural relations as embodied discourse and reveals the landscape “as the locus of articulated social relations” (ibid) similar to Massey’s (1993) notion of progressive place. In its status as a dynamic field stretched between the forces of space and place, the “landscape-as-text is unstable and requires constant reinterpretation” (ibid).

Schein’s conception of a momentary landscape which exists in a system of larger discourses – themselves each implicated in the production of landscapes – aligns with the notion of landscapes as nexus. Regarding the power geometry of the relationship between structure/agency and strategy/tactics, Schein adopts Foucault’s conception of power as “both netlike and circulating” (ibid):

Understood as a material moment in a recurring flow of information / ideals / actions / power, the cultural landscape exists as a crucial point in and of power, as a place where action can contribute to, as well as be constricted by, the ideals that cohere the discursive network. Through the landscape, the human agent is both object and subject. (676)

Landscape discourse is generated by neighborhood associations, architectural and historic preservation movements, economic development initiatives, neighborhood associations, consumption patterns, policing theory and practices, etc. Considered in their socio-cultural context and material form, the collective embodiment of these forces yield a discursive landscape.

The notion of landscapes as intersecting embodiments of socio-cultural forces existing in spatial nexus and temporal moments is useful as a conception of landscape. It will be made clear below that the character of these intersection are by no means structured or neat, but characterized by heterogeneous fluxes and flows of socio-cultural forces. Through the lens of memory, I argue below that landscape is the tensive field across which the ambiguous forces of space and place are embodied.

2.1.2 Landscape as physical and temporal stage

Writing from an ethno-geographic perspective on the memory politics of modern Berlin, Till (2005) claims that “landscape representations are often used by individuals and groups to frame contemporary claims to the past and communicate understandings of social identity” (67). This suggests the depth and portability of stories which comprise and are enacted by landscapes. Till states that “landscapes become central characters in the stories that symbolize the past as well as the future” (ibid). The materiality and imagination of landscape can be enacted as a narration of eyewitness testimony to historical events and social interactions. Mitchell (2003) argues that landscape provides “a stage upon which capital circulates...for the production and reproduction of social life” (241). Mitchell’s Marxian and dramaturgical uses of the “production” of landscapes suggests a performative notion of landscapes. From a visual representation perspective, Cosgrove (2003) asserts that “landscape serves to focus attention to the visual and visible aspects of [socio-cultural] relations” (Cosgrove 249). Landscapes and meaning are outcomes of the planned and unplanned visual ordering of material and imagination in space. Mitchell (2003) reinforces, however, that the visual appearance of the landscape alone reveals little about how it was made. In order to ‘read’ the visual,

one must determine and characterize the “sets of social relations [that] constitute” the culture (242).

Linking Till, Mitchell, and Cosgrove in this way highlights the narrative, performative, and dramaturgical potential of landscapes. One may say that the negotiation of the ambiguous forces of place and space occur through landscape-as-stage. Cosgrove (2003) asserts that “all spatial activity is consciously or unconsciously performative” (265). The tensive relationship opens and constitutes a surface for the performance of socio-cultural interactions. More than just a frame, landscape acts as a force in shaping the possibilities, limitations, and boundaries of interactions. This usage of stage is intended not as a platform for the performance of spectacle, as it might be for extraordinary landscapes. Rather, stage is offered here as a simple standing place for the production and reproduction of ordinary landscapes – even if the production is in response to extraordinary events. “Landscape-as-stage” is also offered in the temporal sense of a period of development or a period marked by a certain station or position. This usage is consistent with the general notions that landscapes exists as moments or nexus. Landscape as a temporal stage offers an observable position within and condition of the ambiguity of place and space. Landscape can be said to provide stages for the production of social interactions and embody temporal stages or conditions. Landscapes which function as and in stages enable the diaphoric work of imaginative synthesis

2.1.3 The mediating function of the socio-cultural landscape

Those who rely upon the landscape concept in geography value its utility as a theoretical and analytical tool which serves to unify and mediate socio-cultural interactions. Matless (2003) suggests that the concept of landscape is important “in

terms of its capacity not only to bring together different regimes of value and move between disciplines, but to cross supposed epistemological hierarchies” (227). Eliciting Latour (1993), Matless suggests that a landscape may perform as a “delicate shuttle” (5) weaving together matters often held apart. Schein (2003) suggests that there is value in “landscape’s role in mediating social and cultural reproduction works through its ability to stand for something; norms, values, fears, and so on” (203). Duncan and Ley (1993) refer to landscapes as “community builders” (17) given their capacity to consolidate shared meanings. Gold and Revill (2000) affirm the shared nature of landscapes creation despite the fact that the rationale for creating landscapes and the intended meanings of landscapes vary across place and time. The questions become: how does this process of landscape as mediator occur? Through which mechanisms does landscape build community, mediate socio-cultural reproduction, and bridge value regimes?

Following Tuan, Olwig (2002) suggests that the mediating function of landscapes comes through diaphor: the negotiation of meaning through juxtaposition and synthesis.

Let us recall Tuan (1978) in order to understand diaphor:

Take the word “landscape.” It is a diaphor in the sense that it derives its tensive meaning through combining two dissimilar entities, “domain” and “scenery.” Domain belongs to the vocabulary of political and economic discourse. A domain or an estate can be surveyed or mapped; it can be viewed objectively from a theoretical point high above. Scenery, on the other hand, is an aesthetic term. It is an individual and personal perspective from a position on the ground. The diaphoric meaning of landscapes lies not in one image (concretely known) pointing to another, but rather in both – equally important – imaginatively synthesized. (366)

In addition to activating the notion of diaphor, Tuan’s explication affirms contemporary conceptions of landscape as the material and imaginative synthesis of social interactions.

As a geographic concept, landscape is unique in its ability to embody, communicate, and

shape the vectors of which it is constituted. Tuan's statement, with minor modification could very well refer to the relationship between space and place. Space as domain and place as scenery are consistent with the relational conception. Tuan's use of the phrase "tensive meaning" affirms the potential for a useful linkage between space, place, and landscape. Specifically, the power of landscape to embody tension through diaphor.

2.2 Memorial Landscapes

This section sets forth a conception of memorial landscapes. The section begins by drawing upon Casey's (2000; 2001) notions of place-memory and the role of landscape in memorial embodiment and evocation. Connerton (1989), Lefebvre (1991), and Nora (1989) are then employed to explicate the social processes of the inscription and incorporation of memory into memorial landscapes. A review of the geographic literature on memorial landscapes follows. This literature reveals landscapes as contested, ambiguous, variegated embodiments of intersecting threads of memory.

2.2.1 Place-memory and landscape

The work of phenomenologist Edward S. Casey represents an extensive engagement of philosophy and geography. His work on the fate of place, place memory, and landscape has informed contemporary uses of these concepts across the social sciences and humanities. Of particular value to the current study is Casey's (2000) conception of place-memory through which he questions the preoccupation with memory as fundamentally a temporal concept. Casey's focus, rather, is on the embodied nature of memory:

To be embodied is ipso facto to assume a particular perspective and position; it is to have not just a point of view but a place in which we are situated. It is to occupy a portion of space from out of which we both undergo given experiences and remember them....As embodied existence opens onto place, indeed takes place in place and nowhere else, so our memory or what we experience in place is likewise place-specific: it is bound to place as to its own basis. (182)

Key to the embodied notion of memory is Casey's treatment of the relational basis of space and place. Spaces are abstract, open, isotropic, and unspecified. For Casey space "possesses no points of attachment onto which to hang our memories, much less to retrieve them" (186). Place, on the other hand, "serves to situate one's memorial life, to give it 'a name and local habitation'" (184). Place presents cues, protuberant features, and forceful vectors of memory (186). Casey offers the example of an undifferentiated vacant lot that is transformed into a "memorable place" by the construction of a house upon it (186). Casey argues for the "stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences" (186). The notion of a stabilizing persistence aligns with popular conceptions of place.

Casey (2001) refers to landscape as "the transitional domain that links...place and space, self and other" (418). He (2000) conceives of landscape as contributing to the "memorial evocativeness" of place in three ways: by its variegation, its sustaining character, and its expressiveness (198). Casey argues that the existence and structure of landscape is borne from the "ongoing proliferation of irregularities" and of "expected and unexpected obtrusions" (198). The variegated projections which define landscape allow memories to be slowed, arrested, and "caught-in-place" (ibid). Landscapes "abidingly sustaining capacity" is supported through the spatial forms of perimeter and field. Perimeter provides functional limitations while field upholds the particular actions which takes place in it (199). Together, Casey argues, perimeter and field provide landscape

“its ability to underlie a potentially immense stock of memories and to ramify into our lives” (199). Casey argues that the expressiveness of landscape is tied to its “inherent emotionality” (199). Evidence of this is offered through the emotional claim and resonance that “special places” contain and engender. The association of vivid memories – positive and negative – to special places in the landscape is a function of landscape expressiveness (199). Casey’s phenomenological conceptions of place-memory and landscape are useful as we now consider the social production of memorial landscapes.

2.2.2 Incorporation and inscription at lieux de memoire

Connerton (1989), in his seminal treatment of social memory, states that every recollection, however personal, “exists in relationship with a whole ensemble of notions which many others possess...this is to say with the whole material and moral life of the societies of which we are a part” (36). Connerton suggests that versions of the past are amassed through the practices of incorporation and inscription. The former involves the messages sent between people who are in one another’s presence. Incorporating actions may be intentional or unintentional. Inscribing actions involve the intentional material storage of information in formal and informal, but intentional ways. The cumulative result of these actions is “an organized body of expectations based on recollection” (6). This is reminiscent of Arendt’s (1958) comment that “the organization of the polis...is a kind of organized remembrance” (198).

Lefebvre (1991) and Nora (1989) provide theoretical grounding for the actions of memorial inscription and incorporation in geographic space. In general, each characterizes the product of these actions as the textured attachment of memory to sites.

In his articulation of the social production of space, Lefebvre argues that “the existence of a monument implies its construction by an urban group” (115). In Nora’s terms the group “highlights” memory through intentional representational choices (17). Stressing the mechanism of production, Lefebvre states that “no individual or entity may be considered ultimately responsible for production itself: such a responsibility may be attributed only to a social reality capable of investing a space – capable of producing that space” (115). Lefebvre sees the role of monuments as transcending death: “a monument transcends the fear of the passage of time, and anxiety about death, into splendor” (221). The role of the builder then, is to intervene into the space of death to “erase violence, death, negativity, and aggression” (222). Monumentality transfigures ‘death space’ into ‘living space’. Sites of memory and monumentality are “enveloped in a Mobius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile” (Nora 1989, 19). The ingredients which compose sites of memory are co-constitutive and inextricably linked. More definitively, Nora suggests that

the most fundamental purpose of the lieux de memoire [site of memory] is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial....all of this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs. (19)

Lefebvre and Nora are useful in connecting the phenomenological and social points offered by Casey and Connerton as we attempt to understand the social mechanisms and meanings of monumentality, memorial works, and geography.

2.2.3 National and regional memorial landscapes

The recent geographic literature on memorial landscapes has focused on the formation of national identity and the politics of commemoration. In her excellent book

on German national memory as experienced in Berlin, Till (2005) suggests that landscapes represent the marking of “social spaces as haunted sites where [individuals and groups] can return, make contact with their loss, contain unwanted presences, or confront past injustices” (8). Till focuses on the notion of memory-work as the individual and collective process of working through the losses and traumas of the past by “imagining a better future through place” (17). For Till, places of memory “give evoked ghosts a spatial form through landscape” (9). Till stresses the “material authority of landscape” (ibid).

Edensor (1997) focuses on the ways in which memorial sites are centers for the political arrangement of national memory. He explicates contested national identities as seen through the production and consumption of two sites in Scotland: Bannockburn Heritage Centre and Wallace Monument. Edensor confirms that processes for political and social remembering are defined by diversity and therefore lead to ever-shifting productions of national identity. In a later work on the spatial haunting of urban memorial landscapes, Edensor (2005) describes remembering as a “thoroughly social and political process, a realm of contestation and controversy” (830). He suggests that the process of remembering in space involves the externalization of material forms and the reassignment of meaning in the landscape through the attempt to banish ambiguity (830-831).

Charlesworth (1994) examines the contested symbolic space of Auschwitz in 1970’s and 1980’s. This work points out how these transformations are an attempt to de-Judaize Auschwitz in favor of a more general Polish/Catholic national identity. Charlesworth’s central point is that groups “must be vigilant of the capacity for

metamorphosis of lieux de memoire” (592). Azaryahu (2003) addresses the reorientation of the Buchenwald concentration camp in response to a changing national political regime. Utilizing Anderson’s (1983) notion of “imagine communities”, Johnson (1995) highlights “the usefulness of public monuments as a source for unraveling the geographies of political and cultural identity” (52). Johnson argues that statuary acts both as the “concentrated nodes” and “circuitry of memory” of popular national consciousness (63). These are important notions to be explored at the scale of the local community. The important connection between the preceding studies on national identity is that each implicates landscape in complex social, cultural, and political processes of identity formation and contestation. That these national-scale memorial landscapes are bound up in contest and ambiguity opens myriad questions for the local scale.

At a regional scale, Dwyer (2000), Alderman (2000), and Moore (2000) each address the emergence of memorial landscapes U.S. South. Alderman (2000) presents the broad notions that memorial landscapes are dynamic phenomena rooted in socially directed processes, reflective of public attitudes, and are active shapers of interpretation and valuation of the past. Moore (2000) examines the role of class relations in the regional memorial landscapes of the cotton textile industry in the U.S. South. Moore suggests that geographers must “cast our nets wider” (694) than simple interpretations of individual memorials through the lens of national politics to include scale and issues of identity formation. Dwyer (2000) presents an interpretation of the “historical-spatial representation” (661) embodied in and through the memorial landscapes of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Dwyer asserts that civil rights memorial landscapes are sites at which the meaning of the movement is constantly being negotiated. Stressing the complexities

of geographic scale and the ambiguity of identity formation related to regional memorial landscapes, Alderman, Dwyer, and Moore present points of departure for analysis of local scale memorial landscapes.

2.2.4 Informal memorial landscapes

The body of literature on informal memorial landscapes takes national identity as its primary focus. Azaryahu (1996) examines the Tel Aviv city square where Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1994. Azaryahu claims that the square was appropriated during a week long liminal period for the purpose of public, national mourning. For Azaryahu, the meaning of the specifically located grieving activity is of national and international significance. While his insights are rich, three principal points of critique arise from Azaryahu's much needed analysis. First, the period of mourning which bounds his study is applied somewhat artificially. Second, Azaryahu's analysis at the level of the city square, while fine from the perspective of symbolic space and national identity, does not permit a full treatment of the myriad meanings of Rabin's assassination at the sub-national scale. Third, Azaryahu privileges the formation of spontaneous memorials as "authentic expressions of grief" (501). Additional attention to the complex and subtle textures of intense memorialization in the wake of events such as Rabin's death will yield a greater understanding of the landscapes of grief and mourning. Rather than speculating on authenticity, we will discern more by inquiring into the competing narratives bound up in the memorial. The notion that spontaneity equates to authenticity cannot be left to stand without empirical assessment.

Phelps (1998) discusses the construction of spontaneous memorials when geographic distance prevents mourners from marking the actual tragedy site. Phelps uses the case of the outpouring of emotion in Britain following the death of Princess Diana in 1997. The site in Paris where Diana and two others died was marked with spontaneous memorials which included flowers and notes. In Britain, however, mourners had no access to the tragedy site, the typical location of such memorials. Phelps observes that large shrines were erected across Britain at traditional sites of memory (typically war memorials) producing a surrogate memorial landscape.

Doss (2002) considers informal memorials and their place in the inevitable process of memorial formalization. By examining the successive memorials of Memory Fence (the spontaneously constructed memorial to victims of the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City) and the Oklahoma City National Memorial, Doss explores the link between the tactical acts and strategic conventions of public memory. In contrast to the formal Oklahoma City National Memorial, 'Memory Fence' "was much more dialogic, and intimate grassroots product of shared, communal grief" (77). Doss asserts that "...the spontaneous, often impermanent, and distinctly 'unofficial' nature of many roadside shrines, grassroots memorials, offerings, and ritualistic behaviors seem less concerned with producing a critique of historical moments and tragic events than in catharsis and redemption" (70). The construction and visitation of these sites provides a place "to see and touch real-life tragedy, to weep and mourn and feel in socially acceptable situations" (70). Doss privileges the intimacy of grassroots memorialization over an examination of the processes which link the different memorials in time and space.

Haney et. al. (1997) suggest that the practice of informal memorialization is an example of an emergent adjunct ritual expression. The nature of unpredicted violent death, Haney et. al. suggest, demands more than customary death practices are able to deliver. The temporal, social, material, and spatial aspects of informal memorialization represent expressions of grief which extend beyond customary funerary and death practices.

2.2.5 Landscapes of death

Related to the formal and informal memorial landscapes literature is geography's rather small body of literature on landscapes of death. In a review article on landscapes of death, Kong (1999) reveals important connections between death and deathscapes, and the core cultural geographic concepts of identity formation, the socio-cultural bases of landscapes, and the central nature of space and place in the negotiation of meaning. Teather's (1998) treatment of Chinese death practices reveal "deathscapes" as constitutive of "deathspace in which abstract structures such as 'culture' become concrete practices and arrangements in space"(197). Kong (1999) makes the important observation that "both monumental deathscapes (such as war memorials) as well as everyday, human-scale landscapes of the dead (such as roadside memorials) deserve attention, although there has been a tendency to privilege the former" (8). Hartig and Dunn (1998) assert that "geographers have revealed the contested but also hegemonic meanings generated by memorials and other public monuments" (5). Hartig and Dunn suggest that roadside memorials to automobile accident victims are themselves "landscapes imbued with meaning"(5). Their inquiry into memorials erected to

commemorate lost young men yields the interpretation that “a multiplicity of meanings...emanate from these simple structures within the landscape”(19). Landscape as mediator and embodiment of the ambiguousness of death is suggested but not yet confirmed by this small body of literature.

Taken together, recent contributions have done much to address a gap in the literature on the formal and informal landscapes of national and regional identity, and landscapes of death. Particular voice has been given to national and regional identity formation, war remembrance, and the politics of monumental scale commemoration. Important interrogations of such notions as authenticity and objective remembrance have opened new avenues of exploration. Of particular relevance to the proposed study are the contemporary socio-cultural dynamics of local, human-scale, memorial efforts. The popular press in the United States has given wider attention to informal memorialization as symbols of tragic events, grief, and mourning than scholars. Geographers have only begun to address memorial formation at sites of violent or accidental public death. Studies, however, have focused too narrowly in their geographic and temporal extent. There is also a need to consider memorial practices collectively, whether or not they are formally sanctioned. The process of memorializing a tragedy, for example, tell us far more about the meaning of the tragedy, than the memorial itself.

2.2.6 Memory Work

Till (2005) provides the most complete definition of memory-work in her study of the condition of Holocaust memory in post-reunification Berlin. From the perspective of national memory, Till states that:

Memory-work is the process of working through the losses and trauma resulting from past national violence and imagining a better future through place. It is a powerful, albeit, difficult, way to live with the ongoing presence of ghosts. (18)

The process and goal of memory-work , in Till's estimation, is the making of "places to which we can return to confront what it means to feel haunted" (19) by establishing a material link between present and past. This is accomplished through the placement of memorials and monuments in lived space (182).

Sturken (1997) suggests that memory-work "often takes the form of cultural reenactment that serves important needs for catharsis and healing" (17). Individuals and groups must exert themselves to work, Sturken claims, due to "the instability of memory" (ibid) – a statement repeated by Linenthal (2001). Linenthal, in his treatment of the aftermath and remembrance of the Oklahoma City bombing states that memory-work is borne out of a fear of "obliteration – the act of intentional forgetfulness" (5). Linenthal describes the narratives which emerge to drive the work of memory. The "progressive" and "redemptive" narratives place respective emphasis on recovery and the responsibility for renewal and redemption. The notion that survivors represent a "remnant community" with responsibility for the memory of the departed drives memory-work.

Vale and Campanella (2005) address the notion of urban resilience and recovery in the aftermath of disaster and recovery. While their edited volume addresses larger scale tragedies than considered here, their "axioms of resilience" apply as guidelines in a consideration of local-scale memory-work. The notions of resilience and memory-work are closely linked in that the former provides impetus for the latter. Resilience allows for recovering, rebuilding, and remembrance. Resilience yields work. Vale's and Campanella's axioms are:

1. Narratives of resilience are a political necessity.
2. Disasters reveal the resilience of governments.
3. Narratives of resilience are always contested.
4. Local resilience is linked to national renewal.
5. Resilience is underwritten by outsiders.
6. Urban rebuilding symbolizes human transformation.
7. Remembrance drives resilience.
8. Resilience benefits from the inertia of prior investment.
9. Resilience exploits the power of place.
10. Resilience casts opportunism as opportunity.
11. Resilience is site-specific.
12. Resilience entails more than rebuilding.

The value of these axioms, rather than a tight definition, is that they apply over time and across multiple scales. The axioms allow for a consideration of the myriad perspectives from which tragedy – at any scale – must be viewed. The political, cultural, social, and economic realities of rebuilding and remembrance are captured here. It is my view that linking the concepts of resilience and memory-work activates that latter concept in ways which allow the full complexity of memory-work to be captured. In this way we are able to more fully understand the narratives which have emerged in the aftermath of the Dawson murders.

2.2.7 Conclusion:

I argue that landscape is the product of the counter forces of disenabled space and enabled place. The requisite cohesive bond is social interaction. The stated and unstated intentions, controversies, contests, and everyday work of memorialization are tensile forces in the generation of the memorial landscape. The collection of these overlapping threads of memorial intention composes the memorial landscape. The ultimate goal, as supported by the literature, is to assign a particular meaning or set of meanings to

geographic space. In the experience-based perspective of the humanist geographer, this is to transform space into place. In the critical perspective of the contemporary human geographer, however, this is to embody the tensive ambiguity of tangled socio-cultural intentions and political action. The socio-cultural landscape is opened for the purpose of negotiation between dis-enable space and enabled place. The role of the critical human geographer is to describe this landscape, its composite forces, its connections to other scales, and its socio-cultural implications. A concept of landscape as embodiment and mediator enables this work.

Equipped with a framework for the memorial landscape, this study examines Baltimore's Oliver neighborhood in the wake of the tragic firebombing of the Dawson home in 2002. Since that time agents have exerted material, discursive, and representational forces to form an active memorial landscape. As each individual or group conducts memory work, and thereby negotiates between space and place, they project meaning into the landscape. Memorial agents who are active in Oliver include residents, churches, schools, governments, activist organizations, artists, and the print and broadcast media.

The material forms which have resulted from these actors and their actions include: an informal shrine at the site of the tragedy, two memorial gardens, a commemoratively name playground and library, the construction of the Dawson Safe Haven for Children Youth and Families, increased attention by the City of Baltimore on the physical appearance and operating infrastructure of the neighborhood, an enhanced network of police presence and surveillance equipment, and numerous material changes in other parts of Baltimore as a result of the tragedy. An active, multifaceted discourse in

the aftermath of the Dawson tragedy has emerged which acts recursively along with material and representational forces. This discourse, I argue, has shaped the memorial landscape. Largely political in nature, this discourse has shaped the very direction of the memorial landscape, allowed for certain qualities of remembrance, and spurred a certain degree of forgetting. The representational forces at play in the memorial landscape include: dramatic performances, the staging of public services and rallies, and numerous other visual, performative, and literary memorial representations. These acts and works, in their use of space and definitions of place form the memorial landscape. The intersection of memorial forms, actions, and representations yields the tensive landscape upon which the ambiguous relationship between space and place is staged.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Setting

A triangulated, multi-method, qualitative research design has been applied in an effort to understand the formation of the memorial landscape that emerged from the Dawson murders. The broad goal of the research design is to unravel the ambiguity which resulted from the negotiation between place and space tensions in the years since the Dawson murders. The objectives to achieve this goal were to identify, document, analyze, and describe the threads of memory which, taken together, comprise the tense memorial landscape. The research design is comprised of both primary and secondary qualitative methods. While certain data predate 2002, the primary temporal focus of the study is from October 16, 2002 – December 31, 2005. This three-plus year period is seen as ample time for the threads of memory to emerge, coalesce, and exert a degree of tense force upon the landscape.

3.1 Part One: Methods and Data

3.1.1 Secondary Methods and Data:

The Dawson murders have generated significant activity in Baltimore since 2002. Private citizens, public officials, clergy, and others have focused upon various aspects of the tragedy to honor the Dawsons, combat the violent drug trade, and renew hope in Oliver. The words and actions related to the Dawson murders have been reported upon in the print and broadcast media, performed as art work, or have otherwise generated public record data. Thus, secondary data sources are crucial to understanding how the memorial landscape has emerged.

Secondary data collection began in November 2004 and continued through December 2005. July – August 2005 involved the analysis of the bulk of the secondary data for the following purposes:

1. to establish a detailed timeline of events between 2002-2005.
2. to determine which individuals and groups were active in efforts to honor the Dawson family. This determination revealed the leaders of emergent narratives as well as key informants for interviews.
3. to determine the character of each memorial effort to inform key informant interviews and other primary data collection activities.

The term “archival research” most accurately describes the secondary method employed. Archival documents were subject to narrative analysis. As shown in Table 3.1, secondary sources of data include: local and national print and broadcast media (i.e. newspaper articles, audio, video, and printed transcripts), government documents, photographs from public and private sources, civil and criminal proceedings, 911 emergency response calls, Maryland State Department of Taxation property records, and artistic works.

Each document was analyzed for the purpose of categorization. Categories include: community, legal, memorial/commemorative, political, and background information. A data element could be placed in more than one category. Within each category a document was analyzed for its most salient points and direct quotations of relevant individuals were extracted as data elements. These data elements were then placed into chronological order. A timeline (Appendix One) was created from these data elements. Secondary data “field notes” were also generated as a collection of support information. Secondary data yielded a list of key informants and questions for semi-structured interviews.

Print News Media Sources
The Sun (Baltimore)
The Afro-American (Baltimore)
The Daily Record (Baltimore)
The Christian Science Monitor (National)
The New York Times (National)
The Washington Post (National / Regional)
Broadcast/Cable News Media Sources
Local Television
WJZ
WBFF
WBAL
WMAR
National Television
ABC News
BET News
CNN
Fox News
CBS News
NBC News
National Public Radio News
Legal and Government Documents
Mayor's and City Council: press releases; speeches; memos; resolutions;
The Dawson Family Community Protection Act- legislation text
Criminal Case Files (U.S. v. Brooks)
Civil Suit Files (McNack et. al. v. Mayor and City Council et. al.)
Maryland State Real Property Database
911 Emergency Response Call audio tapes.
Art Works
Strength in Numbers – music recording
The Plan: Stand Up, Now! – dramatic production
MAAFA Suite – dramatic production
Growing Up in a Notorious World – middle school poetry project
Photographs
The Baltimore Sun
ABC News Nightline
Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University
Author photographs

Table 3.1: Secondary data sources for the period October 2002- December 2005

3.1.2 Primary Methods and Data:

Secondary data analysis yielded an understanding of the responses to the Dawson murders as far more varied, complex, and nuanced than expected. These insights demanded confirmation and further investigation through primary data collection. After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to do so, interviews commenced with two key informants who were judged to be most active based upon secondary sources. Each of these informants was interviewed twice, provided key insights into the workings of the “post-Dawson” built and social environment, and led to other informants. Informants also invited me to meetings, dramatic productions, and commemorative ceremonies. Each informant was asked a customized set of questions based upon secondary data and the comments of the informant who recommended them. This form of snowball sampling yielded a network of individuals within each of the dominant narratives. These networks share certain individuals and affirm the general network as suggested by the secondary data. In addition to filling information gaps, primary data collection also affirmed and corroborated much of the secondary data - a useful feature of triangulated qualitative research.

I sought to conduct fifteen semi-structured interviews. I succeeded in conducting nine with signed IRB consent forms. The Mayor’s Office and the Oliver Community Association did not respond to repeated requests (written, telephone, and in-person) for an interview. The Mayor’s Office has generated a large volume of information related to the Dawson murders, most all of which has been captured in secondary analysis. Thus, I do not feel that this study suffers any loss in not succeeding with this interview. The lack of response from the Oliver Community Association is, I am told by other informants, not

surprising. The Oliver Community Association has been nearly silent on the Dawson tragedy over the three year period. I believe that this study would be strengthened by interview data from the Oliver Community Association.

Three individuals talked with me as a group but would not sign IRB consent forms or agree to individual interviews after repeated attempts.¹ Despite the fact that the comments of these three are of great value to this research, I am bound to disregard them. The inability to use this information represents a gap which I have been unable to fill. Race and class played an important role in their refusal to sign the consent forms. I was invited to a meeting by one of the initial informants to discuss my research and its perceived value to the community. During the meeting I was quizzed on my upbringing, my time in Baltimore, where I lived, my spouse's upbringing, and my personal motivations for studying responses to the Dawson murders. It was made clear to me by these three persons that they resented the fact that a white person from the suburbs (I reside just north of the Baltimore City line) would dare study the Dawson murders or the Oliver neighborhood. The fact that I worked for two years in a community center just to the east of Oliver and that I come from a working class background did not matter to these persons. What mattered most was my white skin and the fact that I was doing research on something that impacted the neighborhood to such an extent. It is my opinion that a narrow understanding of the value of social science research and a

¹ I telephoned each of the three more than a dozen times each. I appeared at their offices while conducting other research in the neighborhood. I succeeded in getting one of the three to agree to a meeting. However, he called me just prior to the meeting to tell me that had had been called to another engagement. I was clearly being avoided. I believe that this avoidance is due to a lack of respect for research and cynical opinions of the importance of the value of a white researcher in a predominately African-American community. Fortunately most members of the community did not share this cynicism.

narrower appreciation for the fact that a white person could properly address a “black” issue motivated the defensive dismissal of me and my work.

I was told later by one of my original informants that “it is always about race with these guys” (original emphasis). I was assured by my informant that a year or more of dedicated, trust-building work with these individuals would reveal my dedication to the topic. I reminded my informant that I was not writing a deep ethnographic study, but a multi-method study of the memorial landscape. I thanked my informant for his help and moved on with data collection.

Other primary methods included: photo documentation, attendance at the Dawson murder third anniversary service, attendance at two dramatic productions (The Plan: Stand Up, Now!; MAAFA: Fire in My Bones), and the group meeting mentioned above. The data products of these primary methods are: interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, promotional materials, playbills, and other printed works. I was invited to experience the MAAFA production by one of my informants. At the end of the stirring performance I was, to my surprise, called up to the stage by the producer who introduced me and the fact that I was researching the Dawson murders. The entirely African-American audience of three hundred applauded approvingly to this announcement. This seemed a fitting balance to the cynicism of three who chose to view my research as audacious.

Primary data collection succeeded in affirming, corroborating, and thickening the narratives that had emerged from primary data analysis. While there were a few challenges in collecting primary data, I feel that the data strengthen this study by not allowing a picture of the memorial landscape to be drawn from a distance. It is clear that

my race and perceived class kept me at a certain distance from key informants and interview respondents. Despite the clear explanation of the confidentiality of the interview, several of informants spoke to me as though I were a journalist interviewing them on the record. On several occasions informants offered verbatim accounts and phrases to those I had read in news reports. Nonetheless, the informant accounts are of vital importance to constructing a more sophisticated understanding of the emergent memorial landscape. Chief among these contributions is the “back story” behind events as reported in the media. Examples of this includes a balance that was brought to the perceived underreporting of events important to persons in Oliver, or the over-reporting of events seen by residents as less significant or more nuanced than represented.

3.1.3 Research Motivations

My personal and academic motivations for focusing my dissertation research on landscapes of tragedy - and the Dawson tragedy in particular - are varied. First, and most personally, I am a father. As with almost all parents, I possess the instinct to protect my daughter from any threat. Parents will go to any extreme to protect the safety and well being of their children. Angela and Carnell Dawson were unable to protect their five children. Two of the children died alone in their rooms. The bodies of the other three children were found beneath an interior door on the third floor. The children had apparently huddled together. The image of children huddled in terror - unable to reach their parents, or their parents them - is one of the core motivations for my treatment of this topic. The horrific nature of the murders compelled me to investigate what happened next.

Therefore I have a personal commitment to the academic study of responses to the Dawson murders. My premise is that responses to the atrocity of an entire family burning to death inside the home tell us a great deal about the resilience or decay of the community. Would the murders truly be remembered? If so, how would they play out on the landscape? If not, what does this say about the state of affairs in Baltimore's inner-city neighborhoods?

Personal statements such as those in the preceding paragraph may present one with the notion that this study is a romantic view of the Dawsons. To this I say that this study is not a view of the Dawson family at all, but their community of survivors. Nonetheless, I offer to the reader that a romanticized view of the Dawsons would be of little importance in scholarly or political circles. To romanticize would be to undermine the theoretical and methodological bases of the study. Further, I have been cautioned by numerous persons from the Oliver neighborhood and beyond not to romanticize the family or to present them as heroes. The prevailing view among those close to the family is that there are dozens or even hundreds of other families in Baltimore just like the Dawsons. This view of the Dawsons is as a symbol of the fight of honest citizens against the plague of drug abuse and violence, but not as heroes. Therefore I affirm that I have worked as diligently as possible to meet the standards and obligations as a social scientist by rigorously employing my training in qualitative research methods and scholarly writing.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, and reaffirmed above, the Dawson murders should be seen as a serious symptom of the larger social ills which Baltimore suffers. A motivation for me in this regard is to document the murders and their

aftermath, as completely and accurately as possible, as one of the most important events in Baltimore's recent social history. There is a history of neglect of the important social events in Baltimore going under-documented or undocumented. A chief example of this is the April 1968 Baltimore Riot. The paucity of academic treatment of this event is alarming. I contend that the public memory of the Baltimore Riot will die with its witnesses. The Reservoir Hill neighborhood which was the epicenter of the riot contains no marker of the event. While the memory is strong within African American residents of a certain age, other race groups and age groups know virtually nothing about the riot. It is my hope that this study of the Dawson murders will be joined by other treatments of the tragedy so that the event remains a part of the public and academic geography and history of Baltimore, and urban America.

3.2 Part Two: The research setting

To compliment the theoretical grounding and review of methods it is important to now provide specific grounding in Baltimore. Among the broad goals of this section is to situate contemporary Baltimore within a regional context and to situate the Oliver neighborhood within Baltimore. The regional, city, and neighborhood scales are important levels of description as this chapter peers into the political, economic, and social structures which provide the context for this study of the memorial landscape. The Dawson murders and memorial responses are treated here as a symptoms of, and responses to, larger social ills. Understanding this diagnosis as a symptom of larger ills is important to understanding the formation and meaning of the memorial landscape.

The first section seeks to establish Baltimore in a regional context. I draw heavily upon the work of geographer David Harvey as one who has written extensively about Baltimore's political economy, its winners, and losers. The section then moves to a detailed description of the Oliver neighborhood's physical, socioeconomic, demographic, and social characteristics. Following these descriptive sections is a short treatment of an illustrative event in Oliver's recent history. I have termed the event the Jordan-Simms affair, and offer it as a qualitative episode which provides key insights into Oliver's condition. The combination of quantitative descriptions and qualitative illustrations provide an important setting and scene for Chapters Four through Six..

3.2.1 Baltimore is a mess

In his book *Spaces of hope* Harvey (2000) writes that "Baltimore is, for the most part, a mess. Not the kind of enchanted mess that makes cities interesting places to explore, but an awful mess" (133). The causes and consequences of disparity of wealth and life chances drive Harvey to his blunt assessment. Baltimore is at once home to some of the finest private schools and medical institutions in the world, while the life expectancy of poor inner city residents (63 years for men and 73 year for women) rivals some of the worlds poorer countries and public school students are three grade levels behind in reading (ibid). Like its formerly industrial kin Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, and Flint, Baltimore has been reshaped by the rapid transition of employment opportunities from the 1970s onward and by the fragmentation and breakdown of urban institutions such as city government and neighborhood integrity. Harvey (ibid) attributes these two forces as the roots of the Baltimore mess.

The movement of large manufacturing operations such as Bethlehem Steel's ship building facilities and General Motors' truck manufacturing plants to the southern US and abroad left tens of thousands of Baltimore's work force scrambling for employment.

Harvey explains the implications of the departure of large manufacturing jobs:

Sever deindustrialization of the economy (connected with the process of globalization) meant some radical shifts in the circulation of variable capital within the metropolitan region. In addition to widespread structural unemployment the effect was to move employment away from the blue collar (largely white male and unionized) industrial sector and into a wide array of service activities, particularly those connected with the so-called 'hospitality sector' that underpinned the redevelopment effort in Baltimore. The result was widespread long-term structural unemployment and a shift towards non-unionized and female employment in low-paying 'unskilled' jobs. (122)

Those with the ability to do so (black and white alike) fled to the surrounding counties "seeking solace, security, and jobs in the suburbs" (ibid, 138). Figure 3.1 reveals the population trends for Baltimore City and Baltimore County from 1950-2000. Most notable about this chart for the current discussion is the sharp rate of decline in Baltimore City from 1970 onward and the corresponding rate of growth in Baltimore County. From 1950 to 2000 Baltimore City lost 298,554 people, or 31.4% of its population. Of the total population lost during this period, 85% occurred after 1970. Between 1970 and 1980 the city lost population at a rate of 991 people per month. At the peak of the reshuffling of the population of Central Maryland, Baltimore City residents fled at a rate of three dozen per day to surrounding counties (i.e. Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard) or out of the region entirely. Those who remained in Baltimore City were

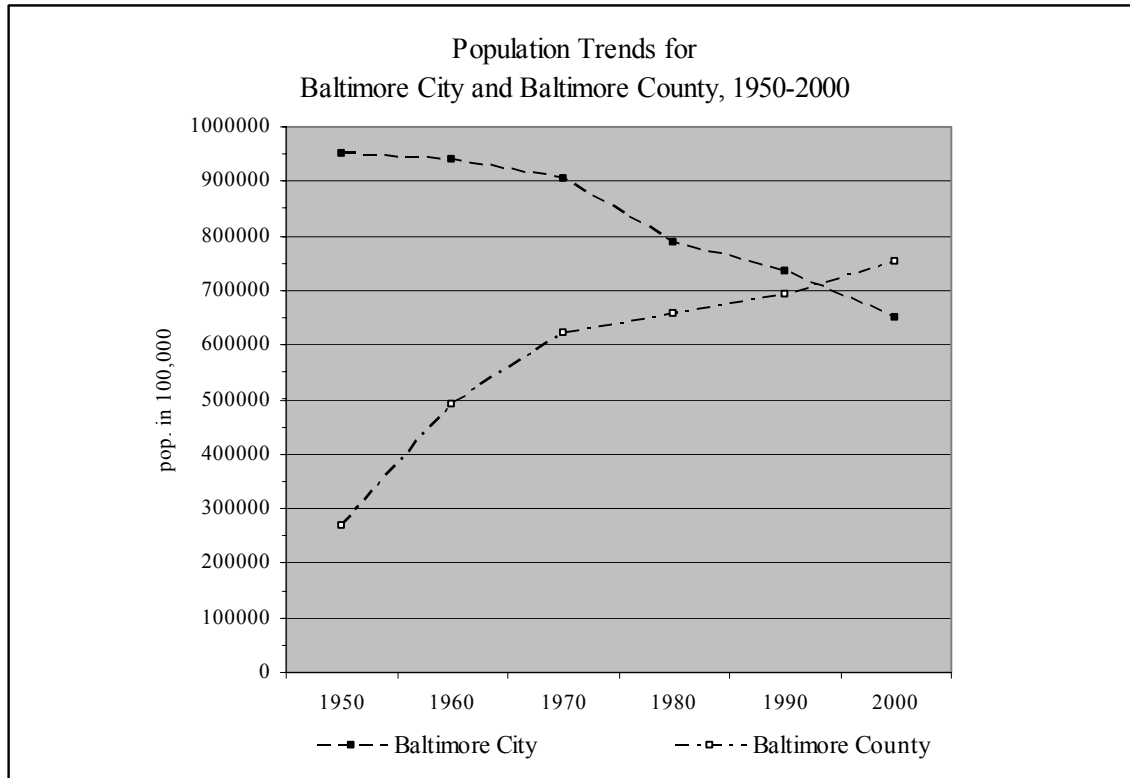


Figure 3.1: 1950-1990 data source U.S. Bureau of the Census 3/27/95 “Maryland: Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990 Compiled and edited by Richard L. Forstall. Population Division. US Bureau of the Census. March 27, 1995.; 2000 data source US Bureau of Census Baltimore County 2000 Fact Sheet.

forced to contend with the post-industrial reality of low wage service and hospitality jobs at one of the large medical institutions or in the hotels, shops, and eateries of Baltimore’s primary tourist attraction, the Inner Harbor. In order to account for lost wages, families required two incomes.

Once dense and alive with local flavor, neighborhoods suffered the loss of residents either because they moved away permanently or because one or more members of each household worked multiple jobs and were thus rarely at home. As Harvey states “the geographical disparities in wealth and power increased to fashion a metropolitan world of chronically uneven geographical development” (148). The working class,

working poor, and impoverished were left to struggle in the deteriorating neighborhoods of inner city Baltimore.

The second of Harvey's roots of the mess made in Baltimore is the fragmentation and breakdown of institutions such as urban governance, neighborhoods, and families. Structural economic problems operated on the city from the top down and bottom up (Table 3.2). Stress on families (unemployment, access to transportation, caring for children and the aged, and single parenthood) led to stress on neighborhoods (i.e. drugs crime and abuse, crime, inadequate housing, and vacancy) which in turn placed a greater demand on the City for services. All of this occurred in a period of hugely diminished tax revenues and a broader national and state political climate which valued keeping tax rates as low as possible. Any hope for "cooperation with suburban jurisdictions [was] overwhelmed by competitive pressures to keep taxes down, the impoverished and marginalized out, and the affluent and stable in" (Harvey 2002 152).

The effect of the loss of complete and functional institutions has been the balkanization of residents within and beyond city borders. Although Baltimore is a majority (67%) African American city, the balkanization relates more to class than race. The poor (black and white) remain in large numbers in Baltimore City, while the more affluent have departed to the suburbs, returning daily to jobs in hospitals or the central business district or weekly for church services in their old neighborhood.

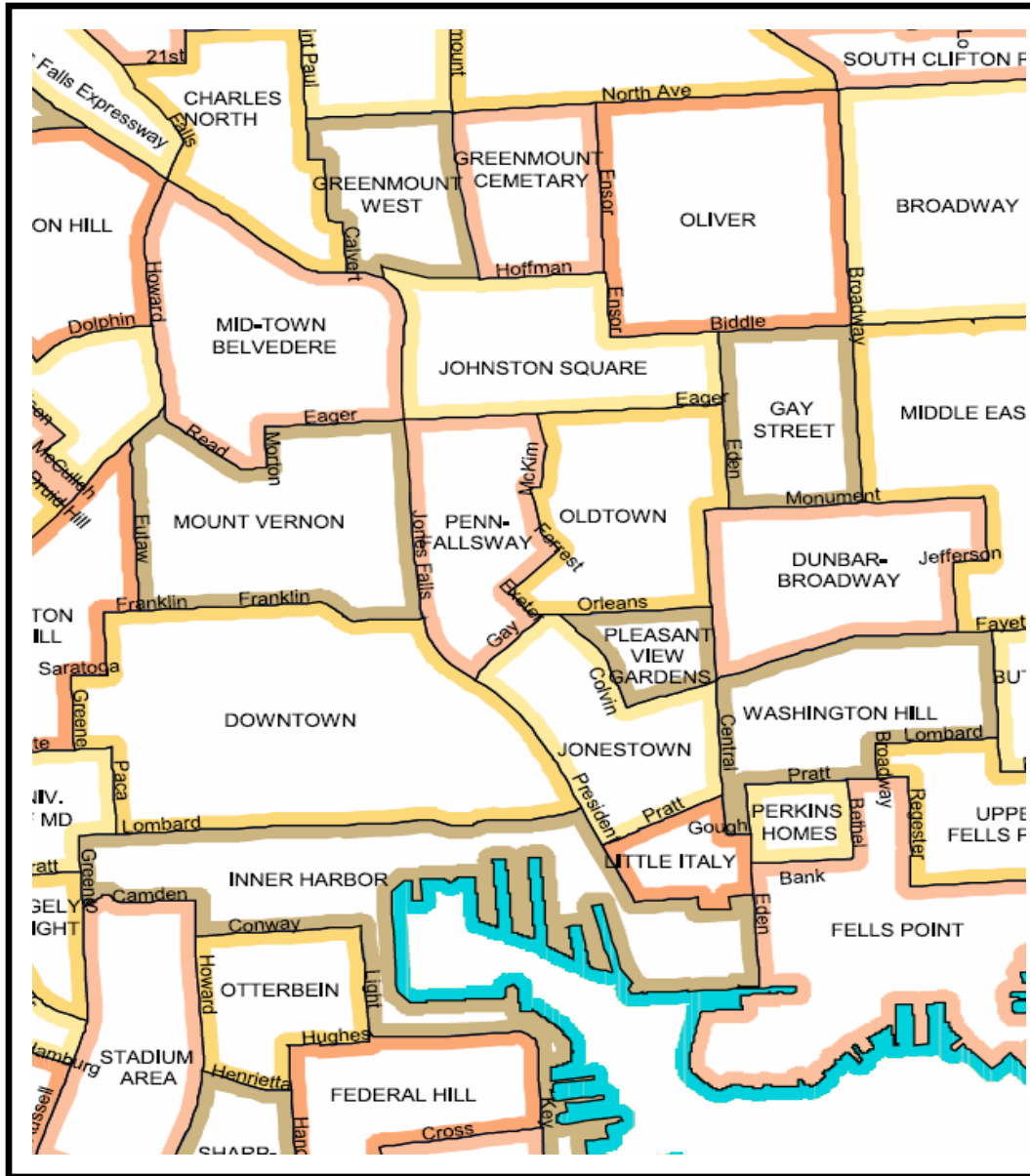
Churches, particularly Baptist and Catholic churches, have been the lone source of consistency for many of the persons and neighborhoods who find themselves on the

Economic Percentages	1966	1988
Adult unemployment rate	7.0	17.0
Household receiving welfare	28.0	30.0
Households with incomes less than \$10,000 (1988 dollars)	41.0	47.0
Households with incomes less than \$20,000 (1988 dollars)	16.0	18.0
Households in which at least one person owns a car	23.0	36.0
Percentage employed as laborers	43.0	8.0
Percentage doing clerical work	1.0	30.0
Household and family structure		
Median household size	2.9	1.9
Percentage of adults retired	13.0	30.0
Percentage of population under 18 years of age	45.0	34.0
Percentage of households with children with a male adult	56.0	43.0
Percentage of one-person households	16.0	31.0
Percentage of households with five or more people	30.0	12.0
The Neighborhood		
Most commonly cited 'good' aspect	People	People
Most common complaint	Housing	Drugs/crime
Percentage of residents who are renters	85.0	78.0
Percentage of adults living in neighborhood more than 10 years	48.0	60.0
Percentage who think neighborhood is improving	NA	14.0
Table 3.2: Then and now: An inner-city Baltimore neighborhood.		

losing end of the structural forces of globalization. Informal political networks, often centered in churches, have emerged as among the most powerful in contemporary Baltimore. Coalitions of clergy and congregants have formed and acted on behalf of those in the undeveloped and underdeveloped parts of Baltimore. The tattered fabric of neighborhoods such as Oliver is held together most visibly by congregations with long memories of bygone days.

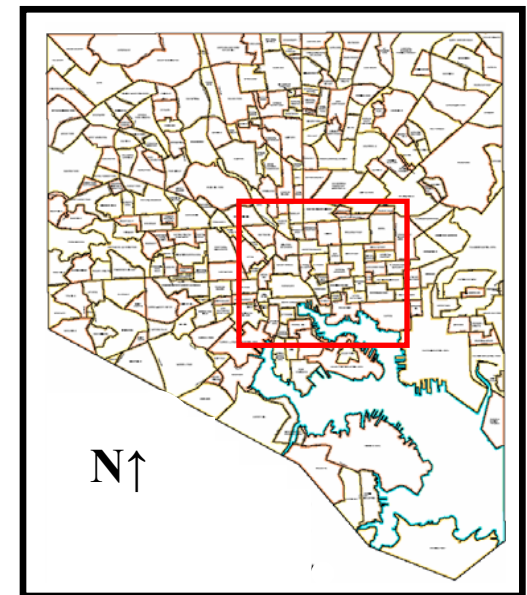
3.2.2 *The Oliver neighborhood: location and physical description*

The Oliver neighborhood is an area of thirty-six square blocks in northeast of downtown Baltimore (Map 3.1). While Oliver's boundaries are open to interpretation, they are generally held by Baltimore's Planning Office to be North Avenue on the north,



Map 3.1: The location of Oliver relative to Downtown Baltimore and the Inner Harbor with locator map below.

(Map data source: Baltimore Office of Planning, 2006)



Broadway on the east, Biddle on the south, and Ensor Street and Greenmount Cemetery on the west. Oliver has a grid street pattern with Harford Avenue diagonally bisecting the neighborhood from the northeast to the southwest. The large blocks are divided by narrow alleys or streets. As typical of Baltimore's older neighborhoods, virtually every building is faced by a street or avenue and backed by an alley.

Largely residential, Oliver consists of brick rowhouses with churches, schools, and public buildings interspersed. Rowhouse styles include vernacular adaptations of popular revival modes such as Renaissance, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Neo-classical. Architectural details include leaded colored glass, cornices, pointed and segmental gables, true mansards, false gables and mansards, door hoods and original door hardware (Baltimore City Department of Planning, 2006). There are also raised stone basements, first-story storefronts, set-backs with porches and/or side entries.

Oliver – often referred to with its companion neighborhood: Madison Square – must be considered as part of the continuing north-eastward expansion of Baltimore City along its major thoroughfares. Oliver was associated with the area to its south, though much of that area has been lost to urban renewal projects (ibid). Importantly, the Baltimore Office of Planning indicates that Oliver is rarely referred to “by any particular name at all” (ibid). The current work confirms that reference to this thirty-six block area is ambiguous. The name Oliver has as its source the merchant Robert Oliver (1758-1834) whose nineteenth century Green Mount estate comprised both Greenmount Cemetery and the land surrounding it (Enoch Pratt Free Library, 2006).

Until the early and mid twentieth century, Oliver was predominantly German and Irish, and strongly Catholic (Baltimore City Department of Planning, 2006). Since then

Oliver's residents are largely African American and Baptist. This demographic transition aligns with Harvey's (2000) statement that working class white residents fled to the suburbs leaving poor African Americans in the deteriorating inner city. Though many of Oliver's houses have suffered from neglect and abandonment, others are well maintained.

3.2.3 The Oliver Neighborhood: demographic and socioeconomic description

The boundaries of Baltimore's 270+ neighborhoods do not conform to any standard statistical areas such as census block groups or tracts. For this reason, neighborhood level data are not available. To address this, a non-profit group called the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance (BNIA) now reports data based upon fifty five community statistical areas (CSA) which are formed along census tract boundaries.² BNIA's broad goal is to help "people make better decisions using accurate, reliable, and accessible data and indicators to improve the quality of life in Baltimore City neighborhoods" (www.bniala.org). BNIA releases summary data for each of the fifty five areas on a periodic basis. The summary data reports are referred to as "vital signs," as they report on the relative condition of each area. Each summary contains population, housing, health and welfare, workforce, sanitation, environment, education, and neighborhood cohesion data. The following section presents summary data for 2003 on the Greenmount East CSA which is comprised mostly of the Oliver neighborhood.

² Community statistical areas are the work of the Baltimore City Planning Department and the Family League of Baltimore City, for use by the Baltimore City Data Collaborative, and now BNIA. These boundaries are not to be confused with the neighborhood boundaries defined by the Baltimore City Planning Department or by the neighborhoods themselves. They are used for statistical display of data only.

The population of the Greenmount East CSA in 2003 was 11, 561, with 5,423 male residents and 6,138 female residents. Ninety seven percent of the population is reported as black. The age structure of the CSA is as follows (Table 3.3):

Age	Percentage
17 and below	29.6%
18-24	9.2%
25-44	28%
45-64	21.2%
65+	12%

Table 3.3: Oliver population by age, 2003.

Among the 3,920 household the median household income was \$18,712. Just under 80% of the households earned less than \$40,000 per year. BNIA reports that 57% of married couples with between one and five children falls below the self sufficiency standards. Forty two percent of Greenmount East’s population aged 16-64 was unemployed in 2003, while 41.9% was employed.

Regarding housing statistics, of the 5,852 total properties in the CSA, 4,662 – or 79.6% were residential in 2003. The median sale price of residential properties was \$31,500. Twenty five percent of residential properties were reported vacant, while 34.8% were owner occupied. Regarding vacant properties in Oliver, an independent survey places the percentage of vacant properties near 50%.

BNIA reports the following health, safety, and well being rates per 1,000 residents. There were 50 calls to 911 report domestic violence. There were 77.4 Part I crimes (i.e. major crimes) down from 112.9 in 2000. Regarding juvenile arrests, there were 191.1 among juveniles aged 10-17. This compares to 140 for the City of Baltimore overall. There was a rate of 78.6 juvenile drug arrests for the Greenmount CSA in 2003 – compared to 46.8 citywide.

Regarding teen pregnancy, the teen birth rate is reported as births per 1000 15-19 year olds who gave birth in 2003. The Greenmount GSA rate was down to 102 in 2003, from 164 in 2000. Of the 2003 births, the percentage of mothers who received first trimester prenatal care was 56.5% compared to 75% citywide.

With regard to sanitation, environment, and community cohesion, BNIA reports the following. There were 26 incidents of dirty streets and alleys per 1000 residents and 25.1 abandoned vehicles per 1000. The tree canopy cover of Greenmount East was 5.5% compared to 20% citywide. There were nine community associations, two community development corporations, and four community gardens. Of the 64.2% of persons registered to vote, only 29.1% voted in the 2002 general election. Of the 48.1% of 18-25 year old residents, only 12% voted in 2002.

This confluence of data suggests that the Greenmount CSA is a low-income African American community that struggles from day to day. A median household income below \$20,000 and a poor housing stock suggest economic stress. In addition, safety concerns regarding youth, and a high teen birth rate reveal social stress. Voter and community group data suggest pockets of engaged citizens, but not among young people.

3.2.4 The Oliver Neighborhood: a social description

Oliver, however, is not a lost neighborhood. There are a number of blocks which are well kept and show the pride of ownership including window boxes with flowers, clean marble steps, and swept blocks. These are the blocks where one is likely to witness mothers and grandmothers sitting on the front stoop watching children play on a summer evening. Blocks such as the 1600 block of N. Caroline St. are reminders that most

everyone in Oliver and neighborhoods like it are law abiding people who care about their families and their futures. These are the blocks that remind us that the small group of ill-intentioned young men occupying certain corners represent a small, but very powerful percentage of the neighborhood.

Despite its challenges, Oliver has active residents who care deeply about the neighborhood and their city. One neighbor, Nellie, reflected on Oliver's past and speculated on its future:

I bought my home a block away in 1982. You knew all your neighbors...And now you don't know who some of the people are, you see, you go in and out your door and you don't know who the people are that's coming through your block anymore. You know, it's changed a lot, it's changed a lot.... We gonna bring this neighborhood back and people want good, decent houses, and that's what we're gonna do. This is a community, it's not just a little box, you know? It's just like letting the whole community go, we're not going to allow that. Everyone is not bad, we have good decent people go to work and take care of their properties and stuff. So, we're not gonna let the little bad apples and their bunch run us away. (Nightline 2002)

A neighborhood pastor talks of the necessity of home ownership for the recapturing of the Oliver that once was:

The homeownership has changed dramatically, probably from 80 percent back in the late '60s, early '70s, to probably 30 percent here in the Oliver community now. Which, when you have homeowners, there's a different investment in the community. However, we do have hope because we have a strong base of homeowners who still love Oliver, love the city, and are working very hard to bring this community back to the level that we saw in the late '70s, early '80s. (ibid)

In a 1992 article in Baltimore's mainstream newspaper, The Sun, Oliver is offered as illustrative of the struggling parts of Baltimore (Clark 1992). Oliver's community association president expressed concern about the educational opportunities that Baltimore City schools could provide her children. The story referred to Oliver as the

“blighted neighborhood, marooned between the remade Inner Harbor and the booming suburb of Towson” (ibid). The story states that some residents “used to believe it was just a matter of time before prosperity seeped into the boarded-up homes and empty lots of the Oliver area” (ibid).. It appears, however, the prosperity never arrived. Noted East Baltimore affordable housing advocate Lucille Gorham is quoted in the article on the paradox of the drug trade in neighborhoods like Oliver:

“[t]here are so many alcoholics and drug addicts on the streets now. You cannot ignore them,” especially because of the crime associated with the drug trade, she said. Although it is a blight on the neighborhood, the drug trade has provided one small benefit that nothing else has managed: “It brings money into the community.” (ibid)

Gorham offers her perspective on the paradox of the drug trade out of concern for the economic viability of the inner city which many feared was in a “death spiral” (ibid). The reporter cited the new national concern with urban affairs in the wake of the Los Angeles riots of 1992, and asked “which path will Baltimore follow” (ibid)?

Later in 1992 The Sun reported on the 15th Annual Oliver Family Weekend Festival. The article offered a retrospective on Oliver through the eyes of a man who grew up there, moved away, and was returning for the festival. The man, Ronald Huff, talked of learning manners from adults in Oliver as a boy. Lamenting Oliver’s condition Huff stated: “[e]verybody looked out for each other. This was one big happy family. The good times certainly outweighed the bad times. Now it's changed, there are drugs, and young people don't show respect” (Heard 1992). These recollections align with a comment made by a long time Oliver resident who said: “Oliver was once called the ‘city on the hill,’ and I want to make it that again” (Field Research Notes 2005).

While there is a certain amount of nostalgia to be drawn from these comments, the references to the drug trade tell us that the change has “taken” the neighborhood, not just changed it. The past seems to be the defining factor for these residents. Their tone suggests a lack of a vision of Oliver’s future. This lack of a progressive mentality toward the neighborhood and community foretells Oliver’s fate. It is important here to note the lack of a collective vision for the future. The lack of vision is a symptom of how the neighborhood spiraled downward. Recapturing a vision, some say, is the key to reclaiming the houses, corners, streets, and sidewalks of Oliver, and the way to properly honor the memory of the Dawson family.

3.2.5 The Jordan-Sims Affair

The purpose of this case examination is to provide a view of Oliver prior to the arrival of the city-wide faith community, the Dawson murders, and the symbolic repositioning of Oliver as the “future of Baltimore.” This illustration is meant to show Oliver at a low point, when it was labeled the most deadly neighborhood in one of the most deadly cities in America. In order to examine the place-space tension that has played out in Oliver since the Dawson murders, we must establish a qualitative baseline. The example of the Jordan-Sims affair provides such a baseline as it reveals the physical, social, and emotional decay that existed. Physical and social ills fed each other as institutions – gainful employment, property ownership, family structure, education, and a community legacy – collapsed. Replacing these was a different institution - the drug trade - which altered the foundations of the place and redefined the neighborhood space

into an illegitimate market. Johns Hopkins University cultural anthropologist Stanford W. Carpenter suggests that Oliver is “a marketplace in the purest sense” (Wilson 2003).

It's a shopping mall for bad activities...A lot of the people who are selling and buying the drugs aren't from the community. In the soup kitchen, a lot of the people aren't from there either. What allows some suburbs to be what they are is that certain illegal activities are pushed into other communities. Oliver is one of those communities where the crimes converge. (ibid)

The drug market as an institution can be seen in the resignation of many residents of the neighborhood as being “just the way it is”: a violent, territory-based field where the everyday lives of law-abiding residents are incidental to the operation of the trade. The division between Oliver’s older residents and its youth point to the breakdown. There appears to be a missing generation between old and young who, for myriad reasons, were not able to uphold their responsibility to teach children how to behave as a part of a family or community.

The events of July 1998 revealed just how far Oliver had slid from its place as a “city on the hill.” On July 5, 1998 fifteen year-old Jermaine Jamar Jordan was shot and killed in the 1600 block of Llewelyn Street by 77 year-old Albert Sims, the sole resident of the block. Jordan, visiting home on summer break from a Georgia military school, had been throwing bricks at vacant houses with his friends when a brick allegedly struck Sims’ car. Sims chased Jordan and three friends and fired a gun into an open door of the vacant house into which the boys ran. Two bullets struck Jordan in the back. He collapsed in the back alley and died later at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Police said that Jordan did not throw the brick that struck Sims’ car (Hermann 1998). Sims was arrested after a short standoff with police. Judged mentally unfit to stand trial, Sims was ordered to a state psychiatric hospital on March 23, 1999 (Francke 1999).

The reaction to the killing in the neighborhood and around the city was mixed. Some people saw the ending of the child's life as an outrageous price to pay for such a small crime against property. Others understood Sims' action to stop what he perceived as harassment and vandalism. Many people had strong opinions about both the protection of property and the sanctity of life, especially that of a child. In Oliver, Ms. Lola Banks stated that the youth in the neighborhood are "hoodlums." She then qualified her comment:

But I don't think gunfire is the answer. I guess the man [Sims] just had enough. Cars cost a lot of money....What makes this kid's death any different from all the others? Children are always sweet when they are dead. They are never sweet when they are harassing senior citizens.(Hermann 1998)

Regarding the perceived influence of Baltimore's oppressively hot summers, Rev. Melvin Tuggle commented: "[a]s summer gets hotter, I'm afraid you may see more of this...We talk about young people going crazy, but some of the seniors are going crazy too. And seniors should be seasoned enough to know better" (ibid). The Afro-American made reference to the oppression of inner-city summers and the Jordan-Sims affair: "[a]s the sun moved closer to the earth this summer, tempers flared as temperatures rose" (Lee 1998),

Sims' former neighbor, Keith Griffin said of the youth in the neighborhood and Sims' reaction: "[t]he kids around here are a bunch of animals. I guess he just had enough. I guess he snapped. It's not right to go out and shoot somebody, but how much can you take" (Hermann 1998)? Eight year-old Reggie Cunningham admitted to his mother that he had thrown rocks at Sims two weeks before the shooting "just to be dumb" he said (ibid). As a Sun reporter would later write, the youngster had been "treading a thin line between fun and harassment" (O'Mara 1998).

On July 8, 1998 Sun columnist Dan Rodricks reflected on the conditions which led to the shooting:

We have more than 300 murders a year. We have more than 50,000 drug addicts. We have neighborhoods where men and women feel safe only after having armed themselves. We have a rate of juvenile crime that steadily erodes the future of the city. We have eruptions of anger that result in critical injury and death because of the easy availability of guns. We have the highest concentration of poverty in the state. We have families with the worst social diseases causing the worst human behavior, and not a clue what to do about most of it...Did Albert Sims ask for help? Did he get it? Did anyone know his name before Sunday night and the death of Jermaine Jordan...No one seems to know much about Sims. He lived on a street of vacant rowhouses. But even if he'd lived on a street of fully occupied homes, his neighbors might not have known who he was or bothered with him. We spend, after all, a lot of time in isolation – indoors, in front of televisions, in cars to and from work, detached from the people around us. (Rodricks 1998)

Sun opinion writer Gregory Kane followed Rodricks' suggestion that Sims was a victim of geographic and social isolation by condemning the community for allowing the isolation of its elders:

When Baltimore police arrested Sims they found him ensconced behind a barricade. Sims' barricade was literal. It's the metaphorical barricade we've been erecting around our elderly for years now that may have contributed to Jermaine Jordan's death. Sims had been harassed by neighborhood youths, his house broken into three times...Sims's detractors have said boys have been mischievous and destructive for years. They're right. They obviously can't remember the time when nearly every adult acted as a cop against such destructiveness and mischief. (Kane 1998)

The Afro-American sided both in its reports and editorials with the young victim of the crime and his grieving family. At no point in three articles did the Afro-American suggest that Sims was justified, or that a debate was justified. The title of two stories about Jordan and his family explain the unambiguous position of the Afro-American: "Who is protecting the children?" and "He had just come to town on Friday." The latter, which is labeled as a "news" document by the paper reads as a mix of an editorial, an

obituary, and a eulogy. The author, Dorothy S. Boulware, projected herself into the story and explained that this tragedy caused her to question her career as a journalist.

Boulware offered this poetic reflection on Jordan's death:

This is not okay with me. And, the tears just won't stop. They're not selective tears.

They're for me - for the time I spent in church that should have been spent with my children. I'm sorry. For the times I walked past children on the street and failed to speak to them as though they were invisible. I'm sorry. For the times I saw a child in the wrong and didn't correct her. Saw him in the right, didn't commend him. I'm sorry.

They're for the adults who are scared of the children - children who've been shaped by our neglect, our apathy, our selfishness.

Tears for the elderly who are frightened, who feel cut off and alone, who also suffer from our neglect.

Tears for a city that maintains a Harbor Place for the wealthy and a Llewellyn Street for the invisible ones.

Tears for the families whose hearts have been broken for the loss of their children; Tiffany Smith, James Smith III, ... to our violent ways.

Tears for the children who've learned and emulate too well our ways of violence.

Tears for the hands - our hands - that hold the gun on our children when we fail to hold them, to hug them, to pay attention to them, to educate them, to encourage them to dream, to listen to their dreams.

Tears for Jermaine, who just came to town on Friday. (Boulware 1998)

Boulware laments the social ills which have become institutionalized in the practice of everyday life and in the structure of the city itself. The complex tangling of social pressures, broken family structures, socioeconomic disparity, and the violence of urban life allowed the most vulnerable – children and the elderly – to be neglected and abandoned.

In the days that followed the shooting, neighborhood and city residents reflected on the conditions that led to the shooting and wondered “who is the real victim” (Alvarez 1998) The plight of Albert Sims living in “his private stretch of no-man’s land” brought to light the conditions in which Baltimore’s older inner city residents lived on a daily basis (ibid). Sixty-eight-year-old Francis Hayward Brown, an Oliver resident, told The Sun:

[s]ome of the people in the neighborhood I’ve been talking to, especially the elderly people, are sorry the young man got killed but they’re not sorry that the man shot him. The elderly have been having a pretty rough time with the young people – you just can’t seem to get them to see that older people should be able to walk down the street without getting beat up. (ibid)

Eighty-four year old Robert L. Goode, who moved out of the neighborhood, said “[t]he longer I stayed, the worse it got,” referring to the violent culture which accompanied the drug trade (ibid). Goode recalled an incident in which “a 7-year-old boy cussed me out” and lamented that “people don’t raise children no more” (ibid).

The Sun, acting on the advice of Oliver residents to look into the conditions that led to the shooting, offered an editorial which moved beyond the particular individuals involved to observe that the “most disturbing thing about this story is the reaction it provoked in the neighborhood where it happened”(The Sun 1998). A sign of how entrenched violence had become in Oliver and other parts of East Baltimore can be seen by the fact that “residents were not shocked. They basically said it was only a matter of time before something like this occurred and they expect it to happen again” (ibid). The editors of The Sun asked:

[h]ow does a community get to this point, where a street is uninhabitable for a lone 77-year-old; where kids roam about wreaking havoc; where people are desperate for protection and inured to tragedy? (The Sun 1998)

The editorial closes with a challenge to the city and region to seek “answers for the citizens who live in places like the neighborhood that proved the ruin of Albert Sims and Jermaine Jordan (ibid).

Focusing on the gap between the older generation and the youngest, Sun reporter Rafael Alvarez interviewed Maryland State Police Chief Psychologist James P. McGee. The following block quote includes direct quotes from McGee and Alvarez’s paraphrasing of McGee:

There will always be tension between those who believe they’ve seen it all and those who think they know it all, McGee said. But in areas of utter squalor like Llewelyn Avenue – Sims’ home and 21 empty buildings slated to be wiped of the map since news of the tragedy broke – anything goes. “It’s no accident that these things take place where they do. Kids go into an area like that and feel that city elders have totally abandoned it. No one cares. Under those circumstances, why would they feel respect for elders? The elderly gentlemen also realizes that he’s been stranded. Why would this guy reasonably expect the city to come and help him? The block itself says loud and clear that the city doesn’t care, [that] if you’re under threat you have to protect yourself because nobody else will.” Those likely to sympathize with the plight of Sims, McGee said, are those who have live through the experience with “youth perceived as nameless, faceless thugs with no identity other than predators. From there, its very easy to go to the next step” where their lives don’t matter. (Alvarez 1998)

The anonymous status of youth is affirmed in the following quote from the Afro-American: “I think about the neighbor who freely shared with us how terribly the kids harassed Mr. Sims and yet admitted that he didn’t even know Jermaine” (Boulware 1998). The fact that this event spawned a debate about who was at fault, and very little reflection on the fact that a child died would be unthinkable in a healthier neighborhood or community. As the above quotation from Dr. McGee reminds, it is no accident that these things happen where they do.

3.2.6 Erasure

The block of Llewelyn Avenue that saw the entanglement of Jordan's and Sims' lives had been slated for demolition as part of an "ambitious plan of the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition to raze 400 houses and rehabilitate another 500" (O'Donnell 1998). On July 8, three days after the shooting, City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) inspectors arrived on the block to condemn it and move it up on the priority demolition list. The Sun reported that the shooting of Jermaine Jordan has "paved the way for a wholesale demolition" (ibid). Twenty-two houses were to be razed in the coming month. A spokesman for DHCD said that all of the property owners had been notified but that "we don't expect significant resistant...most of them [the properties] are long-term abandoned" (ibid). The Sun cited a man who owned ten of the Llewelyn Avenue properties and paraphrased him by saying that "he expects the city to take over nine of them [his properties] for nonpayment of taxes. He said the block lost the battle of drugs and crime" (ibid).

On July 17, 1998 City wrecking crews demolished twenty two houses along the 1600 block of Llewelyn Avenue. "The rowhouses on the narrow East Baltimore alley tumbled easily in a heap of dust, splintered wood and cracked red bricks. People who lived nearby watched the demolition, which took a City Public Works Department crew about an hour to finish" (Shields 1998). Carolyn Lee a resident who lived nearby raised three children on the demolished block. As she watched the demolition she stated: "I know they said they were going to do it, but it looks so strange....I had some of the best times of my life there" (ibid). Another resident, Venus Ware, suggested that even though the buildings are gone, the memory of the tragedy will persist: "they should've knocked it

down before all this stuff started happening” (ibid). Ware’s comment suggest a “too little, too late” lamentation at the loss of a young life and the complete uprooting of an older one.

This remarkable act of erasure, of forgetting, occurred less than two weeks after Jermaine Jordan was shot (Map 3.2). The decision by city leaders to move the Llewelyn Avenue block up on the demolition list reveals just how business-like the landscape of death and alienation had become in Oliver and other troubled parts of Baltimore. The specific criteria used to decide on the expedition of the Llewelyn Avenue demolition are not known. While the effect of the demolition was an erasure, it may very well have been an administrative decision to proceed more quickly since the block was now completely uninhabited. The symbolism, however, of removing the blighted scene would not have been lost on then Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke. A mayor who was utterly silent on the Jordan-Sims affair – save the sound of bulldozers and collapsing rowhouses.



Map 3.2: 1600 block of Llewelyn. The vacant green space in the center of this image is the site of the former 1600 block of Llewelyn Avenue. (Image: Google Earth 2006)

Erasure is not an uncommon reaction in the wake of tragedy. Persons often want to either remove the place of tragic events entirely or they want to put everything back just as it was. This is affirmed by the quote of 14 year-old Damian Tate, who when asked about the demolition of the block and the resulting rubble, said “it looks better” (Shields 1998).

The Jordan-Sims affair is a tale of the physical abandonment of a neighborhood and the social abandonment of two generations of residents: the oldest and the youngest. The particulars of whether Jermaine Jordan threw the brick or whether he was a decent or troubled kid, or whether Albert Sims was or was not mentally competent are not as relevant as the fact that the Oliver neighborhood did not seem surprised at the event and expected it to happen again. The abandonment which quickly became the heart of this story in the mainstream press, is not a metaphorical abandonment, it is literal. Albert Sims’ block was abandoned. Albert Sims himself was abandoned. While Jermaine Jordan in particular may not have been abandoned by his family – and all statements indicate that he was not – the nameless, faceless youth of which neighborhood residents spoke in the wake of the shooting were indeed abandoned by a collapsed social structure.

Interpreting these events and comments through the lens of place-space tensions yields key qualitative baseline observations. High rates of abandonment and vacancy yielded a neighborhood environment in which very few signs of social cohesion. This abandonment represents the dehumanization of the place that Oliver once was. The socio-cultural content once invested in the neighborhood and enabled place gave way to the disabling administration of space by disrespectful children and teens, and violent

drug criminals. Elders isolated themselves inside their houses to avoid confrontation. Teenagers became faceless, nameless enemies of long-time residents. Properties were freely attacked and destroyed. The City used the death of a teen and the incarceration of a sick, elderly man to justify the erasure of an entire city block. Some saw this erasure as the removal of a dangerous space. Others saw the removal as the removal of a place of a lifetime of memories. As of this writing (October 2006) the 1600 block of Llewelyn Avenue stands as it has since 1998. The difference is that the open space is now populated by rats and strewn with discarded drug paraphernalia, alcohol bottles, and tires.

It is interesting to note that in The Sun's reporting of the Jordan-Sims affair, at no time in eleven news or opinion articles is the Oliver neighborhood referred to by name. The spatial references were limited to the vacant "1600 block of Llewelyn Avenue" or to "East Baltimore." The reference to East Baltimore will be repeated throughout the presentation of data and has implications for the negotiation between space and place. This reinforces the notion that Oliver has typically not been referred to by any particular name. As of 1998 Oliver is not on the map.

This chapter has been a presentation of the setting and methods of the research. I have attempted to set the scene by combining quantitative descriptions and qualitative examples of contemporary Baltimore in the context of global economic shifts, and the implications of structural forces at the neighborhood scale. Harvey's (2000) roots of Baltimore' problems serve as the backdrop for the harsh everyday realities of life in struggling parts of inner city Baltimore. BNIA's "vital signs" data provide a quantitative look into Oliver. The Jordan-Simms affair reveals how the damaged neighborhood dealt with violence and memory just prior to the Dawson's arrival in Oliver.

The following chapters present the case of the Dawson family, their murder, and aftermath. Data presented in the next three chapters will reveal the emergence of a sociocultural landscape composed of multiple threads of memory. From October 2002 through December 2005, the data suggest that the threads occasionally converge, diverge, and work in parallel to produce a tension between space and place which is made manifest as the memorial landscape.

Chapter Four:

The lives and deaths of the Dawson family in Oliver

This chapter is the first of two in which primary and secondary data are presented. The primary purpose of this chapter is to chronicle the murders from the months, weeks, and days leading up to the fatal fire, the immediate aftermath, and the rallies and vigils which followed. The chapter concludes with a description of the public funeral for Angela Dawson and her five children. The importance of the data presented here is that it reveals the early stages of memorial negotiation as expressed upon and through the socio-cultural landscape. Space and place are keenly present in the time leading up to the tragedy, the crime scene itself, and the memorial and commemorative behavior in immediate post-Dawson Oliver. In the period of a few weeks, the data reveal the transformation of a neighborhood previously unable to preserve memory to one obsessed with remembering.

4.1 The Dawsons in Oliver

The Dawson family moved into their rented three story rowhouse at 1401 E. Preston Street in the Fall of 1998, a few months after Jermaine Jordan was shot to death by Albert Sims. Positioned on the corner of E. Preston and N. Eden streets, the large rowhouse was a welcome change for the Dawsons, who moved from a two bedroom apartment on E. Biddle. Alice McNack, Carnell Dawson's sister, recollected the importance of the move to the family: “[w]hen they moved to Preston, that was a like heaven to them. They had their own rooms...he [Carnell Sr.] made an oasis for his

family on Preston” (Thompson 2002). All accounts suggest that Carnell and Angela Dawson placed a high value on their home and were vigilant in protecting it.

Angela Dawson, who raised her children full-time, protected the five of them nearly every minute of the day. Accounts suggest that she was always ‘on patrol’ to ensure that her children were safe and that threats were countered with routine calls to police. Although police records show the Dawsons’ first formal attempt to rid their corner of drug and crime was March 21, 2001, it is not clear when the running battle began. A Baltimore Sun report cites police records which show that between June 26 – October 9, 2002, thirty-six calls were made to police from the Dawson home (Thompson 2002c). The calls were made to report “suspicious people, disorderly conduct, and narcotics violations” (ibid). Neighbor Pauletta Smith lamented after the fire, that “all she [Ms. Dawson] was trying to do was protect her kids” (ibid). Table 4.1 shows the dates and details of the Dawsons’ calls to police prior to October 16, 2002.

Creating and maintaining a safe place for her children seemed to occupy nearly all of Angela Dawson’s time. A Sun report stated that the “boys rode their bicycles up and down the 1200 block of Eden St., but always on the sidewalk. Their mother didn’t want them riding in the street...[The children] played basketball in their small, cement-covered back yard. In the summer, there were cookouts and laughter, children splashing in an inflatable pool” (Thompson 2002b). Henry Rogers, a long-time friend of Ms. Dawson affirmed that “she was close to her family. They had a lot of togetherness” (ibid). The Principal of Dr. Bernard Harris Elementary School, where four of the children attended, said that “Angela Dawson often walked her children to school in the morning and visited [the school]” to monitor their academic progress (ibid). To a family

DATE	REPORTED EVENT
21MAR2001	The first documented (by police) attempt by the Dawsons to rid their corner of drugs.
DEC2001	Mr. Dawson was arrested by police who spotted him buying drugs a few blocks from his house. Police seized four vials of crack cocaine from his pocket. He was given probation before judgment by a District Court judge.
26JUN– 16OCT2002	35 calls are made from the Dawson house to the 911 and 311 call center.
23AUG2002	Mrs. Dawson filed a police report against Jonathan L. Colbert (alias: John L. Henry) claiming that he slapped her and that he spray-painted a curse word on the side of their house.
25AUG2002	The Dawsons accuses Henry of throwing bricks throw the windows of their houses.
04SEP2002	Again, the Dawsons accuses Henry of throwing bricks throw the windows of their houses.
25SEP2002	Mrs. Dawson called 911 to report to police that she had just been assaulted by a man who hit her in the chest with a bottle. Mr. Dawson called 311 later that day to report that “the same guys I’ve been having trouble with” are smoking blunts on the corner in front of his house. Mr. Dawson asked police to come and move the men along. Again, on the same day, Mr. Dawson called 311 to report that the same men were back in front of his house. This time he reported that they were yelling “red top, black top” to let people know the variety of drug they were selling.
26SEP2002	Mr. Dawson called 311 to report that a man named “Durrell” was throwing bottles at his house in an attempt to break the windows.
29SEP2002	Mr. Dawson called to report that “the drug dealers are down on my corner” and asked for police to come to move them along. Police has already moved the dealers from the corner of Preston and Caroline.
01OCT2002	Mr. Dawson called police from his employer to report that “drug dealers are all around my house...my wife and kids are terrified and crying.” Mr. Dawson was at work and could not leave.
03OCT2002	The Dawson home at 1401 E. Preston Street was the site of an attempted arson when two Molotov cocktails were thrown through the kitchen window of their house.
07OCT2002	According to police Mr. and Mrs. Dawson met with prosecutors who offered to place the family under witness protection. The family declined saying that they didn’t want to move.
16OCT2002	Darrell L. Brooks firebombed the Dawson home killing Mrs. Dawson and her five children. Mr. Dawson jumped from an upper floor window and died on 23OCT2002 of burn and fall injuries.

Table 4.1: Timeline of police involvement with the Dawson family of 1401 E Preston St. (source: Baltimore Sun and author interviews)

in a less conflict-laden environment, these everyday acts of parenting are routine and unremarkable. That these behaviors were recollected by neighbors in the days immediately following the fire suggest how remarkable Ms. Dawson must have appeared to many residents unable to care for children in the same way.

Concerned about her children's physical safety inside the home, Ms. Dawson shared an anxiety with a friend from the neighborhood, Kate Stansbury, about the position of her house and its large face which was exposed to E. Preston St.:

[s]he didn't like living in the corner house. She felt the house with its large windows facing north and west was too exposed. A stray bullet could come through and hit one of her children. Angel [Ms. Dawson's nickname], wanted to move out, perhaps by Christmas. (ibid)

For a mother to be concerned about the target that her house provided to stray bullets reinforces the institutionalization of the violent drug trade as the space's controlling force. For a parent to make plans about how to reduce her family's exposure (i.e. move out) to the threat of a projectile entering through the window and striking one of her children, illustrates the complexity of life in a violent space and a reality of everyday life that would be shocking in most other communities.

The chief source of Ms. Dawson's concern was fear of retribution for her vocal and visible opposition to anyone she witnessed breaking the law near her house. Her friend Gary Jenkins stated that "[s]he was a wonderful mother and she stood for what she believed in, that nobody was going to do drugs in her neighborhood or around her children...She said 'those hoodlums are not going to run me out of my house'" (Thompson 2002b). The latter part of Jenkins' statement tells us of the opposition Ms. Dawson faced as a result of her repeated calls to police. Kate Stansbury, Ms. Dawson's friend told ABC News producers that Ms. Dawson "understood that they [drug dealers]

were just trying to make money....she just didn't want it done in front of her kids" (ABC News 2002). This view suggests that Angela Dawson was not an activist, martyr, or moral crusader, as some would later suggest, but simply a mother who was protecting her children.

Angela Dawson was not the first mother to attempt to protect her children by involving others. Pastor Calvin Keene of Memorial Baptist Church recalled the story of a woman who sought his help in protecting her children and her self:

I had a parish member who confronted the drug dealing that was happening around her stoops and behind her back alley where they were stashing drugs. She was threatened. She feared for her life. She came to me and some other leaders in the community and we organized and brought over 300 people out where we actually escorted her back into her home to tell the drug dealers and those who perpetrated the acts against her that we would not tolerate it...Unfortunately, subsequent to her going back into her home, she elected to move because the situation persisted. And so, we need to be more vigilant in our approach. We need to have some more effective community policing, for instance. (ABC News 2002)

Pre-Dawson tragedy Oliver did not have the will to sustain an actual or symbolic stance against drug criminals. I argue that the horrific nature of the Dawson murders signified a level of violent retribution not before seen in the neighborhood. This is not to say that witnesses had not before been targets of intimidation, but that the murder of seven innocent people breached a threshold of "routine violence" and approached something akin to terrorism.

Ms. Dawson's running battle with those she saw as threats were well known around their part of Oliver. Some people saw her as a "nuisance, a lady who never let up" (ibid). Neighbors reported that Ms. Dawson "couldn't distinguish between the trouble-makers and the good teenagers"(ibid). Reminiscent of the Jordan-Sims affair, this statement recalls the tendency of law-abiding residents to develop nameless and

faceless images of the enemy – in this case young males. Carole Colbert, who lived across N. Eden St. from the Dawson house, said that her grandson, John Colbert– who lived with her – had numerous encounters with Ms. Dawson:

He did have a dispute with them, with the lady who lived there... She [Dawson] called the police on him so many times it was getting to be a nuisance. Last time she called the police he'd be sitting on the steps. I sent him to the store and he'd have to cross the street to get away from her house. (Vozella 2002)

Colbert continued by saying that Ms. Dawson became “so unpopular that Colbert’s grandson considered circulating a petition calling for the family to move out” (ibid). Although no petition was ever circulated, the comments of Ms. Colbert reveal Ms. Dawson’s vigilance and the conflict that it created with neighborhood youth.

Angela Dawson was seen by some as an instigator who threatened the structure of the neighborhood as they understood it.³ Most residents understood the rules of living in an occupied drug territory: don’t snitch, stay inside after dark, and don’t challenge the dealers or their associates in any way. Angela Dawson openly challenged the social and informal political order of the drug territory which ruled Oliver. Beyond those directly involved in the drug trade are those who are beneficiaries of the proceeds of the trade. A common understanding expressed in interviews and news accounts is that families often survive on the proceeds of drug sales. Therefore, Angela Dawson’s defiance of the rules threatened the livelihood of otherwise law-abiding families who turned a blind eye to the source of income. In the case of the Colbert family, known by police to be connected with the local drug gang, Ms. Colbert’s distaste for Angela Dawson is likely, at least in part, to be rooted in defense of the household income. A coincidental note, Jonathan Colbert was shot and killed on the day of the second anniversary of the Dawson murders.

³ The assertions presented in this paragraph are informed by interviews (most notably with local clergy), participant observations, and commentary routinely offered by local news outlets.

In the early afternoon of Sunday October 16, 2004, anniversary observers were gathering outside a church on Preston Street when the shots rang out. Colbert collapsed and died on the sidewalk in the middle of the 1400 block of E. Preston Street, three doors from the Dawson home.

4.2 The Arson Murder of the Dawson Family

Calling the police is not tolerated in these... areas in the field. Snitches get stitches. That's how it goes down, man. Can't call the law and expect not to get some kind of retaliation or you know what I'm saying? Playing with freedom here. I mean, I hate to say it, and it's not a good thing, man, but that's the way the ball bounces in these communities. (ABC News 2002)

The words of the unidentified man who spoke from the perspective of Baltimore's violent criminals rang true in the early morning hours of October 16, 2002 when Darrell L. Brooks kicked in the door at 1401 East Preston Street, poured gasoline on the floor, ignited it, and ran away. The fire engulfed the house and trapped all seven members of the family. Angela Dawson (age 36), twin brothers Keith and Kevin (age 9), Carnell Jr. (age 10), Juan (age 12), and LaWanda (age 14) died on the second and third floors of the house. Carnell Dawson Sr. (age 43), after sustaining second and third degree burns over 50% of his body, jumped from a second floor window. He died a week later at Johns Hopkins Bayview Hospital (Pelton 2002).

Calls to 911 to report the fire flooded in. During a five minute thirty-four second audio tape of the emergency calls, there are several instances in which a message asks the caller to hold because all of the lines were busy. The first call on the audio tape was from a frantic woman who stated: "Eden and Preston is a murder scene! There are five babies in the house! Please send someone" (<http://www.baltimoresun.com/search/bal->

101602fire911calls)! The next caller, more calm, told the operator that Ms. Dawson was on the third floor and was screaming out the window “please help”. Later callers said that “it’s a bad fire”.....“it’s too black, I can’t see anything” and one reported that he saw “somebody jumping out the window” (ibid). When asked by the operator if the house was occupied, three of the five callers said that it was, while two others were unsure. Nellie, an adjacent neighbor, recounted her experience on the night of the fire:

It [the fire and smoke] woke me up and it was raining so hard and it was cold. And I had my head out the window and I asked Gwen what’s wrong. Because she was just crying, coming around the corner. She said “it’s a shame those babies died in that fire”. I said: “What babies!” And I said I’ll be right down. I slipped something on and went and around the corner. Everything was taped off.....[A police officer] said “Ma’am, right now this looks like it might be a homicide and not just a fire so we can’t let anyone past the line right now.” So a lot of neighbors just stood there, embraced each other and talked and tried to see what we could do to help. The emergency people were mainly on the opposite side of the yellow tape to try to do what they could do at that particular time. (Author interview)

The cold rain continued as daylight arrived on October 16 as six of the seven members of the Dawson family were dead, the house on the corner of Preston and Eden Streets was a blackened shell (Photograph 4.1). Mike, a community activist and former U.S. Army Ranger, described the blackness:

I was an Army Ranger for four years, and, you know, I’ve been to Mogadishu [Somalia], I’ve been to a lot of places, I’ve seen some things. I’d never seen so blackened a building in my life. (interview)



Photograph 4.1 The scene at 1401 E. Preston Street on the morning of October 16, 2002 (source: Associated Press)

Reports of the fire appeared in newspapers and on broadcast television and radio news programs across the United States and around the world. Official reports were that the cause of the fire was unknown and under investigation (Thompson 2002a). Neighbors, however, had no doubt about the cause of the fire. Henry Rogers, a friend of Ms. Dawson unequivocally stated: "It was deliberate. It was deliberate...They had an ongoing problem all this year, threats, accusations, police being called...They were fearful for their lives. The husband and wife were scared. ... It was heavy on their hearts" (ibid). Unlike the neighborhood reaction to the Jordan-Sims Affair, the Dawson fire stirred raw emotions in a neighborhood that thought it had seen it all. Disbelief, fear, outrage, pain and sorrow beset the Oliver neighborhood, East Baltimore, and the entire city and region.

Darrell L. Brooks was arrested on October 17, 2002 and charged with arson and six counts of murder. A seventh murder charge would be added upon the death of Mr. Dawson. Mr. Brooks had been on two years probation but had never reported to his

parole officer and was therefore in violation (Willis 2002). The State of Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services came under immediate criticism for its poor supervision of Mr. Brooks and other parolees (ibid).

In addition to the serious questions about Mr. Brooks' supervision were questions from various corners on the measures taken to protect the Dawson family. The Sun cited law enforcement officials as stating that the Dawson's refused to be relocated from their home for the sake of protection (Thompson 2002a). John Robert Harrington, Jr., Ms. Dawson's brother, stated that he did not believe the Baltimore City Police Department's claims that they offered to protect the Dawson's by moving them after the October 3, 2002 firebombing (Willis 2002). Baltimore Police Detective T. Holt insisted that the offer of relocation was declined. Detective Holt stated: "I had stayed in touch with the family...I did what I could. We tried to relocate them, but they were insistent on staying put. They said they did not want the drug dealers to run them out of the neighborhood"(ibid). The commander of the police community outreach program, Lieutenant Rick Hite, stated that three of his officers visited the Dawsons after the first firebombing. Lt. Hite confirms the Dawsons' persistence:

[t]hey were in the process of considering a move to the West Side, but Mr. Dawson was adamant about the fact that they were not going to let the drug dealers remove them...We also offered to transport Mr. Dawson to and from work. Safety is a relative term. At that point, he felt a need to safeguard his family in a manner in which he felt comfortable. (ibid)

Reverend Willie Armstrong of the Baltimore Child Development Community Policing Program, stated his awareness of police attempts to move the Dawsons: "[t]hey had said the landlord was helping them...They were trying to find someplace else to go, and they were even considering moving back to Oklahoma" (ibid), Mr. Dawson's birthplace.

4.3 Enter BUILD

At this point in the chronicling of the Dawson tragedy it is important to introduce one of the important groups in the formation of the local memorial landscape:

Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development – commonly known as BUILD. A city-wide activist group, BUILD was founded in 1977 as a local branch of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). The IAF was founded by famed community and union organizer Saul Alinsky in 1940. IAF currently boasts fifty three local organizations in the United States and three abroad (www.industrialareasfoundation.org) BUILD describes itself as a “faith-based, non-partisan, multi-denominational, ecumenical, city-wide citizen organization” (www.buildiaf.org). BUILD’s model for community organizing draws upon what it sees as the biggest source of power in Baltimore’s African American community, its congregations. BUILD’s sole objective is to increase the political power of its members. Membership in BUILD is limited to institutions, primarily congregations, but also schools and community associations. BUILD is well known in Baltimore for its work in the late 1980s and 1990s on the redevelopment of West Baltimore’s Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood. BUILD has also seen success on issues such as after-school programs, living wage issues, and “pay-day” lenders.

A hallmark of BUILD’s success is its focus on action. In fact, BUILD does not meet or rally – they hold “actions.” Every amount of BUILD’s effort is directed, in a highly disciplined manner, to building power through action. The leaders of BUILD are the clergy and lay leaders who represent congregations. Each leader is trained by the IAF in an intense two week leadership program. BUILD is staffed by a handful of

professional organizers who provide advice and direction to its leaders, but who remain behind the scenes. BUILD is known in Baltimore for its ability to demand change by organizing large numbers – hundreds and thousands – of people to participate in repeated actions. BUILD’s ability to “turn out” hundreds of people on a regular basis is strong testimony to the power of African-American clergy (interviews).

BUILD entered Oliver in 1997 with a small after-school program know as Child First. With seven congregational members in Oliver, it was not long before BUILD began to branch out from the elementary school where the program was based to seeking to make change in the entire neighborhood. Thus, the October 7, 2000 survey was an action to ask residents what they wanted. BUILD reported the results of the survey at a February 2, 2001 meeting. In order to reclaim the neighborhood from the drug trade, BUILD reported that residents wanted: affordable housing, safe parks, a multipurpose community center, and good schools (Willis 2002). At a day-long community meeting, BUILD demanded that the City work as aggressively with them on the redevelopment of Oliver, as on other high profile economic development initiatives. A key intervention sought by BUILD was a reduction in the amount of time required to acquire a vacant property – which takes approximately 18 months (ibid). City officials indicated that they would work with BUILD on this process. BUILD’s lead organizer said that their efforts were “not just about rebuilding or redeveloping a neighborhood... That's just bricks and mortar. This is about seven BUILD churches, a community association and a school coming together to rebuild people's lives” (ibid).

In September 2001, BUILD leveled harsh criticism against newly elected Baltimore Mayor Martin O’Malley. Before a crowd of over 1,000 people, BUILD Co-

Chair, Bishop Douglas I. Miles, called O'Malley a "governor wanna-be" and accused him of breaking a promise of \$2 million for BUILD's Child First after school program (Francke 2001). Pointing to accountability and performance, the Mayor's office commented that a "larger pot of after-school dollars than ever is being awarded by merit rather than political power...The programs that are not judged effective are seeing their funding reduced"(ibid). While Maryland's political elite (including current and former governors and lawmakers from the federal, state, and local levels) attended BUILD's 25th anniversary celebration, Martin O'Malley did not (Nitkin 2002).

The clash between BUILD and O'Malley would continue to play out over the next few years and would become particularly ugly in the wake of the Dawson murders. BUILD's focus on Oliver would also overshadow individual community groups and congregations. The Oliver Community Association, for example, was effectively silenced by BUILD's powerful voice on matters of community concern. Another group, Clergy United for Renewal of East Baltimore (CURE), would be dissolved out of the duplication of clergy efforts in East Baltimore. Finally, the Johns Hopkins Hospital affiliated non-profit Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC) would fade into the background of East Baltimore community politics.

4.4. BUILD Rally and Vigil - October 20, 2002

On October 19, 2002 The New York Times stated that 500 members of BUILD would attend a rally and vigil in front of the Dawson home the following day Times, 2002b). The Sun reported that a crowd of one hundred gathered for a rally and vigil for the Dawson family (Kay 2002). Photographs of the rally suggest a crowd



Photograph 4.2: Hundreds gathered on October 19, 2002 in front of the Dawson home at 1401 E. Preston Street to remember the family and rally the community against violence. (Photo courtesy: JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health.)

numbering more than 200 (Photograph 4.2). The BUILD-led rally was attended by neighborhood residents, residents from other neighborhoods, clergy from around Baltimore, a few officials from the City and State; and was covered by broadcast and print news agencies. Karmen Smith, a resident of Baltimore's Hamilton neighborhood (several miles northeast of Oliver), stated that she brought her children to the rally "to show them the kind of things the drug trade has done to our communities...I believe there's more with us than there is with [drug dealers]. They should not be able to strike fear or terrorize our communities like this"(ibid). Ms. Dawson's brother, John R. Harrington Jr., told the crowd that it was up to them to stop the drug criminals from controlling the community: "[i]f the community's not willing to get involved... These guys don't respect property. They don't respect themselves" (ibid).

The rally was broadcast live on 105.7 FM.⁴ Other speakers include Rev. Iris Tucker of Knox Presbyterian Baptist Church, Rev. Calvin Keene of Memorial Baptist Church, Bishop Douglas Miles of Koinonia Baptist Church and BUILD co-chair, and State Senator Nathaniel J. McFadden, an Oliver resident and Senate Majority Leader. The rally was organized by the local BUILD members. Dante, a BUILD staff organizer, stated the rationale for the rally:

In a crisis what do you do? You meet. So we pulled our leaders together in the Oliver neighborhood and met at Zion Baptist Church and said “what should be our response?” And we agreed that we had to make people safe here. At the same time this happened, within a couple of days, you know ten families came to me and said that they were no different from the Dawsons. You know, they called 911 and now they have an “x” on their back....And then finally we said we have to have an action.. What we call an “action.” So we had 400 people on the doorsteps of the Dawson family home. (interview) (Photograph 4.3)



Photograph 4.3: A temporary blue canvas tent was erected in front of the Dawson home. The shelter served as a temporary meeting place as well as protection for the memorial materials which had accumulated as persons came to pay their respects. (Photo courtesy: JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)

⁴ Attempts to locate an audio recording of the rally were unsuccessful as of the time of this writing.

Notable here is the estimate of the number of people who attended the rally. This puts the range of estimates between one hundred and five hundred people. The rally was meant to reassure the people of Oliver that the Dawson murders had created a heightened awareness of safety and the need for law abiding residents to come together in collective grief and mourning and to quell fears. Planning for this community-directed rally/vigil began the afternoon after the Dawson murders. While City and State officials said very little in the two days following the murders, BUILD's leaders – unrestrained by the political need to reserve judgment – planned and acted in the ways they deemed appropriate. Placards were held at the rally which read “Thou shalt not kill”. A tent was erected in front of the Dawson home as a temporary meeting place and as a shelter for the memorial of flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, note cards, and a water jug labeled “The Dawson Family” into which people contributed money. A hand written note on the outside of the blue canvas tent read: “Think of the children, and please stop the madness.” Andre, the BUILD organizer, reflected on the words of Rev. Keene regarding the meaning of the Dawsons themselves to the local community:

Rev. Keen said it well in his speech in front of the Dawson family home on that Sunday....you know...he said: “We know them. The Dawsons were known to us. We are their pastors. Their school teachers. Their grandparents that helped raise their children. We knew the Dawsons.” And, you know the call after any tragedy is that, of any martyr, is not to die in vain. Well, [quoting Keen] “our job is to make sure that doesn't happen.” So there really was a rallying cry. But this work didn't start because of it. I think the best way to describe it is that it intensified our work. (interview)

The tone of the rally was of anger at the senseless loss of a family and claims that the City and Mayor Martin O'Malley had not done enough to protect the Dawsons

and was not doing enough in response to their murders. Andre reflected on BUILD's shared perspective on the impact of the murders:

So we stood outside the Dawson family home, and [agreed] that “if we don't rebuild Oliver, and neighborhoods like Oliver, then tragedies like the Dawson family will happen again, whether it's in this neighborhood or another neighborhood, it'll happen.” I mean this tragedy, almost like Katrina, highlights 40 years of systematic neglect of neighborhoods like Oliver...of poor and working poor people...so how are we going to respond. So the memory for me, if you're asking more about memory, is those moments that, you know, radicalized my own anger around what should be our response. And keep in mind, I mean, there's articles all the way back to I think 2001 you know, where BUILD teams are in the streets in Oliver, you know, going door to door to find out what people want to have done. And we're hearing vacant homes, crime, and trash. And, you know, BUILD congregations started acquiring property in order to act on that vision. So we already had a vision to rebuild and revitalize Oliver, and what the Dawson family tragedy did was intensify that. (Author interview)



Photograph 4.4: Rev. Calvin Keene addresses the crowd in front of 1401 E. Preston Street. Confused by the silence and perceived lack of action on the part of Baltimore's Mayor Martin O'Malley, Keene and the crowd chanted: “Where's O'Malley?” (photo courtesy: JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health).

Led by Rev. Calvin Keene (Photograph 4.4), a BUILD clergy member, the crowd chanted “Where's O'Malley” (The New York Times 2002). Rev. Keene stated: “the community is here; where is the Mayor?...Mayor O'Malley, we're looking for you” (ibid). BUILD contended that tragedies like the Dawson murders were the result of years

of neglect as a low priority for City Hall (ibid). BUILD Co-chair, Bishop Douglas I.

Miles stated:

Oliver is just an example of what has happened in large urban areas, particularly on the East Coast for the past 35 years. There's been a systematic disinvestment in urban centers beyond the downtown community. And as such, now, Oliver is manifesting many of the problems that that disinvestment has created, the lack of employment, the lack of livable housing, the lack of after school programs for children. The drug epidemic that's throughout the City of Baltimore, particularly, outside of, again, the downtown area. So it's representative of the national benign neglect in urban centers. (ABC News 2002)

Rev. Keene stated that tragedies will keep happening unless something fundamental changes:

We need a more cooperative effort from corporate institutions in our city to reinvest so that we can turn the situation around. It's a long-term plan but we need to invest now because if we don't, two years from now, five years from now, you'll be back here talking to me because we've had another tragedy in our community. (ABC News 2002)

The degree to which the content and tone of Andre's, Rev. Keene's, and Bishops Miles' statements agree is a clear example of the painstaking preparedness of BUILD clergy. As stated by Andre, nothing BUILD leaders say or do is accidental or "off-the cuff"(field notes September 2005). More important is the political stance taken by BUILD that all of the bad things that happen in Oliver are caused by systematic neglect and disinvestment by city, state, and federal governments. This position allowed the Dawson murders to be politicized from the start. To use a literary metaphor, BUILD saw great potential for the Dawson tragedy as an illustrative plot point in their political narrative of the death and hoped-for rebirth of Oliver. A plot point that had the potential to leverage real change in the social and physical reality of Oliver.

4.5 The response from public officials:

Mayor O'Malley avoided the media while he visited the burned-out home, met with the Dawson's grieving family, and coordinated with police and fire commissioners in the immediate aftermath of the fire (Pelton 2002b). Councilman Bernard C. Young, who resided near the Dawson home, assessed the O'Malley's performance: "I think the mayor's leadership has been great....The reason the mayor has not been in the news is because there is an investigation going on....Everyone's focus right now is on getting the most violent criminals off the street" (ibid). Regarding BUILD's accusations, Gerry Shields, a spokesman for Mayor O'Malley, pointed out the BUILD "has been no fan of the mayor, and to use this horrendous incident as an opportunity to criticize the mayor is unbelievable" (ibid). In the immediate days after the murders, it appeared that 1401 E. Preston Street emerged as a battle ground in the ongoing feud between BUILD and the Mayor. The feud dated back to 2000 when BUILD alleged that the Mayor reneged on a campaign promise to fund its Child First after-school program (Francke 2001). Tony White, another spokesman for O'Malley, candidly stated that "BUILD appears to have achieved the dubious distinction of becoming the first group to try to use this tragedy to promote its own agenda". White continued by saying that "if there's any finger-pointing, it should be at the drug dealers" (Walker 2002).

In the hours and days after the arson murder of the Dawson family the perception in Oliver and across East Baltimore was that public officials had not responded at all, or did so with a muted tone. While hindsight lends reasonable explanations to the initially muted tone of public officials and lawmakers, the perception was that a "double standard" was playing out which cast Oliver residents as "second-class citizens" (New

York Times 2002b). The lone lawmaker who defied the need to know the facts of the case before speaking was State Senator Nathaniel J. McFadden. During BUILD's rally on October 20, 2002 and in interviews with various news agencies, McFadden referred to the murders as an act of terrorism, called for the activation of the National Guard to patrol the streets of East Baltimore, and assured residents of "this and all the other 'Edens and Prestons' that people would have the positive things they need to live safely and happily" (ABC News 2002).

Police and fire officials released information to the public and press as their investigations became conclusive that the fire was indeed arson and that Darrell L. Brooks was indeed the suspect – both of which neighbors already knew. When forensic evidence and witness statements led to Mr. Brooks' arrest, Mayor O'Malley stated that "these children will not have died in vain...This is not the future of our city. This has to become part of our past" (Vozella 2002). Police Commissioner Edward T. Norris stated that the Dawsons "acted heroically...They did the things good citizens should do" (ibid). Norris, initially more vocal than O'Malley, expressed his hope that the outrage in the community is galvanized and directed at drug dealers and violent criminals: "this is going to be, I hope, a tipping point in this city....It's about time we got the outrage focused in the right direction" (ibid).

City and state lawmakers, however, spoke with a much more aggressive tone. Several lawmakers compared the situation at the corner of Eden and Preston Streets with the Washington, D.C. area sniper shootings. The crux of the comparison was that every effort imaginable was being taken to find and stop the sniper in wealthier suburbs, while

seven people are burned to death in their inner-city home. Baltimore City Councilman, Melvin L. Stukes stated:

I know we don't have the manpower on the Police Department to man every corner. That's what we've got the military for....The military is being used on the sniper, with the spy plane. Well, this is terror too. (ibid)

The context for comparisons to “the sniper” is the October 2002 random sniper attacks on suburban Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Two men, John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, menaced the region with random shootings which claimed ten lives. For several nervous weeks the region was terrorized by two gunmen. The sniper shootings dominated local, national, and international news. The full resources of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies – including the US military – were used to apprehend the snipers. Contemporaneous to the Dawson murder, the sniper shootings overshadowed the tragedy in Baltimore in the regional and national press. While the Dawson murders were reported around the US and world, there is every reason to believe that it would have been considered a more significant event if not for the sniper attacks. Recognizing the importance of the Dawson murders, the ABC News television program Nightline, dedicated an entire forty minute episode to the Dawson murders and the aftermath on November 1, 2002. The news special, entitled “Mean Streets,” suggested that the death of the Dawsons represented a “rebuke to the media” (Folkenflik 2002) for not paying ample attention to the lives and deaths of inner city residents. The broadcast format used no reporter narration. Rather, the voices and images of Oliver residents, told the story. Nightline executive producer Leroy Sievers stated the motivation for the program:

There are neighborhoods where people are victims of violence all the time...Here's this struggle on this block and this woman and her family trying to

fight the drug dealers. We thought we needed to show that... In the media we're often accused of getting it wrong or imposing our own view of it. This is one where we want to hear from the people... (ibid)

The forty minute program is a vital source of data for this study as it captured extended interview statements from neighbors, clergy, and political leaders in the days immediately following the murders.

Both the struggle faced by the Dawsons, and the struggle Baltimore faced after the Dawsons to “reclaim the city” were consistently compared to international terrorism and the sniper crisis in suburban Washington, D.C. Sen. McFadden stated on October 16, 2002: “We’ve been fighting this thing, it’s an ongoing battle... We’re talking about terrorism around the world. We’ve got terrorism right here with some of these drug dealers”(Thompson 2002a). After several days of closed-door meetings with city, state, and federal lawmakers and officials, McFadden expanded upon the terrorism comparison:

We have terrorist cells of juvenile drug dealers... We liken it to al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Same kind of thing. And it’s all over the city. And they have no fear of retribution. It’s just a brazen attack when you firebomb a person’s house two times within a month... We want to respond just like the Israelis would respond when they’re bombed. You bomb them one day, they take action the next day.(Vozella 2002)

This fervor played out behind closed-doors as officials developed a strategy which would provide more than words of comfort and assurance to Oliver, but would provide interventions which would show that the city and state, in particular, grasped the magnitude of the event and the outrage within the community. An unidentified male resident of Oliver echoed lawmakers and officials regarding terrorism:

I would label this as domestic terrorism. You have someone who stood for something that was positive, that was just, that was worthwhile, lose their life, in exchange or due to the fact that this person wanted to continue illegal illicit activities on these streets. That to me, what happened here's a terroristic (sic) act. It is no more or less terroristic than what they did in New York or Pennsylvania or

Washington, DC. It's an act of terrorism. It's just domestic terrorism. It originated here as opposed to outside sources.(ABC News 2002)

On October 17, 2002, the shared fervor was revealed when Mayor O'Malley made an unannounced appearance on WBAL radio after radio hosts had harshly criticized O'Malley for keeping such a low profile in the days after the Dawson murder. O'Malley, normally known for his passionate outbursts and emotional speeches, broke from his restraint by firing back at radio hosts who earlier called the Mayor and City Council "nitwit politicians" 2002c). The Mayor angrily stated:

If indeed this was an intentional firebombing ... all of us should be outraged. I was near tears all day yesterday, and I couldn't stop thinking about my four children all yesterday...I barely got through a moment yesterday without thinking of those kids...People have a very easy time blowing off homicides in the city of Baltimore...But the fact of the matter is these kids had absolutely no culpability in what happened to them. And I am going to do everything in my power to make sure the sacrifice they made was not in vain...I think you do the body politic a grave disservice when you blame these heinous acts on the so-called nitwit politicians...On that note, that probably is a good way to exit...And gentlemen, if you enjoyed that, come outside after the show, and I'll kick your ass. (ibid)

On October 19, 2002 The Sun offered an analysis of the Mayor entitled "For the mayor it's all personal, especially fire; He appears to take deaths as affront to crime fight."(Pelton 2002b) The relevance of the article is that it portrays O'Malley as being in personal crisis in the wake of the Dawson murders. For a man who "often wears his passion in public," O'Malley was unusually quiet in the eyes of many (ibid). Those close to O'Malley stated that they had "rarely seen him look so down as after the firebombing"(ibid). Michael Cryor, co-chairman (with O'Malley) of the City's "Believe" anti-drug campaign observed that O'Malley "has just been traumatized by this, both as a father and a mayor... The mayor's wife has just had a new baby, and I think the

vulnerability of children is very much with him”(ibid). Earlier in the week, O’Malley stated to veteran reporter Tom Pelton:

I went by the scene of the fire, and I’ve been in constant contact with our fire chief and our police commissioner....And I’ve looked into the eyes of that [fire] chief who was out there in the early morning hours, and you could just see how shaken he was by the grave visage he had to witness of those little kids being carried out of that house. (ibid)

The fact that the mayor of one of the deadliest cities in the United States was in personal crisis is reflective of the significance of the Dawson murders and of the feelings of the entire city and region. As with the reaction at the neighborhood scale, the magnitude of the tragedy shook O’Malley because it breached the threshold of everyday violence and death. The notion of “everyday” violence and death may sound harsh. This phrase refers to the sorts of deaths which occur between members of the drug trade: criminals hurting and killing rival criminals. The transgression of criminal against criminal violence into the lives and deaths of innocent children and adults is among the most shocking aspects of the Dawson murders.

A streaming video statement from O’Malley (made available on the Mayor’s office website on October 18, 2002) revealed a subdued tone as the mayor invited residents to remember, pray, and resolve:

Dear Fellow Citizen: This week, as a people, we are grieving a horrible loss in our city. We lost 5 innocent kids, and their mom, and their father, who is clinging to life and is going to have to wake up to that loss if indeed he does. We've lost the most valuable assets any city can have, and that is, the children that are our city's future. The people, who have done this, want to cower us, want us to stop, want us to retreat.

If there is anything that we have to vow because of this, it is that we only become stronger in our determination, and not to let the small number of bad people in this city run out the overwhelming number of those of us who truly care, like the Dawson family cared. I'd like you to join us on Monday, October 21st at 6PM for

a moment of remembrance, prayer and resolve on behalf of the Dawson family at Eden and Preston Streets. I hope to see you there. (O'Malley 2002)

Photograph 4.5 accompanied the streaming video statement on the mayor's website. The mélange of bright colored balloons, stuffed animals, notes, and flags against the burned-out backdrop of 1401 E. Preston came to represent the tragedy. Images of the spontaneous memorial appeared repeatedly in television, websites, and in newspapers as the visual representation of the loss experienced in Oliver and throughout Baltimore.



Photograph 4.5: Memorial in front of 1401 E. Preston Street. Photo source: Office of the Mayor of the City of Baltimore, 2002)

4.6 The October 21, 2002 rally and vigil at the corner of Eden and Preston

The two-hour rally and vigil at the corner of Eden and Preston streets carried a more official tone than the BUILD-led rally. The city-wide rally was attended by between one and two thousand people (Photograph 4.6). Notable figures and officials such as NAACP head Kweisi Mfume, U.S. Representative Elijah E. Cummings, local radio host Lawrence Young, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townshend, Mayor O'Malley, Commissioner Norris, Sen. McFadden, and renowned surgeon Dr. Benjamin Carson (Photograph 4.7). Mayor O'Malley spoke of the murder of the Dawsons as



Photograph 4.6: An estimated 1,000-2,000 people gathered at the corner of Eden and Preston to remember the Dawson family, to express their emotions, and to seek answers to what was going to be done about the constant threat under residents of certain neighborhoods live. (photo credit: Dr. Phillip Leaf)

presenting a “moment of crisis” for Baltimore which required that citizens choose where they stand in the battle for the future of the city (Thompson 2002c). O’Malley told the crowd: “[w]e’re going to pull this city together as we’ve never pulled it together because we have a responsibility to the little ones who lost their lives across the way... We all need to do our part. None of us can say we are doing enough” (ibid). Dr. Ben Carson challenged the crowd to find a way to capture the promise of the city’s children before they become victims like the Dawson children or perpetrators like Darrell Brooks (Afro-American 2002). Far from demonizing Darrell Brooks, Carson elicited his name as yet another child lost to the streets.



Photograph 4.7: The October 21 vigil/rally lasted two-hours and was marked by a formal tone in which public officials and other noted figures offered speeches, remembrances, prayers, and songs. Pictures of the victims set the backdrop for the event. The family members are, from left, Angela Dawson, mother, Keith Dawson, Keith Dawson Juan Ortiz, Carnell Dawson, Lawanda (photo credit: Elizabeth Malby, *The Sun*)

The Afro-American newspaper reported the scene:

Two thousand citizens, many holding burning candles aloft in prayer, confronted on this night with the sight of the bombed out, blackened shell of the Dawson family home, felt overwhelming sympathy and said the offer of relocation made by police and social services was not nearly good enough. (Byrd 2002b)

A neighbor attended the vigil to hear how the safety of her family would be protected: “I came here tonight to be assured that what happened to the Dawsons doesn’t happen to my family” (ibid). The neighbor, Gloria, was disappointed by the “bombast and rhetoric” of the vigil:

Not one speaker had a plan for handling any future threats against innocent citizens by drug dealers...One uniformed cop could have prevented this. When I came out this morning I couldn’t believe my eyes...There were four cops guarding a shell of a house. Ray Charles could see that was stupid. Where were they before the family died? (ibid).

Although the rally/vigil took on an official feel as Baltimore's city-wide ceremony to remember the Dawsons, the planning for the event did not originate with this goal. Radio personality Larry Young led the planning of the ceremony which included the Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network, a host of ministers, sororities and activists (Byrd 2002). As news of the community vigil spread, officials outside the planning of the event began including themselves on the program. The invitation made by the mayor above represents the redefinition of the event from a community vigil to a city-wide vigil with political undertones. All accounts indicate that the Mayor invited himself and the entire city to the rally and vigil even though he was neither the sponsor nor the host. Once this occurred other officials added themselves as podium guests who felt the need to speak to their constituencies. Therefore, not only did speakers representing Baltimore's African-American community speak, but also representatives of all levels of government spoke.

A witness of the scene indicated that "it was important to be on the stage for many people [and]...as they showed up, officials were literally pushing their way onto the stage" (interview; Photograph 4.8). In an assessment of the vigil's overriding rhetoric, The Afro-American lamented that the rhetorical "reflex after any tragedy is to invoke the policies of the 1980s rather than the policies of the late 1960's. This is relatively easy to do when all citizens ask of our leaders is to stand before the scene of yet another horrendous crime and shake their fists" (Afro-American 2002). The war against drugs would continue while the goals of a "great society" went unuttered. The rhetoric of

defense and defiance would drown the calls to address the underlying social causes of tragedies such as the Dawson murders.



Photograph 4.8: Politicians, officials, and other community leaders crowd onto the stage at the October 22 vigil at the corner of N. Eden and E. Preston streets.

4.7 The Funeral for Angela Dawson and her five children

East Baltimore's enormous Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was the site of the funeral for Angela, Kevin, Keith, Juan, LaWanda, and Carnell Jr. (Photograph 4.9) The October 24, 2002 ceremony was attended by more than one thousand people and included dozens of dignitaries and public officials (Thompson 2002d). The Sun reported on the public nature of the funeral:

The sight of six caskets, each topped by flowers and a photograph of the deceased, brought many to tears yesterday. In the week since the fatal arson, the Dawsons and their children have come to symbolize not only the courage needed to stand against drug dealing, but the high price paid when trying to bring peace to a neighborhood. (ibid)

Unlike the long list of speakers at the city-wide vigil, surviving family members chose four to speak at the funeral: Mt. Pleasant's Rev. Clifford M. Johnson Jr., White House Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy John Walters, Baltimore City Police Commissioner Edward Norris, and Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley.

The rhetoric of war and renewal was repeated throughout the ceremony. Rev. Johnson told mourners that they were engaged in nothing less than "a war between light and darkness, between good and evil" (ibid). John Walters described interventions his office was making to help law abiding people win the war. He announced the allocation of \$1 to \$2 million to pay for additional police foot patrols, police overtime, surveillance cameras and improved street lighting. Walters spoke of the debt owed to the Dawson family: "that debt is to take their place, to stand up against evil in our communities.... We will try to live every day in their memory" (ibid).

Police Commissioner Edward Norris elicited Shakespeare's Coriolanus and asked "What is the city but the people?" Norris challenged mourners and the community at large to ensure that the Dawsons' deaths have appropriate meaning: "[w]e have to realize the sacrifice of the Dawson family is in vain if we do not sustain the outrage..... This is all of our problem. ... Are we going to go and achieve our destiny, or are we going to let these people die in vain" (ibid)? Norris' message to mourners was to allow their anger to harden and be channeled into action against the criminals forces in their neighborhoods.

Mayor Martin O'Malley offered an extended quote from Rev. Martin Luther King's eulogy for the four young girls killed in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL on September 15, 1962. O'Malley couched the Dawsons as

warriors and their home at Eden and Preston as a battle ground. Speaking to drug criminals, he said:

To those who push and peddle this hate - to those who would murder these innocent -- you think you have purchased half of us and intimidated the rest, but you are as wrong as you are foolish and cruel, for you have left us the shining memory of these young martyrs, and so long as Baltimore remembers the Dawson's, we will never surrender to your hate. Not one neighborhood, not one block, not one house. (ibid)



Photograph 4.9: Pall bearers carry one of six Dawson caskets from Mount Pleasant Church. (photo credit: Associated Press)

Regarding the Dawson's sacrifice and memory, O'Malley challenged mourners and the city to believe as the Dawsons believed and to honor them by uniting "to answer hate with love" (ibid). On place and memory, O'Malley stated that survivors of the Dawsons must take up the:

unrelenting love of a family who believed in themselves, who believed in their children, who believed in their neighbors, who believed in their City. A family whose lives were taken because they were determined to do the right thing. Determined to create a safer and better place on this earth for their children..... LaWanda, Juan, Carnell, Kevin and Keith, tell us not to allow their sacrifice to

have been in vain. They tell us that they are counting on us. Counting on us for all of Baltimore's children - innocent, unoffending and beautiful - to come together as we never have before. To answer hate with love. To stand together so none of us can ever be singled out. To drive the hate of drugs out of our families and homes and neighborhoods. (ibid)

O'Malley's use of the word "believe" was intentional and intensely political. The word and concept carries intense and ambiguous emotions in Baltimore. O'Malley's multi-million dollar anti-drug "Believe" public relations campaign has been the target of both praise and criticism. The campaign has been praised for its effectiveness in connecting the everyday problems of a drug-poisoned city with higher concepts of faith. The campaign has been criticized, most notably by Dawson family survivors, as being culpable in exposing witnesses to danger. The charge is that the campaign encourages residents to call police to report crime but that no mechanism for assuring witness safety exists. The "Believe" campaign remains central to the Dawson story and will be explored in Chapter Five.

The fifty car funeral procession made the long, slow drive to Dulaney Valley Memorial Garden in the northern suburb of Timonium. The journey from the dense urban environment to the bucolic suburban environment must have presented yet another stark contrast to mourners. The Baltimore City Council passed a resolution entitled "Lights On – Remember the Dawson family" urging the collective remembrance of the Dawsons and the fight for Baltimore:

For the purpose of encouraging all Baltimore City residents to drive with their lights on and to leave their front and back porch lights on all day Thursday, October 24, 2002, in support of the Police Department's fight against crime and to remember the tragic loss of Angela Dawson and her 5 children. (Baltimore City Council 2002)

Numerous street closings and detours were necessary to execute the procession. The six members of the Dawson family were not buried in the “Fallen Heroes” section of Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens as originally announced (Photograph 4.10). The reasons behind this change are unclear as representatives of the cemetery state that they do not recollect the details of the arrangement (personal communication, March 3, 2006). Nonetheless John W. Arminger Jr., the owner of the cemetery donated the six plots in honor of the family’s sacrifice: “It’s a gesture to reach out when there are unexpected, tragic deaths in the community... You know it’s the right thing to do when you read about them” (Barnhardt 2003).



Photograph 4.10: Angela Dawson and her five children were interred at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens in the Baltimore County suburb of Timonium. The six were originally to be interred in the Fallen Heroes section of the cemetery – which honors police officers and fire fighters who perish in the line of duty – but were instead interred in the Field of Honor East. (photo credit: Amy Davis, The Sun)

Chapter Five: The aftermath of public murder in Oliver

This chapter is the second of two in which primary and secondary data are presented. The primary purpose of this chapter is to chronicle the aftermath of the tragedy from the time following the funeral for Angela Dawson and her children through December 2005. The data presented in this chapter are important as they reveal the planned and unplanned ways in which individuals and groups attempted to give meaning to the lives and deaths of the Dawsons. The work and politics of memory formation are expressed through the socio-cultural landscape in numerous ways. Space production and place-making are ever-present in the years following the murders. The existence of a “post-Dawson Baltimore” became institutionalized as a concept in the hearts and minds of Oliver’s residents and the public and private figures who concerned themselves with the family’s legacy. The data offered in this chapter reveal the struggle of politicians and local activists for the right to shape the legacy of the Dawson family. Mayor O’Malley and other officials painted the family as exemplars in the struggle of decent citizens over criminals. BUILD pointed to the murder and the plight of the family as a symptom of the decades of neglect endured by inner-city neighborhoods. The Dawson Family Memorial Committee, a small group of local residents, worked to ensure that the individual family members was not forgotten in the political wrangling.

All sides agreed over these three years that the physical and social environment in Oliver needed to be drastically altered in order to seal a lasting legacy for the Dawson family. The nature of that change, however, differs across groups. Some, such as O’Malley saw the future through the active and sustained involvement of every law-abiding citizen in combating drug dealing and violent crime. Others, such as BUILD,

thought that the physical environment must change first in order to create the conditions for lasting change. The Memorial Committee simply wanted to build the memory of the family members themselves into the fabric of the community in a manner which permits positive growth in the lives of the residents and the emergent identity of the neighborhood.

This chapter is a chronological treatment of the aftermath of the Dawson murders from November 2002 through November 2005. Because there are numerous threads of activity presented here, a perfectly straight chronological narrative is not followed. There are several instances in which a theme or thread is followed through to its own conclusion. I then return to the chronological accounting. Some of the threads are substantial enough to lend themselves to rich narratives. Other threads are less substantial, but still merit analysis and discussion. All threads are important in explicating the memorial landscape which has emerged in Oliver.

5.1 Neighborhood and city-wide interventions

Simultaneous to the grieving, mourning, and gathering to remember the Dawsons, elected and appointed government officials from the City Council to the White House coordinated, planned, and acted. Those actions were led by the Mayor's office over the following months and years. A November 11, 2002 press release detailed the forty nine actions taken by eleven City agencies in the pursuit of twenty broad goals for the improvement of Oliver (O'Malley 2002b). The press release began with this statement:

As the Oliver community and the city of Baltimore struggles to recover from the horrible arson fire that took the life of Angela Maria Dawson, her husband and

five children, ground work is being laid to forever change the environment that spawned that malicious, cowardly act of violence. Angela Dawson was a heroine, who lost her life because she chose to shield her children from the criminal element that sought to claim and pedal poison from her front stoop. (ibid) (emphasis added)

After the week long period of grief-filled vigils and ceremonies, a most practical strategy arose as a way of ensuring the “proper” memory of the Dawson family. Table 5.1 shows the details of O’Malley’s plan and immediate actions. Continuing to associate the Dawson family with the “Believe” campaign O’Malley stated at the November 11, 2002 press conference: “The Baltimore ‘Believe’ campaign unfortunately now has its first martyrs in the Dawson family....It is because of the courage of families like the Dawsons that Baltimore has for three years in a row led the nation in the reduction of violent crime” (Thompson 2002). O’Malley’s claim of the Dawsons as martyrs for his campaign was underscored by his statement that: “[i]f we choose to forget or seek comfort through denial and indifference, the magnitude of the loss attached to those seven lives will be incalculable” (O’Malley 2002b). In this instance the City has entered Oliver not to erase memory from the landscape as with the Jordan-Sims affair, but to promote remembering through interventions into the built and social environment.

Table 5.1 -- City Government Actions Taken as of November 11, 2002

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES (MOCYF)

- > Teen Nights In and Kids Night In - Every Friday night.
- > Baltimore Rising Recruitment in the Oliver Neighborhood – 1000 Fliers distributed door to door.
- > Providing crisis counseling to children in the neighborhood effected by the tragedy.

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS

- > Oliver and Madison Square Recreation Centers in the Oliver Community, made available for Teens Night-In programming and activities.
- > Challenged DRP employees to help mentor kids on MOCYF wait-list
- > Four crews assigned to abate service requests, including tree removals, pruning, plantings

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- > Expanding Operation Nightlight and Operation SafeKids to the east side in November
- > School Nurses monitoring issues related to violence in the home/community
- > 50 residential and methadone treatment slots opened for Oliver and Broadway East residents

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- > 49 smoke detectors installed
- > Canvassed neighborhood and distributed fire safety pamphlets
- > Providing extra presence in conjunction with the Police Department

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

- > Solid Waste has closed all outstanding service requests.
- > All fire hydrants painted
- > Closed all outstanding service requests including 5 BGE street lighting requests.
- > Coordinating barricades to discourage drug traffic

EBMC & DEPT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- > Has made \$6K available for community volunteers or consultant work in the Oliver community
- > Will be spending approximately \$4M over the next year and a half in Oliver
- > Helped finance 7-unit homeownership redevelopment of formerly vacant houses on Caroline Street
- > Working with Oliver area BUILD churches to facilitate assemblage of vacant properties used for dumping/drug dealing/drug stashes to be used for church-related community development projects
- > 19 HABC properties have been slated for disposition
- > \$3M committed to rehabbing 35 vacant scattered sites units
- > Blocks over 90% vacant to be demolished within the next 30 days: 1900 Block Chester, 1500 Block Bethel, 1600 Block Hoffman

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- > Extending block watch program to Oliver community
- > Enhanced partnerships with community & faith leaders
- > Daytime curfew enforcement
- > Increased involvement of BPD chaplains
- > Crime prevention workshop planned
- > Increased utilization use of BPD Senior Citizen Liaison
- > Permanent presence 24/7 in Oliver community (2 P/O's)
- > Uniformed presence for nuisance abatement/quality of life
- > Deploy TARU Command Vehicle, when available
- > Increased Helicopter Patrols
- > Recognize Hot Spot resources / Operation Safe Kids
- > Rapid response to 911 drug-related calls
- > Street Rips and Buy/Busts
- > Occasional Deployment by CID and Criminal Intelligence
- > Block closures
- > Warrant Apprehension Task Force

The intensity with which O'Malley coupled rhetoric and action conspired to send a clear message that his administration was singularly focused upon protecting the people of Oliver and improving their surroundings. Gerry Shields, an aide to O'Malley, said of post-Dawson Oliver that the "neighborhood is going to be a key for the mayor for the next year or so because of this tragedy...Its opened our eyes as to what was going on over there" (Marks 2002). This statement suggests that the Dawson murders represent a "moment" in Oliver and Baltimore which may be addressed by a year's worth of effort. BUILD members suggest that "it took thirty years of systematic neglect to ruin Oliver, and it will take as many years or more to bring it back" (interview).



An example of this renewed focus from the City came on November 13, 2002 when O'Malley launched his "Inspire Baltimore" initiative. In an attempt to capture the conceptual power of light as a symbol of hope and comfort, O'Malley sought to illuminate the distinctive steeples and belfries as well as signature buildings around the city. The objective of the initiative was to "instill pride and a sense of ownership in communities" (O'Malley 2002c). O'Malley chose to launch the forty-site citywide initiative at Oliver's Nazarene Baptist Church, the "gateway to the Oliver community" (ibid). It is interesting to note in the post-Dawson period how easily the name of the neighborhood rolls off the tongues of politicians and from the pens of reporters.

O'Malley stated that since the Dawsons died "we need to reach out to our East Baltimore neighbors" (Stiehm 2002). Regarding the importance of churches O'Malley stated:

We want our churches to serve as a beacon, a lighthouse for all of the community, a place where people can go and experience what is sometimes hard to find: peace... Years ago, churches in Baltimore served that role. We want to return to it, to say, "the light is on, we are waiting for you." (O'Malley 2002c)

O'Malley's statement is reflective of the period of mourning and aftermath that East Baltimore was still feeling in early November.

Rev. James J. Thompson, the pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church commented that the lighting of his churches gold spire would "do great things for the neighborhood" (Stiehm 2002). Rev. Thompson spoke of the community being delivered from the Dawson tragedy even though everyone was still in mourning. He lamented that "[a]ll of us were devastated by the senseless destruction of life, not only in East Baltimore but all throughout the city... They [the Dawsons] were our neighbors" (ibid). Commenting on the massive presence of City workers in the neighborhood since the Dawson tragedy, Thompson stated: "no matter how dark it seems, eventually there is light" (ibid). This brand of optimism is common in the weeks following a tragedy.

The afternoon of November 22, 2002 marked one of the first commemorations of the Dawsons since the week-long period of grief and mourning that followed the arson fire. Thirty Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts gathered at the Dawson home to hold a ceremony in honor of the family. The scouts used the ceremony to launch a petition to urge the City to construct a permanent memorial at the corner of Eden and Preston streets and to officially proclaim October 16 as "Dawson Family Day" (The Sun 2002). There is

no indication that this petition was ever acted upon by City officials. The effort of the Boy Scouts has likely been forgotten by most. The event, however, is important in that it provides an example of the small ways in which individuals and groups expressed their reaction to the Dawson murders. Further, this effort points to the myriad threads, some shorter than others, which are knitted together to create the memorial landscape. The efforts of the Boy Scouts is one of the early events which contributed to the continual transformation of the corner at Eden and Preston and the marking of the date of the murders.

Tuesday November 29, 2002 saw another use of the corner of Eden and Preston streets to honor the Dawson family. The Maryland Hip-Hop Alliance held it's "Mental Food Drive" in front of the Dawson home. The event featured the sale of the music CD "Strength in Numbers" which was produced in memory of the Dawson family. Local hip-hop artists Kevin Beasley and Al Herriott assembled, mixed, mastered, and distributed the CD in the short period since the Dawson murders. Copies of the album were sold in front of the Dawson home for five dollars with all proceeds going to the Angel Family Fund. Beasley spoke of the emotion of the event: "[w]hen I first recognized it was them, it just crushed me...I just had to drive down there. When I got there and saw it, I just broke down and wept" (Kaltenbach 2002). Of his song "Dedication" Beasley said that he "wrote the song that day after it happened...I never wrote a song that fast before. And we [cut] it that same night, the night after the fire" (ibid).

Police Commissioner Edward T. Norris recognized the value and power of the symbol of the burned out shell of the Dawson's home and images of their funeral and

burial to inspire Baltimore's police officers. Norris used these images as the backdrop for a five-minute video which was shown to police officers at daily roll call (Willis 2002). As the images progress from the fire, to the funeral, to the cemetery, Norris tells officers:

The arson murders of the Dawson family painfully demonstrate the lengths to which thugs will go to protect what they wrongly believe is theirs... That's why it's so important for us to apply suffocating pressure on the gangs that brazenly sell their poison. We apply pressure by identifying who the players are. Who pitches. Who touts. Who enforces. Who stands lookout. Who controls the corners. Make life miserable for these players. ... Stop, debrief, interrogate, issue citations and arrest members of gangs for urinating, drinking alcohol, driving without seat belts, playing loud music, littering and the like. This judicious application of life enforcement makes it uncomfortable, and ultimately impossible, for gang members to conduct illegal business.(ibid)

Norris, former New York City Deputy Police Commissioner, intensified the so-called "zero-tolerance" or "quality of life" policing made popular during New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's term. Norris was careful to point out to Baltimore officers that while enforcing quality of life that they also "send a message to the lawful members of the community who are cooperating and aggressively addressing the problems that plague their lives... Take this tragedy as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment that we will not permit citizens to retreat into their homes in fear" (ibid). Asked his opinion on the use of his family's deaths in this way, Angela Dawson's brother John Harrington said: "I applaud the man... law enforcement sometimes used tragedies as an effective tool to make people aware that life is fragile" (ibid).

In an editorial response to Norris' video The Sun credited the Commissioner with "being part of the solution" but lamented that the "sad truth in Baltimore is that our police have become targets, witnesses have become the hunted and innocents have seen the ideas of safety shredded in a hail of bullets" (The Sun 2002). Agreeing with Norris that

officers must take a stronger stand against criminals, The Sun warned, however, that if this “happens outside the context of more fundamental change in the criminal justice system, his message will never square with life on the streets” (ibid). A persistent inability to convict violent criminals, either through a lack of evidence or a misstep in the criminal justice process conspire to produce a “revolving-door justice” where a “lack of consequences only fuels the drive to retaliate” (ibid). The editors state:

It's also incumbent upon all of the system's players to work in closer tandem on these issues. Even after the Dawson murders, which much of the city saw as a turning point, finger-pointing and mistrust better define some of the important relationships than cooperation. (ibid)

This example illustrates the opening of a policy and administration debate by the use of emotional imagery. The administration of urban space through policing strategies is lent an emotional quality through the use of the image of the burned out house and the funeral ritual.

5.2 Dawson Memorial Playground & Library

The first formal commemorative naming after the Dawson tragedy came on December 10, 2002 when the library and playground at Dr. Bernard Harris Sr. Elementary School were named for the Dawson family. The four youngest Dawsons attended the school. A ceremony attended by Mayor O'Malley and several members of the City Council, was marked by poetry, songs, and a balloon release. The third grade classmates of Kevin and Keith Dawson sang: “We remember...your labor shall not be in vain, and our reward awaits in your name” (Wilson 200). The auditorium stage sat empty except for four empty chairs labeled: Keith, Juan, Carnell, and Kevin. Dawson family members, Alice McNack and Donnell Golden, attended the ceremony. McNack, the

sister of Carnell Dawson Sr., was reassured by the dedication that “they will always be remembered, that their stories will be told” (ibid). Donnell Golden, Angela Dawson’s mother, said that the dedication was a pleasant surprise and that she was “getting stronger as the days go by” (ibid). The naming of both the playground and the library was meant to reflect the interests of the Dawson boys who enjoyed playing and reading.

In the first editorial of 2003 *The Sun* reflected on 2002 with the title: “A year to remember?” (*The Sun* 2003) The gloomy editorial listed numerous negative stories which made 2002, in the eyes of the newspaper “a real stinker” of a year (ibid). The editorial ends with two tragic local events:

Sadly, two other local 2002 events offer not a shred of hope or optimism. The Dawson family murders and the sniper who terrorized the Washington suburbs were examples of humanity at its worst. Even the outpouring of sentiment and calls to action they inspired can't overcome the pure evil these events represented. If only to help put events like these behind us, the new year is a welcome sight. (ibid)

It seemed apparent at the end of 2002 that the proposed solutions to the roots of the Dawson tragedy were to be the real test of Baltimore’s resolve to fight crime and overcome the crippling ills associated with drug dependency.

The weeks and months immediately following the Dawson murders saw numerous actions from all corners of the neighborhood, city, and region to attempt to make sense of the loss. Through petitions, music, commemorations, and interventions into the condition of the everyday environment, ordinary citizens and public officials alike acted in sometimes frenzied fashion to produce representations of collective and complex emotions.

5.3 The Dawson Family Community Protection Act

Spring of 2003 witnessed an attempt to address the seemingly intractable problems revealed in 2002. On April 3, 2003 U.S. Representative Elijah E. Cummings of Maryland's Seventh Congressional District introduced House Bill 1599 into the 108th Congress (see Appendix Three for the full text of the bill). The bill is named The Dawson Family Community Protection Act (HB 1599, 2003). The general purpose of the bill is to "amend the Office of National Drug Control Policy Act Reauthorization Act of 1998 to ensure that adequate funding is provided for certain high intensity drug trafficking areas" (ibid). The specific purposes of the bill are to ensure the appropriation of at least \$1 million to be used by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program in areas with "severe neighborhood safety and illegal drug distribution problems." (ibid). The bill was passed in a voice vote on September 30, 2003 (The Sun 2003c).

The bill text directs that the Office of National Drug Control Policy shall use the funds in two ways:

1. To ensure the safety of neighborhoods and the protection of communities, including the prevention of the intimidation of potential witnesses of illegal drug distribution and related activities.
2. To combat illegal drug trafficking through such methods as the Director considers appropriate, such as establishing or operating (or both) a toll-free telephone hotline for use by the public to provide information about illegal drug-related activities. (HB 1599, 2003)

The "findings" section of the bill tells the story of the Dawson's vigilance and their deaths, calling the murders "a stark example of domestic narco-terrorism." The bill recognizes that public confidence in law enforcement is a prerequisite for winning the

struggle against narco-terrorism, as well as the difficulty in gaining this confidence when violence and the threat of violence are ever-present (ibid). Stating the rationale for increased resources into prevention, investigation, prosecution, and re-entry, the bill challenges the value of witness protection programs as the best way of ensuring safety:

Witness protection programs are insufficient on their own to provide security because many individuals and families who strive everyday to make distressed neighborhoods livable for their children, other relatives, and neighbors will resist or refuse offers of relocation by local, State, and Federal prosecutorial agencies and because, moreover, the continued presence of strong individuals and families is critical to preserving and strengthening the social fabric in such communities. (ibid)

Instead, the bill advances the notion that community areas themselves be the source of additional funds directed at “making the affected communities safe for the residents of those communities and encouraging their cooperation with...law enforcement” (ibid). While the bill does not spell out specific expenditures, reports tell of increased police patrols, police overtime, additional surveillance cameras, and the establishment of anonymous tip-lines (ibid).

Speaking about the bill during a July 21, 2003 public hearing in Baltimore,

Rep. Cummings stated:

When the Dawsons perished so tragically, a number of us in the city and in Congress made a decision that we were not going to allow them to die in vain... What we wanted to do was make sure that we did all we could to provide resources to help [citizens] create the kind of environment where drug sales people felt unwelcome... One of my greatest fears when the Dawson incident happened was that it would have a chilling effect on the people who want to cooperate with the police, thus making the problem even worse... I think that's part of the intent of whoever perpetrated this horrific offense, to intimidate, to send a message. We all read about people in the drug trafficking field sending messages. ... We as a society have to address it. (Willis 2003 emphasis added)

Cummings' words echoed those of Martin O'Malley in their mutual desire to change the environment which spawned the Dawson tragedy. The notion that the space of the illegal drug market would be converted into a space where criminals felt unwelcome and one that would prove unprofitable. O'Malley spoke of the value of the legislation by saying that "[w]e cannot allow any block, any house, any neighborhood in these United States of America to become ruled by drug dealers" (ibid). It is interesting to note Cummings' statement that City and Federal lawmakers were committed to the memory of the Dawsons, but did not mention the State of Maryland. This exclusion, I believe, was intentional as Maryland's governor during this period was a republican, while Cummings and O'Malley are democrats. Therefore, political "credit" for The Dawson Family Community Protection Act was claimed by democrats.

During the July 21, 2003 hearing Cummings stated that the Dawson tragedy lent political will to increase attention to high crime areas:

I think it took the tragic deaths of Angela and Carnell Dawson and their five children ... sometimes we know what to do, but we just don't have the will to do it...I don't think we would be where we are today with this legislation without that tragedy happening. I wish I could say differently. (ibid)

Cummings' pointed statement further establishes the Dawsons as martyrs. It suggests that one of the meanings of their deaths will be the equipping of law enforcement agencies to combat violent narcotics criminals. There is a sense that the Dawson tragedy created an opportunity for an increased militaristic approach on the part of law enforcement.

While he and his membership appreciated the additional funds to combat narcotics trafficking in his neighborhood in particular, Oliver Community Association

President Rev. Robert C. Burley Sr., asserted that additional funds must be directed at youth programs. Burley lamented that if “we don't find something for our children to do, others will” (ibid). A contrasting view came from newly appointed Baltimore City Police Commissioner Kevin P. Clark who stated his desired approach of “arresting [his] way to the core of the problem” (ibid). These perspectives reveal the magnitude and complexity of drug trafficking and its ancillary effects. The Editors of The Sun called Cummings’ bill “a solid next step” (The Sun 2003b). The Sun editorial board commented that “in the name of the Dawsons, the city already received an extra \$2 million last year from the federal funds...buying equipment for surveillance, software to track crimes and criminals, street lighting and more police patrols” (ibid). The federal district drug office was noted for their practical steps to increasing “community involvement in reclaiming the territories from which the police intend to clear the drug trade” (ibid). The 2005 reauthorization of The Dawson Family Community Protection Act increased the annual allocation per high intensity area to five million dollars.

The points of view expressed by Rev. Burley and Commissioner Clark represent the two prevailing approaches to address systematic problems in Baltimore. BUILD is the most notable group whose approach is to address the problems through social programming. The police commissioner and other public officials hope to attack problems through the criminal justice system. Rep. Cummings’ legislation highlights the need to do both, but leans more heavily upon the latter. Cummings’ bill added to Oliver’s emergent identity the spatial designation of a “high intensity drug trafficking” area and as a site of “narco-terrorism.” That the Dawsons not die in

vain motivated the redefinition of Oliver as drug territory to space which is subject to public safety interventions and surveillance. For Cummings and other bill sponsors, the murders served as a tipping point by which attention and resources could be lent to the improving Oliver's plight and that of similar neighborhoods across the United States. If the legislation is viewed as a reform of U.S. drug policy, the Dawson murders may be seen as the trigger. This relationship between public tragedy and public policy is seen following other recent events such as: intelligence community and foreign policy reform in the United States following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; federal emergency management policy following Hurricane Katrina of September 2005; and fire safety regulation overhaul in Rhode Island following The Station Nightclub fire of February 2003. The policy process regarding the Dawson murders sought to honor their memory and protect their surviving community members through policy instruments meant to change the environment to the extent that drug criminals no longer remained.

5.4 The first anniversary:

On the heels of the passage of the federal legislation, the first anniversary of the Dawson murders was met with a great deal of hope after a year of cooperation between residents, clergy, City officials, police, the non-profit sector, and the federal government. Even if premature, the overall assessment was that "in most of these battered blocks of the city, one can see a difference" (The Sun 2003d). The Sun assessed the scene near the corner of Eden and Preston a year after the murders:

Now on a sunny fall afternoon, regular folks are on the street, shopping at Danny's or the corner market, picking up their kids from school. Faces peer from windows and half-opened doors. More people are looking out for one

another again, not rushing into their homes and barricading themselves from the community...Of course, Oliver still is far from an idyllic neighborhood, and the extra protection and city services remain a necessity. There are recalcitrant corners, alleys and dead ends of crime and grime, blocks full of boarded-up or burned-out rowhouses, and broken glass and trash in the park next to the elementary school. (ibid)

The claim that the Dawsons had not been forgotten resounded through City Hall and Oliver's church hall. An October 13, 2003 Sun editorial stated that the Dawsons are not forgotten.

Baltimore often seems to be a city of endless promises - lots of talk, little action, no apologies. It is a culture that seems to accept that more than 200 people have been killed here every year for more than a generation - and not by some invading army but by one another. This time, though, there already has been action."

The fact that the larger community could sustain the collective focus for an entire year on aligning its actions with what is defined as an appropriate memory for the Dawson family appeared to be a point of pride and necessary of celebration.

The editorial board of The Sun credited the accomplishments of City Hall as the most productive in ensuring that the Dawsons' sacrifice was not in vain.

Accomplishments included: "flooding the streets with light and cops, targeting the local drug chiefs and guaranteeing that a 911 call gets a speedy response" (ibid). The Police Department cited the addition of foot patrols, surveillance cameras, and better relations with residents as the reasons for the success (ibid). Added to more intense policing is the simple fact that criminals moved from Oliver in the wake of the Dawson murders.

Another success celebrated on the first anniversary was the implementation of a "war room" in the State's Attorney's Office. The goal of the "war room" is to

facilitate interagency and intergovernmental information sharing to prevent future tragedies:

City and state justice agencies worked together steadily to make real the idea of a "war room." There, prosecutors, pretrial planners and probation officers can find in one place all the records for career criminals newly rearrested so these repeat offenders don't quickly turn up back on the streets. These agencies, along with those that aid the city's children, enlarged programs to aid the riskiest kids and better monitor those on curfews and community detention. The goal is to head off the next potential Darrell Brooks. (ibid)

The Sun also observed the value of the Dawson family name which "brought more than \$3 million in federal money for extra crime fighting equipment and officers' time, pulled \$1.15 million in federal money to add 200 drug treatment slots citywide, and pushed people to reach outside their comfort zones" (ibid). Despite BUILD's claim that "every amount of attention that Oliver had received in the wake of the Dawson tragedy is due to their efforts" (interview), they are not mentioned explicitly as an important part of the year's successes. BUILD members claim that the Mayor's Office and the editorial board of The Sun avoids mentioning BUILD by name due to historical differences of opinion (background comment).

BUILD, notably quiet throughout 2003, announced its ambitious plans for Oliver at a service at Memorial Baptist Church on October 19, 2003. The Dawson murders has served as a catalyst in BUILD's efforts to organize residents into a "safety net of social programs and capital improvements" (Wilson 2003).

Approximately 400 people gathered to remember the Dawsons. Pastor J.L. Carter of nearby Ark Church told the crowd:

I am praying for some noise in Oliver. Not the sounds of gunshots or firebombings, but the noise of trucks and construction workers coming into our community to tear down the old buildings and build up new buildings. (Pelton 2003)

BUILD presented its planned \$100 million reconstruction of Oliver. The group had assembled \$2.25 million of its own money since the Dawson tragedy, and looked to the State of Maryland and federal government as major funding sources. BUILD hoped to hitch its plan to Johns Hopkins Hospitals proposed \$800 million eighty acre science and technology park adjacent to Oliver. The roots of BUILD's ambitious plan, and its ties to the Dawson murders were explained to me in an interview with one of BUILD's lead organizers:

If we don't rebuild Oliver, and neighborhoods like Oliver, then tragedies like the Dawson family will happen again, whether it's in this neighborhood or another neighborhood, it'll happen. I mean this tragedy, almost like [Hurricane] Katrina, highlights 40 years of systematic neglect of neighborhoods like Oliver and of poor and working poor people. So how are we going to respond? So the memory for me, if you're asking more about memory, is those moments that - you know - radicalized my own anger around what should be our response. And keep in mind, I mean, there's articles all the way back to I think 2001 you know, where BUILD teams are in the streets in Oliver, you know, going door to door to find out what people want to have done. And we're hearing vacant homes, crime, and trash. And, you know, BUILD congregations started acquiring property in order to act on that vision. So we already had a vision to rebuild and revitalize Oliver, and what the Dawson family tragedy did was intensify that. (interview 9/27/2005)

Motivated by perceptions of systematic neglect, and radicalized by the murders, BUILD succeeded in gaining the attention of Jack Shannon, president of East Baltimore Development Inc., the managers of the Hopkins expansion, who stated that he had preliminary talks with BUILD, but has not made any commitments. Shannon commented on his general desire to "work together to create a stronger and more vibrant East Baltimore" (ibid). Representative Cummings told the crowd of four hundred that he would put pressure and federal appropriations sources for the Hopkins project that funds go to Oliver. Cummings stated: that "any dime that

comes into the biotech project, we will insist that Oliver be included in that project” (ibid). State Senator McFadden summarized the service by saying inviting people to “come back in a few years, and this will all be changed... This meeting today gave us some real momentum. Now we have to find the resources to make it happen” (ibid).

Tom Pelton closes his report on the first anniversary of the Dawson murders with a description of the memorial which remained at the corner of Eden and Preston Streets: “the stuffed animals, flowers and cards heaped high on the iron porch of the Dawson home, where the windows remain boarded and black ash marks lick up the walls” (ibid). A BUILD member reflected on the meaning of the anniversary dates for the organization:

The date is the test. For us to hold ourselves accountable. You know that every year we gather to do an accounting, and to account for our own actions...are we keeping our pledge for the Dawson family not to die in vain. And the only way we do that is to check in and see where we're at. And we'll do it again...in a different way. (interview)

5.5 The Dawson Family Memorial Garden

May 8, 2004 saw the unveiling of the Dawson Memorial Garden across Eden Street from the burned-out shell of the Dawson home (Photograph 5.1). Students from The Stadium School, a charter middle school, built the garden to honor the Dawsons and their sacrifice. The teacher who lead the students stated that the tragedy hit the students hard and that they wanted to do something positive as a way of dealing with their own emotions (interview). The garden was intended as a symbol of perseverance and renewal to counterbalance the Dawson tragedy which stands an “enduring symbol of urban terror” (Barker 2004). One of the student gardeners, an

eleven-year-old, said that "[w]hen people pass by, I would want them to think that those were people there who stood up for their community" (ibid).

The teacher who led the student project told me in an interview that when the middle-school students gained permission to build the garden they had to clear rats, gravel, debris, televisions, and drug paraphernalia from the narrow 90 by 13 foot site. Students planned and designed the garden, and raised funds from public and private sources. One of the student gardens donated his life savings to the project and then wrote a letter to all of his teachers challenging each of them to match his gift (interview). For safety reasons students did not build the garden alone. For that, they employed the help of a local non-profit gardening organization called Civic Works.

The Sun reporter Jeff Barker described the garden:

The garden of fresh maples, black-eyed Susan, petunias and other plantings is intentionally rich in symbolism. There are seven trees - one for each of the Dawson family members who perished in the fire. . .Seven boulders are embedded in the ground, intended to invoke the family's strength. The garden is full of perennials that will remain green even through trying winters. The corner garden is directly across the street from the rowhouse where the family members died. (Barker 2004)



Photograph 5.1: Student gardeners examine their work at the opening of the Dawson Family Memorial Garden. (photo credit: Andrew Chung)

Donnell Golden, the mother of Angela Dawson, placed a yellow ribbon around one of the seven trees in honor of her daughter. She said of the meaning of the garden

I'm overwhelmed... You know how things happen, and there's no more said about it? Well, I was so happy that my family was being remembered, that they didn't die in vain... I'm all right today as long as I'm on this side of the street... I can't go over there [to the house]. It's too emotional. (ibid)

Martin O'Malley, who attended the garden dedication ceremony spoke of the legacy of the Dawson family by saying: "I don't think that I will ever be the same after that tragedy, and I don't think our city will ever be the same, either... But out of those ashes, there is new hope" (ibid). O'Malley commented that the burned-out house must be a source of inspiration and that the effect of the garden is to continue in the reclamation the symbolic site and turning the tide in the war on drugs (ibid).

In a November 2005 editorial, The Sun contemplated the value of the Dawson Family Memorial Garden:

The Dawson Family Memorial Garden, across Eden Street from that family's East Preston rowhouse, dwells on the specifics... There are seven tiles embedded in the garden, each with a name: Angela, Carnell Sr., LaWanda, Juan, Carnell Jr., Keith, Kevin. There are seven small, strong boulders, the right size for sitting, paired with the tiles. Some of the rock benches afford a garden view, and some look out onto the streets and the neighborhood beyond. Sitting on Carnell Sr.'s boulder at the eastern end of the garden, one looks left to follow the curving path of grass past each tile and boulder. A turn to the right, and one can watch workers rebuilding the house he lived in, reconstituting it into a shelter and haven for children in distress... When finished, the Dawson home will shelter families in immediate need, and caretakers there will help keep an eye on all the children on the block. The churches, schools and neighbors involved with the Dawson memorial see it as just one part of the family's legacy that also includes playgrounds, after-school activities and neighborhood revitalization. (The Sun 2005)

This interpretation of the garden makes reference to the planned reclamation of the Dawson house into The Dawson Safe Haven for Children Youth and Families. The garden and the haven indicate the intense need for persons in Oliver to redefine the space of the murders. The reclamation of the burned building and the conversion of a trash-strewn vacant lot represent place-making. The action required to imbue meaning and memory through physical transformation converts space into place. Indeed memory lies in the design and construction of the memorial spaces as much as in that which the finished product represents.

5.6 The second anniversary

The second anniversary of the Dawson murders was indeed marked by the sounds of bull dozers. A row of vacant houses owned by Memorial Baptist Church was ceremonially demolished before a crowd of several hundred people following an October 17, 2004 rally at the church. During the rally Reverend Iris Tucker called the group to account for the promises made the year prior: "one year ago, we met in this sanctuary and made concrete promises to reclaim and rebuild...It's check-in time, to see if we have enough money to get started" (Loh 2004). A representative from each government agency and Oliver congregation ceremoniously walked a check to the altar. The accounting was as follows:

- BUILD raised \$1 million and took control of 200 abandoned properties.
- BUILD used a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to hire a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, the Reinvestment Fund, to develop a renewal plan.
- The City of Baltimore donated dozens of properties the southeastern corner of Oliver through its Project 5000 anti-blight initiative. The City also contributed \$400,000 toward demolition costs.

- U.S. Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski announced the availability of \$600,000 in federal money for the community's revitalization - \$300,000 from a bill she sponsored last year and \$300,000 from another bill working its way through Congress. The sum is 30 percent of \$2 million in federal Economic Development Initiative funds initially earmarked for the extensive east-side redevelopment effort north of the Johns Hopkins medical complex, which centers on a biotechnology park.

Reverend Calvin Keen observed the significance of the date and the meeting by saying that the "Dawson tragedy caused us to really focus and redouble our efforts" (Siegel 2004). Rev. Keene was anxious to show that there is action to follow from years of planning and fundraising:

Memorial [Baptist Church] is going to knock those houses down so the community can see there is power in this plan and we're ready to go...Our task is to bring about a critical mass of open space where building can begin...I think it's important for the morale of the community and to keep people excited...All they've seen over the last 30 years is this community deteriorating. (ibid)

BUILD leaders recognized that they were far from their ambitious \$100 million goal, but that they had enough money to begin demolishing rows of houses. Even the most modest construction goal of sixty houses, however, was far out of reach, let alone the longer term goal of two hundred new dwellings.

The City held a separate event on the same day to unveil plans to turn the [Dawson] family's charred home in the 1400 block of E. Preston St. into a haven for neighborhood children" (Loh 2004). The absence of City officials from BUILD's first and second anniversary observances is striking considering how consistently vocal Mayor O'Malley had been on the memory of the Dawson family, and the obligation to the people of Oliver and East Baltimore. The third anniversary observation would feature Mayor O'Malley and the groundbreaking of The Dawson

Family Safe Haven for Children Youth and Families. BUILD members, save Rev. Tucker, did not participate in the third observance.

Through the first two anniversaries, BUILD sustained the Dawson murders as a rallying cry for its work to rebuild Oliver. The use of the anniversary date to mark progress in reshaping the social and physical structure of everyday life in Oliver is an example of the confluence of time, space, and memory in the performance of multi-scaled community politics. In November 2005 BUILD members told me that the Dawson murders had nothing to do with the work they were doing to rebuild Oliver. The point of this statement was that it was the loss of an entire generation that motivated their work, not a single event. I interpret this as a recognition by BUILD that the political utility of the Dawson name had been exhausted.

5.7 “Believe”

As revealed through his words and deeds above, one of Martin O’Malley’s primary goals in post-Dawson Baltimore was to associate the family’s struggle against drug crime with his “Baltimore “Believe” campaign. O’Malley referred to the Dawsons as martyrs of the

which aims to
trafficking,
drug use in



campaign
reduce drug
drug crime, and
Baltimore. A

2002 progress report states that the goal of the campaign “is nothing short of altering the governing dynamic that has led people in Baltimore...to think that nothing much can be really be done to combat the pestilence of drugs” (Linder & Associates 2002).

Program literature refers to “Believe” as a community-centered advertising campaign.

The program website describes the central tool of the campaign:

The leading campaign component is a biting, gripping 4-minute movie depicting the hard-core realities of drug life in Baltimore. Through the eyes of a 10-year-old African American boy, the movie seeks to move people to join in the fight against illegal drugs. The 4-minute movie will be segmented into several sixty-second and thirty-second message-specific commercials to air on local television and radio stations. (<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/believe>)

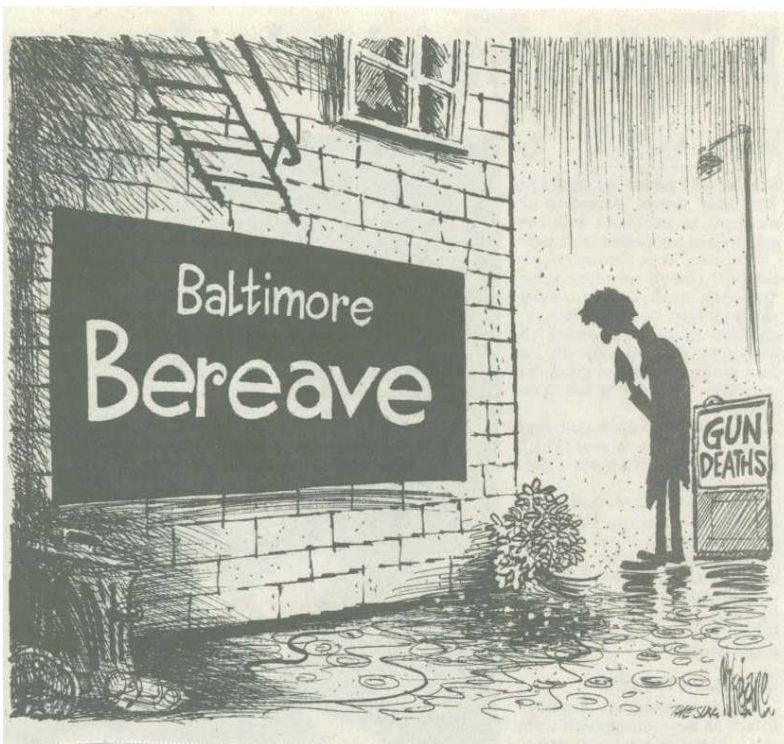


Figure 5.1: This editorial cartoon comments on the “Baltimore Believe” campaign as well as the ubiquitous memorials which appear throughout parts of Baltimore. (Source: *The Sun*, 2002)

Launched on April 5, 2002 the “Believe” campaign set about the task of convincing the entire city of the need for greater vigilance against the vagaries of illegal drugs. The campaign actively encourage citizens to “seek help, report illegal drug activity, and become involved in community activities and the lives of children in and around

their neighborhoods” (ibid). In addition to an initial media blitz, every vehicle in the Baltimore City fleet donned a “Believe” bumper sticker, every City building a large “Believe” banner, and every employee a “Believe” button, shirt, or hat. The distinctive white block text on a black field instantly became the mark of Baltimore.

While it is not possible to draw a definitive conclusion between the launch of the “Believe” campaign in April and the beginning of the Dawsons’ intense focus on drug criminals near her block in June, the efforts do coincide. Martin O’Malley stated that “Believe is a call to the people of the city to rise up and ‘risk action on faith’” (Linder & Associates 2002). It appears that Ms. Dawson did so. The New York Times wrote on October 19, 2002 that “Angela Dawson believed, with horrific results” (2002). The article continued by describing the “Believe” campaign as “part exhortation, part call to action, part desperate plea to take back neighborhoods [or] to report drug dealers” (ibid). A neighbor of the Dawsons, when asked by a reporter from The Christian Science Monitor about the “Believe” button on her jacket, said that “it means I believe the police should have been doing their job...and I believe that the Dawsons are in the right place, they’re with Jesus Christ – they’re in his hands now. Other than that, I don’t know anymore” (Marks 2002). Another neighbor, who did not want to be identified out of fear of retribution, told the Afro-American that:

This family took a stand...They saw those “Baltimore Believe” ads and tried to do what the police told them Fight back. They did that, but it don’t look like they got any help. They came under attack and had to stand alone. And now they’re dead. (Byrd 2002b)

The Linder & Associates, Inc progress report on phase one of the Believe campaign stated the following regarding the Dawson murders:

The recent firebombing in East Baltimore that killed a family of seven including five children in retribution for the mother's relentless stand against drug dealing on her block has created "a moment of crisis," in the Mayor's words, in which citizens must choose between defying drug violence or surrendering to it. There is no middle ground. (Linder & Associates 2002)

The progress report, however, moves on from this mention of the Dawson murders to speak of the scourge of drugs in the past tense as though Baltimore's worst days were overcome in the six month period of phase one. While not unbalanced, the progress report highlights marketing efforts over measured social outcomes, and is congratulatory of the then nascent campaign's "success." Despite the successes listed in the Linder & Associates report, the authors state that "urgent work still needs to be done....and Baltimore people who have taken a stand against drugs, often with great courage and sacrifice, must be recognized and honored as heroes and role models" (ibid). This statement is an acknowledgement of the Dawsons' sacrifice and an interpretation of what that sacrifice should mean to city residents.

The Dawson tragedy called the "Believe" campaign into an important debate. Those who saw the Dawsons as the exemplars of the principles of the campaign associated the family more closely with high-concept campaign. Those who blamed the campaign for contributing to the tragedy by emboldening Ms. Dawson undermined the campaign by claiming that "we believe we've been deceived" and by asking "believe in what?" On January 7, 2003 The Cochran Firm, founded by noted attorney Johnnie Cochran, wrote a legal memo to the City of Baltimore which notified the mayor that a lawsuit would be filed on behalf of the surviving members

of the Dawson family who claimed that the “Believe” campaign was partly responsible for the Dawsons deaths (Wilber and Vozella 2003). The memo was requested by the Baltimore City Solicitor after a November 26, 2002 letter from the Cochran Firm which indicated that police could have done more to protect the Dawsons. Janell Byrd-Chichester, lead attorney for the Cochran Firm said that while the “Believe” campaign expresses a “wonderful sentiment...It’s reckless to invite people to step up to a dangerous situation, and then be on notice that these particular people have stepped up and are in danger, and then fail to provide protection...The outcome should not have been surprising” (ibid). Tying the Dawson struggle to the “Believe” campaign, Byrd-Chichester suggested that the 2002 flooding of the city and its airwaves with the “Believe” message made it unlikely that the Dawsons were unaware of the campaign.

Martin O’Malley responded to the legal memo by calling it “pretrial hype” (Pelton and Vozella 2003).

This is just part of what the Cochran firm does to try to induce a settlement... Coming from out of town, I don't think they understand our determination to rid ourselves of the 24- 7 occupation of our street corners by drug dealers...I don't blame the Dawson family at all for wanting to retain counsel to see what their rights are...It is horrible beyond imagination what happened... The Dawson tragedy actually inspired a lot of participation in the “Believe” campaign. It inspired all of us more. It really drove home the urgency of our challenge. That sad little house has become our Alamo, and nobody in this administration will forget it. (ibid)

The association of the “Believe” campaign and the Dawson home at 1401 E. Preston St as “our Alamo” reinforced O’Malley’s conviction that the Dawson tragedy exemplified the need for, and the principles of the city-wide campaign. Responding to news of the impending suit, letters to the editor as well as journalists’ editorials

overwhelmingly supported O'Malley and offered the opinion that the Dawson family, Ms. Dawson in particular, would have struggled against drug criminals regardless of the campaign (Rodricks 2003). Call records are not available for the time prior to Spring 2002 so this opinion is difficult to confirm or deny.

The Cochran Firm did not file suit until February 2005. In the intervening period, the Dawsons would be further associated as martyrs of the "Believe" campaign. March 8, 2003 saw the launch of the derivative "Reason to Believe" campaign. Formed in the immediate aftermath of the Dawson murders a "broad coalition of foundations, businesses, city leaders, and social advocates" gathered to raise \$30 million over two years to improve the lives of children and to fight drug crime and abuse through drug treatment programs, school readiness and after-school programs, police training, and ex-convict re-entry initiative (Shatzkin 2003). Mayor O'Malley stated that the campaign was recognition of the need to "subordinate our own private agendas to what the city needs at this critical juncture" (ibid). Notable about the "Reason to Believe" campaign was the partnership between BUILD and the City. BUILD Co-Chair, Bishop Douglas I. Miles stated:

The emphasis here is that we bury past differences and move on for the greater good of the total community. I don't remember a time in the past 30 years when there's been an effort of this capacity to bring together this many segments of the community. It's uptown seeking to call downtown to a common agenda. (ibid)

The "Reason to Believe" campaign should be seen as an effort to import greater substance into the initial campaign in response to comments of its over reliance on image.

The notion that the Dawson tragedy presented a “moment” for Baltimore is reinforced through the apparent spirit of cooperation that continued almost six months after the murders. Miles’ suggestion that a common agenda was being pursued in the wake of the Dawson tragedy and under the “Believe” umbrella further entangled the two. It should be noted, however, that the “Reason to Believe” campaign does not reappear in the print media after early 2003.

The Mayor entangled the Dawson memory and the “Believe” concept further on July 3, 2003 when it unveiled the “Believemobile” at the Dawson Family Memorial Playground at Dr. Bernard Harris Elementary School (The Sun 2003). Then again on October 14, 2003 the Mayor associated the two while addressing a crowd of 1,000 British politicians, drug-abuse counselors, nurses, and social service providers on Baltimore’s approach to drug crime and drug addiction treatment (Richissin 2003). O’Malley, invited by Home Secretary David Blunkett, discussed the “Believe” campaign and Baltimore’s innovative approaches to dealing with drug crime and abuse. O’Malley blended the hope embedded in the “Believe” campaign with the reality of situations such as the “assassination” of Carnell and Angela Dawson and their five children to suggest that while Baltimore is on the proper track to recovery, there is much work to be done. From late 2003 through February 2005 the Dawson family name does not appear in the data relative to the “Believe” campaign.

5.8 McNack, et. al. v. The Mayor and City Council, et. al.

On February 17, 2005 five surviving members of the Dawson family, led by Carnell Dawson’s sister Alice McNack, filed a lawsuit against the State of Maryland,

the Governor, Mayor O'Malley, the Baltimore City Council, the Baltimore Police Department, the current and past police commissioners, the State's attorney and one assistant, and a host of unnamed police officers (Dolan 2005). In addition to fourteen million dollars in damages, the suit sought to "require that Defendants provide protection commensurate with the danger the City solicits citizens to assume as participants in the Believe Campaign" (Civil Complaint p 5). The suit alleged that "defendants knowingly and recklessly failed to back up the Believe Campaign and offer meaningful protection against retaliation" and that the murders were "foreseeable and predictable" (ibid 4-5). The suit alleged five counts: deprivation of the Dawsons' right to life, liberty, and personal security; deprivation of equal protection; negligence; gross negligence; and intentional infliction of emotional distress (ibid 32-6).

The complaint points to the millions of dollars spent on the "Believe" advertising campaign while no additional funds were directed toward witness protection. Kathleen Behan, attorney for the plaintiffs commented that the suit is "based on the failure of the state and city to protect the Dawson family...The witness protection program at the time of the Dawsons' death was inadequate" (Daily Record 2005). None of the named defendants have spoken publicly about the suit's allegations. Martin O'Malley commented only that "whatever the result of this lawsuit...the Dawson family will always serve as a reminder of the courage of the people of Baltimore as we continue in our struggle for justice against the absolute hate that claimed their lives."

The amended civil complaint states that the “Believe Campaign was in fact a program without substance.....a publicity campaign that does not provide protection in accordance with the danger in which it asks citizens to place themselves” (Civil Complaint 27). In addition, police procedures and perceived lack of follow through placed persons at greater risk:

Baltimore City Police Department’s practice of going to the residence of informants and failure to act not only provided to the drug dealers the identity of the complainants, but also indicated to the dealers that no action would be taken to help the Dawsons, thus placing them in danger for retaliatory attacks. (ibid 14)

Plaintiffs point to the perceived contradictions of Martin O’Malley’s reference to the Dawson family as martyrs for the Believe Campaign. The surviving family members resent the perceived fact that the negligence of O’Malley et. al. resulted in the death of their family only to hear him refer to the family as martyrs for the City campaign:

Mayor, City Council, and BCPD increased the danger to the Dawsons by encouraging and soliciting them to report illegal activities in their neighborhood and then alerting drug dealers that the Dawsons were the ones that made the complaint, Yet, while the City has called the Dawsons martyrs of the Believe program, and has used their tragedy to promote the program and raise money for the City in their memory, it still has offered almost no support to the surviving family members despite its promise to “provide long-term support for the remaining child” as stated by Martin O’Malley in his action plan dated October 22, 2002. (ibid 31-32)

As of this writing the civil case against representatives of Baltimore City continued in Baltimore City Circuit Court. The court found in favor of the State of Maryland in the civil claim against representatives of the State. The State was not seen as culpable in the perceived failings of the “Believe” campaign.

5.9 The Third Anniversary Ceremony / The Dawson Family Safe Haven

Plans for The Dawson Safe Haven for Children Youth and Families (hereafter Safe Haven) began under the leadership of Rev. Iris Tucker in 2003. An informal group calling themselves The Dawson Memorial Committee developed the concept of the Safe Haven as a way of honoring the sacrifice of the Dawsons through the adaptive reuse of the structure that was once their home. The significance of transforming the burned out shell into a haven for children and families was meant to represent the rising of the community from the ashes of despair. The first major funding announcement for the Safe Haven came in January 2005 when the State of Maryland contributed \$230,000 to the Knox Community Development Corporation for the reconstruction of 1401 E. Preston as a Safe Haven (The Sun 2005).

The grant was made through the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) "Community Legacy Program." Lieutenant Governor Michael S. Steele and DHCD Secretary Victor Hoskins presented the check to Rev. Tucker in front of the building. The corner of Eden and Preston again served as the stage for a public gathering involving the Dawsons. The broad goal of the Safe Haven is to provide a safe place for family activities which center on children. The announcement of the grant predicted a Summer 2005 opening.

The groundbreaking ceremony did not occur until October 25, 2005. The delay in breaking ground, let alone opening, were attributed to negotiations with construction engineers on the safety of the building. The Dawson Memorial Committee, supported by Mayor O'Malley, was committed to renovating the existing structure, rather than demolishing the building and building anew as builders

preferred to do. The memorial committee had worked through a process which involved some members wishing to tear down the building while others wanted to renovate the space that was the Dawsons. A member of the memorial committee reflected on the decision making process:

...some of the people on the team, wanted to keep the building as is, no, I'm sorry, wanted to just completely redo the whole building.....Some people in the neighborhood said, you know, maybe we shouldn't touch that building. Just leave with the black still on it, charred, and that's the testimony. And when she [Rev. Tucker] started trying to do the planning, she has to actually tear down the whole building now, because, she's going to leave the façade...you know cleaned up and everything....because structurally, it was beyond repair. So it'll be a brand new building...So it'll be interesting to see how the team uses memory as they're going to memorialize the family through this new building. (interview)

The groundbreaking for the Safe Haven was planned to coincide with the observation of the third anniversary of the Dawson murders (Figure 5.2). A crowd of approximately 300 gathered again on the corner of Eden and Preston Streets to remember the Dawson family. Television crews, news reporters, police officers, fire fighters, housing officials, BUILD members, a choir, and many neighbors attended the event. The official groundbreaking was hosted by a City Housing Department official. A member of the Dawson Memorial Committee welcomed guests:

We wish to welcome you to the Oliver community. We in the Oliver Community are very happy to see this many take part in what we're trying to do. We should never forget what happened here. We should make this turn out to be something great instead of something bad. And I just want to say that our community is a good community even though something tragic happened here, it is a good community. We are people about people. We love our neighbors and we love visitors. (transcript of author tape)

Rev. Tucker then spoke of the Safe Haven as “our phoenix rising from the ashes” (ibid).

Mayor O'Malley spoke at length on the symbolic meaning and purpose of the house:

Every time I'm on this corner, it's very difficult for me. And I think for you it's very difficult as well. I ride by going in to work and coming home and I can never help but to glance over here and to look at these boarded up windows in this house where the little sounds of children once were. Before this horrible tragedy struck us. I feel better now, that the boards are coming off those windows. And even in the rain that the light of day is coming in through those windows....

And some of the contractors – God bless them – said it would be a lot easier if we just tore the whole thing down. We're not going to tear the whole thing down. We are going to – at additional expense – preserve much of this house, and those holy walls, because they continue – in their silence – to speak to all of us. They speak to the courageous men and women, black and white, who put on the blue uniforms of the fire and police departments everyday and go into harms way to protect lives.... These walls speak to the people, black and white, of our city who come together to achieve meaningful and lasting things.... They speak to all of those who have the courage to step forward as witnesses. (original emphasis). Not only witnesses in crimes that happened so that they can hold up in court, but witnesses to the light and that the darkness never did overcome that light. And that will not overcome the light that the people of East Baltimore displayed in the face of this unspeakable tragedy. Since that time in the Eastern District, my compliments to all the neighbors in the Eastern District who have worked with their police to achieve a 43% (I think) reduction in homicides in the Eastern District since 2002. And we are not done yet. The work of this City continues. It is work of light. It is work of importance. It is work that is lasting. It is work that is meaningful. It is work that speaks not only to our country, but also to the whole world. From this spot in East Baltimore: we value life, we cherish life, in our city there is no such thing as a spare American, we are not a crowd, we are a community (original emphasis). And we remain a community dedicated to the light. (transcript of author tape)

Sen. McFadden elicited the Civil Rights Movement hero Rosa Parks who had died that same week to compare the sacrifice of the Dawson family:

To the Dawson family. Like Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat, Ms. Dawson refused to give up her corner. In memory of Rosa and her standing up to injustice, we're here today standing up to the injustice that was inflicted upon the Dawsons... My ultimate thanks goes to the people of this community who stuck together, who said 'we will not forget.' And that drives us all. And out of that corner will rise young people who will be able to say: a tragedy one day occurred in the rain in the middle of the night, in a cold rain

in the middle of the night. But out of it will rise an institution, under the leadership of the faith community...for the next generation, a monument to remember the Dawson family.” (transcript of author tape)

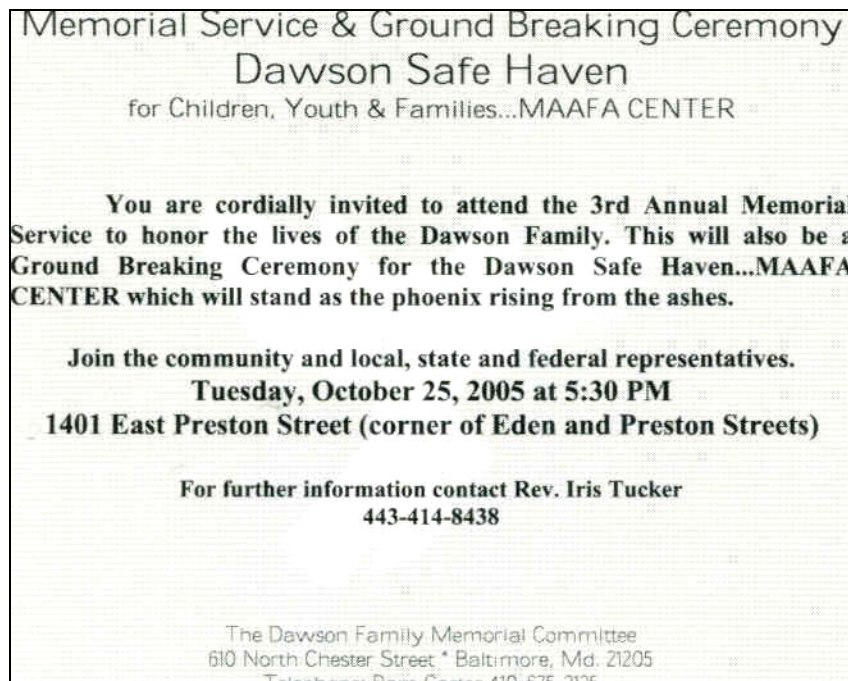


Figure 5.2: The invitation to the 3rd Annual Memorial Service and Dawson Safe Haven Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Another notable speaker among the many on the October 25, 2005 ceremony was Baltimore City Fire Chief Goodwin. The Chief spoke of the emotional toll the Dawson tragedy had upon his department and the Police Department:

...on that unfortunate morning, not so much unlike this very moment...fire fighters and police officers stood together hand-in-hand and felt we failed. We tried so hard on the fateful evening to make a difference, but we just couldn't. Because evil overtook us for that moment. And looking back here now to see what the community has pulled together. Thank you for giving us the faith and the determination to continue on, and to make that little difference, and to help you protect your community. (ibid)

The groundbreaking ended not with traditional spade shovels, but with trash bags.

The mayor, housing commissioner, and an Oliver clergy member each threw a bag of

debris from the unsalvageable portion of the house into a construction dumpster to symbolize the reconstruction (Photograph 5.2).



Photograph 5.2:
The groundbreaking of The Dawson Family Safe Haven for Children Youth and Families was performed with the ceremonial tossing of bags of debris into a construction dumpster. (photo source: K. Lam, *The Sun*, October 25, 2005)

Photograph 5.3 shows the progress on the construction of the Safe Haven as of October 16, 2006, the fourth anniversary of the murders.



Photograph 5.3: The view of the Dawson Family Safe Haven for Children, Youth, and Families on October 16, 2006, the fourth anniversary of the murders.(Photograph by the author)

5.10 Dramatic Productions: The Plan: Stand Up Now! and The MAAFA Suite

Shortly after the Dawson tragedy Dr. Warren Rhodes wrote *The Plan: Stand Up Now!*, a production which can best be described as a “musical ministry.” The production debuted in 2004 at a church in Dover , Delaware. Dr. Rhodes and players from the Dover church then toured to a few other churches during 2004 and 2005. I attended the production of *The Plan* on October 8, 2005 at New Shiloh Baptist Church in West Baltimore. The timing of the production was meant to honor the third anniversary of the Dawson murders. Approximately 500 people attended the production (Figure 5.3).

The musical production tells the story of an inner city neighborhood which is wrestling with the scourge of drug violence and addiction. The various points of view include that of clergy who attempt to rally community support against drug

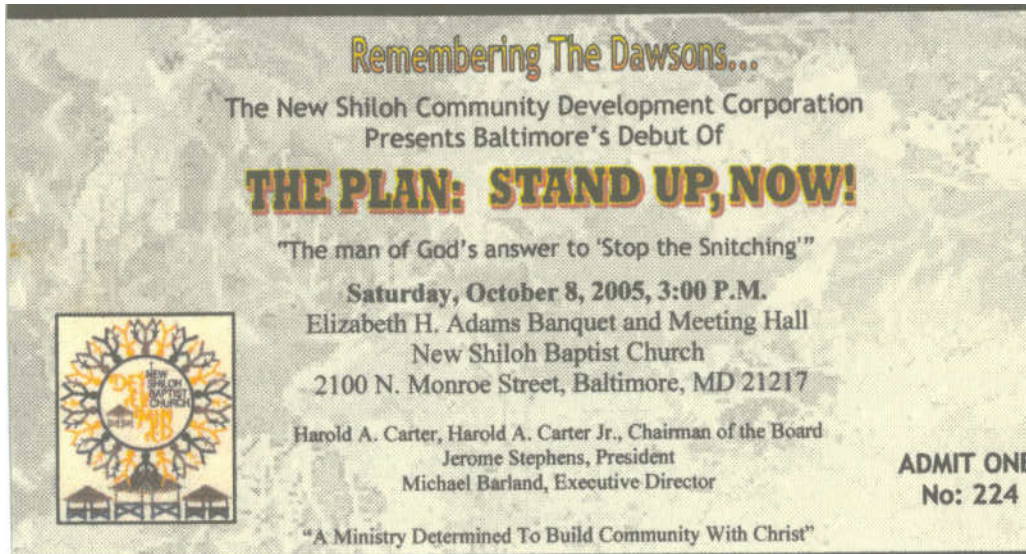


Figure 5.3: The admission ticket to the production of *The Plan: Stand Up, Now!* The timing of the production coincided with the observation of the third anniversary of the Dawson murders.

criminals, citizens who act in defiance of the “rules” of the drug territory, citizens who are afraid to speak out, citizens who passively benefit from drug sales, and the drug criminals themselves. The production draws a fairly representative, albeit schematic, picture of the sociological structure of an inner city African American community. The Plan takes place after the Dawson murders and uses the event as motivation to spur the fictional neighborhoods stance against drug criminals. The climax of the production is when a grandmother turns her drug dealing grandson over to police upon hearing news that he nearly killed a young teen over money and territory. The message of the story is that safety and security is in the hearts and minds of neighbors and if they stand up together against crime, they will be able to

reclaim their stoops, corners, sidewalks, streets, parks, and playgrounds. The Dawson family – Angela Dawson in particular – are represented as martyrs in a holy fight against evil. The motivation which Dr. Rhodes hoped to impart was for communities to summon a near-military bravery – rooted in religious faith – to stand up together against drug criminals.

A second dramatic production, also timed to honor the third anniversary of the Dawson murders was MAAFA Fire in My Bones: A Commemoration which was performed on October 28-30 and November 4-5, 2005 at New All Saints Catholic Church in northwest Baltimore. In sweeping fashion the dramatic suite tells the story of the struggle of African Americans from the earliest days of the African slave trade to the present. The word *maafa* (pronounced “ma-a-fa”) is a Kiswahili word coined in the 1990’s by African diaspora scholar Mirimba Ani (interview with producer). *Maafa* means “great tragedy” or “horrific disaster.”

The production is meant to commemorate the loss of millions of ancestors and generations of families in the African diaspora. *Maafa* is produced in cities around the United States such as New York, Baltimore, and Chicago. Each production varies slightly as directors often add locally meaningful pieces to the production. The Baltimore production, for example, was offered as a commemoration of the Dawson Family, so a scene featuring a fictional Dawson family was added. The producer talked about the scene:

During the MAAFA suite we have a scene which reenacts her [Angela Dawson] interaction, now it’s our interpretation because we don’t know, of her interaction trying to get to her house with her child, and drug dealers standing on the corner in front of her house. Now she says some powerful words in this reenactment. I believe that in itself helps people to understand that if we allow lawlessness to take hold in our communities, they will forever

be in control. But if we stand up, even in death - and I'm going to get biblical on you now - Shadrach, Mishach, and Abindigo, the three Hebrew boys who were told to bow down to the king. They said: "oh king, oh king, even if we must perish in this fiery furnace we know that our God is stronger, our God is in control." So they did not yield, they did not bow. So it says that we understand that we've got the power of God with us. So that's what the commemoration does. It sends out volumes to folks: "we are still commemorating. Our memory is still on the Dawson family....Our memory is still on the event." (interview with MAAFA producer)

**The
DAWSONS
LIVE HERE**

... their spirit, their courage &
their belief in Baltimore.

We believe.

Let everyone know the Dawsons are not forgotten.
They didn't fight back and die in vain. We will see their dreams
of a safe, drug-free Baltimore come true.

Thank You!

Figure 5.4.: A page from the playbill of *The Plan: Stand Up, Now!*

In addition to dramatizing Angela Dawson's reaction, the writers and director included the arson act itself. Darrell L. Brooks, the arson murderer, is presented as both perpetrator and victim. Brooks commits the arson, and then in the next scene apologizes to the family during his sentencing trial. The production took every pain to reveal the full complexity of life in inner city African America. In this way the audience is moved to at once despise Darrell Brooks as a murderer of children and take pity upon him as a child himself. MAAFA is a dramatic expression of the full emotions which reside within communities touched by the Dawson murders (Figure 5.5). The commemoration did not romanticize Angela and Carnell Dawson as martyrs or holy warriors, nor did it demonize Darrell L. Brooks as a bold-faced murderer. Rather, as the producers demanded, the memory of the Dawson is left for

Knox HOPE Development Corp. & The City of Baltimore Mayor's Office for Children, Youth & Families

Present

MAAFA



Fire In My BONES A COMMEMORATION

OPENING AT:

New All Saints Roman Catholic Church
Father Donald Sterling, Pastor
4408 Liberty Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21207

PERFORMANCE DATES:

October 28, 29, & 30 2005 at 7:00 pm
November 4 & 5 2005 at 7:00 pm
"EVOKING AND SENDING FORTH OF OUR ANCESTORS"
WILL BE PART OF THE OPENING & CLOSING PERFORMANCES

ADMISSION CHARGE:

\$10.00 FOR ADULTS
\$5.00 FOR CHILDREN (12 & OVER)
Not Advisable for Children under 4 years of age

TICKET SALES/INFORMATION:

(443) 414-8438

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL:

Rev. Iris TuckerKnox HOPE
Fr. Donald Sterling...New All Saints
Rev. James Carter.....Ark Baptist
Rev. Marshall Prentice....Zion Baptist

(410) 542-0445
(443)-414-8438

Figure 5.5: A poster advertising the MAAFA: Fire In My Bones dramatic production.

each person to construct for themselves, inclusive of all of the structural forces of race, class, gender, history, and family dynamics.⁵

This chapter has revealed how material, discursive, and representational realities contributed to the construction of a “post-Dawson” memorial landscape. Interventions into the built environment by City agencies, the construction of a memorial garden, increased surveillance infrastructure, and the adaptive reuse of the Dawson house represent a network of material alterations motivated by a collective drive to remember. The consequences of debates between Baltimore’s Mayor, BUILD, and surviving family members constitute ambiguous elements in the formation of the meaning of the Dawson murders. Dramatic productions, music, video, and architectural lighting provided a representational component to the memorial landscape. Together, these components address concerns for the memory of the individual members of the Dawson family, as well as concerns about the legacy of the family. These efforts also reflect a concern for the future of Oliver and the fight of law-abiding citizens for livable communities. The murders animated the once resigned neighborhood to debate its condition, its future, and the role of the City in ensuring safety in place-appropriate ways. As a clergy member told me in an interview: “this fire could have happened on any corner in any city in America. But it didn’t. It happened here. It happened here for a reason. The fire shook the entire community to act so that the family’s death would not be in vain” (interview).

⁵ At the end of the production of MAAFA which I attended, the producer called me onto the stage and explained that I was researching the Dawson tragedy. A crowd of over 300 applauded with approval at this news. Given the extent to which I was ignored or resented by other persons with whom I attempted to speak, this was a welcome bit of support during the data collection period.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusions

6.1 Discussion

As administrators and caretakers of the spaces and places which constitute the memorial landscape residents, clergy, activists, educators, police, and public officials have become shapers of the Dawson family legacy. The memorial landscape has been partly shaped by the progression of rhetoric regarding the Dawson murders, the appropriation and transformation of the meaning of elements in the built environment, and the identification of the Dawson family as both exemplars and victims of the “Believe” campaign. Examples of how space has been produced include city, state and federal government interventions into the built environment through efforts to improve the physical appearance of the neighborhood, temporary increases in the deployment of social services, increased police presence and surveillance, the funding of the demolition of abandoned buildings, and the association of the Dawson family with the “Believe” campaign to further civic goals. Examples of place-making include commemorative efforts such as: the adaptive reuse of the house at 1401 E. Preston Street as a “safe haven,” the construction of informal memorials on the corner of Eden and Preston Streets, the adoption of the corner as a de facto community gathering place, the conversion of the vacant lot into a memorial garden, the commemorative naming of the school playground and library, and the production of works of art as representations of the Dawson family and the neighborhood.

One of the immediate effects of the Dawson murders was to expose the dominant rule of everyday life in an occupied drug territory: don’t snitch. Carnell and Angela Dawson’s repeated ignorance of this rule was penalized through the

repeated harassment, assault, and ultimate death of their entire family. Retribution for calling police or testifying in court is, by all accounts, guaranteed in neighborhoods controlled by drug gangs. The acts of mourning and protest in the days following the Dawson murders signaled the recognition of a previously unknown tolerance threshold in Oliver. The term “tipping point” has been used by many in the time since the murders. This tipping point appears to have been defined by the deaths of five innocent children. The notion that an entire family was “wiped out” for the sake of protecting drug turf boggled the minds of many. As neighbors stood in protest, they exhibited behavior which would normally not be tolerated by dominant drug criminals. Prior to the murders the act of standing in defiance of violent criminals would result in one being mocked and ridiculed at best and killed at worst. The Dawson murders, however, opened up a period in which the public behavior of normally law-abiding citizens governed the neighborhood. As reported in the literature on public responses to unexpected death (Azaryahu 1998; Doss 2002; Haney et. al. 1999) a period in which public space is redefined for the purpose of grief, mourning, and protest is a common response to tragedies of a certain magnitude. The dozens or hundreds of murders which had taken place in Oliver prior to the Dawson murders did not affect the balance of the neighborhood. Past acts of defiance were unsustainable given the relative power of criminals to control space through intimidation. The use of phrases such as “post-Dawson Oliver,” and “post-Dawson Baltimore” represent the tipping of the neighborhood balance.

As Linenthal (2001) explores, a tone of defiant optimism often accompanies such transgressing events. As the data suggest, the time leading up to and

immediately following the Dawson murders, an “us and them” division was established and reinforced as the governing social structure of the neighborhood. The Jordan-Simms affair along with the reports of Angela Dawson’s perceived inability to distinguish between “good” and “bad” teens confirms the existence of opposing sides. Following the arson murders formerly uninvolved neighbors took up Dawson’s defiant tone and vowed that the families death would not be “in vain.” The police commissioner as well as BUILD members stated a desire for collective anger to be maintained and channeled into action so as to permanently alter the balance of the neighborhood. In a 2005 radio interview, a community leader named Clayton Guyton told of his use of the Dawson name to remind local criminals of the limits to their actions. Guyton warned those he new to be criminals that “we don’t need another Dawson family tragedy here” (Marc Steiner Show, 2005).

The oft repeated phrase, “not in vain,” embodies the need for neighbors, activists, police, elected officials, and the media to construct a fitting meaning of the Dawsons’ deaths. Each group attempted to do so in its own ways. Neighbors sought meaning by gathering together and contributing to memorial efforts so as to provide a sense of safety and security for themselves and their families. BUILD activists immediately channeled their own outrage over the Dawson murders into their broader political message that the state of affairs in Oliver were symptomatic of decades of neglect. Certain elected officials called for the further militarization of the inner city. Calls for National Guard troops and Maryland State Police suggest the desire of some to match the might of the drug criminals with federal and state military and police forces. For Mayor O’Malley and other elected officials, the meaning of the Dawsons’

lives and deaths were as exemplars of the finest qualities of Baltimore's citizens.

Congressmen Cummings used the tipping point to garner the political will to allocate millions of dollars of drug enforcement dollars into Baltimore.

6.1.1 The house at 1401 E. Preston Street

The identity of the Dawson's rented rowhouse at 1401 E. Preston Street has been dramatically transformed since the family moved there in 1998. When the Dawson family moved into the three story rowhouse it was described as "heaven on earth." At that point the Dawsons did not know the neighborhood and saw great potential for happiness in the spacious house. After living there for three years Carnell and Angela Dawson came to know the neighborhood, the good neighbors, and the troubled drug criminals. Vigilant about the safety of the children, the Dawsons began speaking out on the criminal behavior occurring around their house. In doing so, the Dawsons identified themselves as targets for retribution. For local drug criminals, the house became a site which embodied a challenge to their authority as the administrators of the open-air marketplace. The house was transformed into a target. Taylor's (1999) assertion that "place is defended, while space is attacked" is apt in considering the Dawson home-household.

Attacked numerous times, the house was marred by graffiti which included curse words and warnings. One firebomb attack on October 3, 2002 was followed two weeks later by the fatal attack on the house and family. The transformation from target to murder scene was rapid. The house as a murder scene was marked by the familiar symbol of yellow police tape. The front stoop was adorned with the

balloons, stuffed animals, flowers, notes, cards, and flags which constituted an informal memorial. The vivid color of the informal memorial against the backdrop of the burned out house signified that something awful had happened in the house that affected the entire community.

As days, weeks, and months passed, the blackened and boarded house stood as a symbol of death, a foreboding reminder of the circumstances which claimed innocent lives. The house was referred to as “our Alamo,” “our 16th Street Baptist Church,” and simply as “that sad little house.” Some in the community wished to leave the house in that blackened condition as a reminder of the darkness which killed children. Others wished to reclaim the house as a statement that the darkness shall not triumph. The latter view prevailed. The house was once again transformed, this time into a “safe haven.” The commitment of the local memorial committee, with funds from state and city government, reclaimed the meaning of the house in a manner befitting Angela Dawson’s intentions: as a safe place for children.

6.1.2 The corner of Eden Street and Preston Street

The data presented in this study reveal the transformation of the local function and meaning of the corner of Eden and Preston Streets. The Dawson family settled into a house on a corner that was ruled as a drug trafficking territory, as a space administered by young male drug dealers. The corner did little to serve the needs of the residential community. To law abiding neighbors, the corner was an undifferentiated space which was occupied by a powerful, unsanctioned body. The corner was known to police as a troubled spot, but was just one of hundreds just like

it in Baltimore. The murder of the Dawsons changed the meaning and function of the corner by investing it with powerful emotional content.

The first transformation occurred by the corner being enveloped as part of the murder scene. The sidewalk was enclosed with the house with police crime scene tape. The corner was also continually monitored by police for two weeks following the murders. Simultaneous to its status as a crime scene, the corner was adorned with an informal memorial at the base of the street sign pole. The site became the de facto meeting place for neighbors, public officials, police, fire investigators, and representatives of the news media. Since then the corner of Eden and Preston has become the place for community events, rallies, vigils, commemorations, protests, music, and poetry. Local response to the Dawson murders designated the corner of Eden and Preston as the center of Oliver. In its new capacity the corner has become the stage on which neighbors grieved, mourned, protested, memorialized, and performed.

“Eden and Preston” as a spatial metaphor entered the local vernacular as a reference to the murders. The plight of occupied spaces around Baltimore was summoned by the mention of the intersection. Far from a simple location on a planning map, “Eden and Preston” became a symbolic site, just as “West Bank” and “Northern Ireland” are both sites and symbols. As a memorial symbol, the corner is a place-marker in the remembrance of the Dawson murders. Having been reclaimed from drug dealers and made the center of Oliver, the corner stands for the affirmation of life, the remembrance of the Dawsons and therefore contributes to achieving the goal of not allowing their deaths to be in vain. As with other places struck by tragedy

such as Oklahoma City (terrorist bombing), Columbine, Colorado (public school massacre), and Love Canal, New York (environmental contamination), the transformation of the corner of Eden Street and Preston Street to “Eden and Preston,” and from space to place, occurred at the lighting of Darrell L. Brooks’ match.

The prevailing spirit regarding the function and meaning of the corner of Eden and Preston Streets is as “turf” that law abiding citizens reclaimed in a symbolic battle with criminals. A tone of optimism pervades as persons talk of the future of the corner and the southwestern corner of Oliver.

6.1.3 From vacant lot to memorial garden

The lot across Eden Street from the Dawson house stood vacant, abandoned, and undifferentiated prior to Spring 2004. The murder of the Dawson family spurred the reclamation of the lot by students of The Stadium School. The effort to give material form to their emotions in situ represents the transformation of space into place. The elements of the garden design -- the seven rocks which represent each family member, and the use of deciduous plant material to represent the continual rebirth of life and community – invest the space with memorial content and thus make it a special place, and give it - in Casey’s terms - “place-memory.” Given that that the lot had no direct link to the Dawson family other than proximity, the claiming of the site may be seen as an annexation of space from criminals, a memorial claim. For the memorial gardeners and their supporters, it was important to stake a memorial claim to new ground to disenable criminal control of space. In this way the memorial

claim on the lot may be seen as a progressive expression of power against the regressive forces of violence and intimidation.

Related to the memorial transformation of the lot from undifferentiated space to a memorial place is the symbolic demolition of rowhouses near Memorial Baptist Church on the second anniversary of the Dawson murders. The demolition of the abandoned, boarded-up houses was a commemorative and political act. In response to the 1998 Jordan-Simms affair the City demolished an entire block as an act of erasure. The City produced a space in an attempt to take away bad memories of a tragic place. In 2004 BUILD (with City permission) demolished half a block in an act of hope for the place that might emerge. In this case negative, or disabling, space was removed in order to open the way for place-making. The efforts to change the environment which spawned the murders constitute memorial acts.

As of this writing the empty space on which those houses once stood has not been repopulated. Vacant lots await a new function in the neighborhood. This liminal status, between space and place, raises interesting questions for the place-space tension concept. How are we to consider intention and time? While the intention is to construct new and better houses on the lots, the funding to do so is not forthcoming. The lots which were cleared in the Dawson name have now sat vacant for two years. Do the lots remain the product of commemoration? I suggest that the answer rests in the hearts and minds of those who demolished the houses in 2004. If the Dawson memory plays a role in driving the reclamation of the sites, then it is an example of a “place-in-progress.” If not, then perhaps these vacant lots represent an abandoned thread of memory in the form of undifferentiated space.

6.1.4 The commemorative naming of the school library and playground

The commemorative naming of the library and playground for the Dawson family at Dr. Bernard Harris, Sr. Elementary School is the most traditional of memorial acts which occurred in the aftermath of the murders. The act, which occurred soon after the murders, represents the incorporation of the loss of members of the school community. Marking these portions of the school provided a material embodiment of the memory. The library and playground stand as symbols in the community narrative about the Dawson family. The position of the school as an enabling place in Oliver is firm. The commemorative naming of portions of the building ambiguously positions the school in the emergent memorial landscape.

I argue that hasty commemoration is intended to satisfy a self-imposed requirement that the fallen community members be honored in a timely manner. I argue further that such commemoration is one of the early, albeit clumsy, threads of memory which emerge from affected neighborhoods or communities. The commemorative naming of portions of the school building in Oliver was done, in part, as a healing exercise for the school's children, faculty, and staff. This effort gave a material reality to the scourge of death which had overtaken the school. With the loss of the Dawson family, three of the six grade levels in the school lost a classmate. In this sense the process of commemorative naming is far more valuable than its product.

The product, hastily named portions of a public school building, allows for only a certain amount of memorial content. This is especially true since the school

itself has already been named for someone else (i.e. Dr. Bernard Harris, Sr.). The rush to commemorate, which often follows tragic events, negates the full legacy of the Dawsons and falls short of the intention. The commemoration is meaningful for those who were present in the time and place of the tragedy, but there appears to be little or no transcendent quality to the naming. The transformation of the name does little to transform the purpose or function of that which is named. The attachment of names to places is, as Nora (1989) suggests, to stop ourselves from forgetting. I argue that the hasty attachment of names to sites undermines the power of memorial places to transcend death. Nora talks of the goal of sites of memory to embody the most memorial content in the fewest of symbols. The naming of parts of an already named site invests a shallow amount of content into an unnecessary number of sites.

6.1.5 The reemergence of Oliver as a differentiated place

The Dawson murders quite literally put Oliver back on the map. The data show that prior to the murders, Oliver was not a commonly used reference to this part of East Baltimore. Rather, the neighborhood was referred to as a part of “East Baltimore.” The region within the city became known by its police and planning district name (i.e. East Baltimore or Eastern district) rather than by the twenty different neighborhood names of which it is composed. The Dawson murders focused attention, within Oliver and beyond, that a tragedy happened not only to a family, but to a neighborhood. The negotiation of the meaning of the tragedy and how it was to be woven into the fabric of the community yielded a renewed sense of Oliver’s relevance and that it was not lost to the drug trade. This is not to suggest that

all of Oliver's problems have gone away through three years of collective neighborhood reclamation efforts. Indeed the symptoms of crime, poverty, and broken social structures persist. The data suggest that the myriad ways in which individuals and groups have attempted to produce space and make place have yielded a memorial landscape which has revealed the neighborhood itself. The neighborhood which had previously been ruled by drug criminals and police as a battleground has been humanized, or placed, by those who wish to ensure that the Dawson family is properly remembered. By seeking to give meaning to the lives of the Dawsons the neighborhood has discovered its own identity.

As the data regarding the Jordan-Simms affair show, the Oliver neighborhood held little relevance in the late 1990's. References to the site of the killing are either intensely local (i.e. the 1600 block of Llewelyn Avenue) or regional (i.e. East Baltimore). The magnitude of the murder of the Dawson family, by contrast, necessitated a neighborhood place name because the murders happened to the neighborhood. The new spatial references which emerged were: "Eden and Preston" and "Oliver." The emergence of "Oliver" as a spatial identifier suggests that remarkable events demand more precise place names. An example of this is the common reference to Shanksville, Pennsylvania as the site of the crash of United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001. For the purposes of the collective narrative on 9/11 we require a reference more specific than Southwestern Pennsylvania, Somerset County, or even Stonycreek Township. Shanksville is the community name we use despite the fact that Flight 93 did not crash in Shanksville, but in the township outside the town. Public tragedies such as the plane crash and the Dawson murders take the

lives of victims, and also define communities of survivors. Just as we require that the date be marked, we require that a place be marked.

Some of Oliver's residents did not need to be reminded of what is good and healthy about their neighborhood, despite all of its problems. Others within Oliver and beyond, however, were reminded that they were members of a neighborhood with clear boundaries, a history, and a strong faith community. The shock of the Dawson murders spurred a neighborhood conversation about Oliver's history, its present-day plight, and its future. The murders awoke some to the fact that Oliver had become an undifferentiated space within a drug territory. In addition to talking to one another, media attention gave neighbors the opportunity to talk about Oliver to a local, regional, and national audience. In addition to conversations within the neighborhood, the media spotlight served to enable the articulation of a vision for Oliver. Residents, activists, business owners, clergy, and local officials lamented the deaths, raged against the conditions which created the environment, and vowed to make changes to make Oliver better.

This rediscovery of Oliver lent BUILD a degree of leverage as they had been working in the area for three years prior. It is interesting to note that BUILD's definition of the boundaries of Oliver are inclusive of more area than the generally agreed upon boundaries. Nonetheless, BUILD's effort to raise money and political power to reclaim and rebuilt Oliver were aided by the recognition by others of Oliver as a distinct place. As a participant in the renewed conversation on Oliver, BUILD put forth an aggressive plan for reclamation and reconstruction. Not all in the neighborhood agreed with the plan or BUILD's approach. Comments offered on

background confirm strained relations within Oliver's community leadership. The nature of the strain, however, could not be more positive. Tension over the future of Oliver suggests that there is collective concern for the future. This progressive tension is far more enabling than the regressive tension which accompanies dominance by an occupying drug trade. As Carroll et. al. (2005) state in their treatment of the galvanizing and fragmenting forces of local disasters: restoration, rebuilding, and community planning are likely to lead to the development of "trust and shared understandings necessary for effective concerted action" (317). The shift in conversation from "what is wrong with East Baltimore?" to "what is best for the future of Oliver?" reflects the enabling of place.

6.1.6 The lessons of the "Believe" campaign

As of the time of this writing (September 2006), the debate over the role of the "Believe" campaign vis-à-vis the Dawson murder continued in civil proceedings. The fundamental debate is whether the Dawson family exemplified the spirit of the campaign or died because of the campaign. A compelling case may be made on both sides. Exploring this ambiguity may be helpful in articulating the implications of the "Believe" debate for the emergence of the memorial landscape.

The goal of the high-concept civic campaign was to stem the tide of drug abuse and violence in Baltimore. As a campaign of city government, "Believe" extended beyond the usual reach of tourism sloganeering and sought to empower citizens to turn in criminals and seek help for drug abusers. Akin to a corporate advertising campaign, the "Believe" concept was innovative in that it was devised

and deployed by government. Unlike corporate advertising, the City was unable to align service provision with the campaign. The apparent disconnect between Baltimore City government's ability to integrate the advertising campaign with the workings of public safety and social services is at the heart of the debate.

Taylor (1999) suggests that producing and administering space is what states do and making place within that space is for citizens to do. The "Believe" campaign's lack of grounding in the everyday lives of certain citizens highlights the tension. A simple example of this is the police practice of visiting the address of persons who called to report crimes. This practice identifies callers to criminals and establishes the persons and residence as a target for retribution. The lack of ability to integrate local knowledge into policing practices led to the Dawson house becoming a target for criminals. I argue that the disconnect between the spirit of the campaign and the policies and procedures of government is rooted in the government's well-intentioned but poorly executed attempt to enable place.

The "Believe" campaign reveals the inability of government to drive the investment of meaningful and lasting socio-cultural content into space. I argue that if the "Believe" campaign had its origins from a source other than city government, it may have been more successful in achieving its goals in a manner which enabled its integration into Baltimore's spaces. The cooption and parody of the "Believe" concept suggests that citizens converted the campaign into something more valuable to them. The now ubiquitous parody bumper stickers are used by urban environmentalist ("Be Leaf"), advocates of good behavior ("Behave"), beehive hairstyle enthusiasts ("Beehive"), National Bohemian brand beer enthusiast

(“BOHlieve”), those who prefer that the concept be articulated in the local vernacular (“B’lieve hon”), and others.

The derivatives of the campaign subvert the lofty concept by communicating a particular message between people who share common interests, affinities, or sense of humor. Each group shares a set of common sensibilities which enable the communication. The state (i.e. Baltimore City) cannot be defined by a simple set of meaningful common sensibilities, thus the “Believe” concept was capable of achieving only a certain degree of resonance. Many in Baltimore are of the opinion that government is not and should not be in the position of communicating in this fashion. Thus, Mayor O’Malley, and other campaign planners, chose a high-concept, all encompassing campaign which could not speak to all citizens. I assert that the “Believe” campaign was targeted at the city’s large Baptist population who are more likely to respond to the campaign’s appeal to a principle of faith. I assert further that City government is not equipped to sustain an engagement with such high concepts. This raises questions about the relationship between public administration and faith communities that would be important lines of future research.

6.2 Conclusion

This dissertation has demonstrated the emergence of a local, human-scale memorial landscape in the wake of violent tragedy. The multi-method qualitative research design has yielded data which have revealed the memorial landscape as the diaphoric embodiment of the production of space and the making of place. This study is rooted in the social sciences literature on sociocultural landscapes in general, and memorial landscapes in particular. The research questions, methods, data, and analyses extend the literature to conceive of the formation of the local, human-scale memorial landscape as a complex, dynamic, multi-scale embodiment of myriad sociocultural intentions. The temporal focus of this study bridges a gap in the literature between studies of immediate aftermath and studies of the past. The memorial landscape as presented here is constituted by formally sanctioned memorial works, informal memorial works, and administrative interventions in the built environment.

The findings of this study are:

- As with national, monumental-scale landscapes, the formation of the local, human-scale memorial landscape involves complex and dynamic expressions of sociopolitical identity and power.
- Individuals and groups derive use-value from memory as a sociopolitical lever of power. Memory is a useful tool in the execution of sociopolitical agendas at the local level.
- Memory work is transformative in its capacity to disrupt the fixedness of space and to enable place. Local, human-scale memory work is valuable in its ability to elicit the enabling qualities of place.

- The local, human-scale memorial landscape should be defined as the all-inclusive body of interventions executed in the memory of the event and its victims.
- Multiple geographic scales actively produce the local memorial landscape. Over time the participation, and consequently the influence, of individuals and groups at scales above the local diminishes.
- Governed by preexisting cultural, political, and social context, the reaction to local-scale violent tragedy are marked by a progression from myriad groups at various scale staking memorial claims to a small local-scale group who assume memorial responsibility.

This dissertation has demonstrated that the process of memorial landscape formation is not to be reified as a strict cultural process meant to express sentimental or nostalgic views of the past. Nor are notions of landscapes as complex mediating embodiments the lone terrain of national remembrance. This study has shown the complexity and dynamism of local, human-scale memorial landscape formation. The deployment of memorial interventions in response to violent tragedy is a sociopolitical expression of power. Memorial and commemorative acts in such settings are meant to claim neighborhood space by evoking the memory of victims. The repetition of these acts over time is meant to sustain and build power.

The space of stressed communities is administered through intimidation and violence. The work of controlling space involves two priorities: build power to enhance control of space, and deny the attributes of place to exist. Violent tragedy traumatizes the established order of space and perturbs the community. The domination of space by regressive forces of violent crime is challenged by the progressive forces of memory work. The coexistence of these tensive forces yields the memorial landscape. The contemporaneousness of criminal space and memorial place in the aftermath of violent tragedy reveals the progressive power of memory to

perturb the fixedness of previously “derelict landscape” (Jakle and Wilson, 1993). Rather than being sentimentalized, memory should be seen as a lever of progressive power. Romantic notions of “community” and “memorial” should be replaced by activated sociopolitical notions of politically “progressive places” and “memory work.”

This dissertation has found the ability of memory work to transform spaces into places. The sociopolitical relations within a neighborhood and between the neighborhood and “up-scale” political and social bodies is relevant in the formation of the local-scale memorial landscape. The expression of memorial sentiment at the local scale is the product of multi-scale memorial interventions. Each intervention is defined by sociopolitical relations which contribute to the formation of the memorial landscape. The entanglement of these multi-scale relations at the local scale reveals the tensive character of the memorial landscape. Each set of relations carries ambiguity as to the causes and consequences of violent tragedy and the interpretations and intentions for establishing meaning and memory. Over time, individuals and groups shed ambiguity. After an initial period of intense memorialization, there begins a time of less intense activity from which a handful of dominant interpretations emerge. Time witnesses the progression toward memorial economy.

This study has demonstrated the value of considering all interventions executed in the name of the victims of local-scale violent tragedy as elements in the memorial landscape. As landscape is understood to be the product of the relationship between space and place, the full range of space-producing and place-making elements should be seen as constituting the memorial landscape. Just as

commemoratively named building, memorial gardens, and art works are products of memory work, so too should we consider the demolition of abandoned houses, the implementation of public surveillance systems, and changes in public policy. The interplay between space and place results in the tangled embodiment of domain and scene. When viewed through the lens of social memory, this diaphoric body is a memorial landscape. I assert that social, cultural, and political geographers are well served by viewing memorial landscapes as the manifestation of the memories which space will permit and which place requires.

The data reveal the value of memorial claims by individuals and groups as a means of leveraging the sociopolitical will and resources to act . Ambiguity arises out of each agents competing use of memory. Over time, the complexity of the story of the tragedy diminishes in proportion to the overall usefulness of the memory as a power lever. This data have demonstrated that after an initial period in which grieving and mourning seems to be everyone's concern, and handful of groups from scales above the local (i.e. Mayor and BUILD) and a handful of local-scale individuals and groups engaged in focused memory work. The up-scale groups contested the causes and consequences of the tragedy and debated solutions, while local-scale groups attempted to emplace various interpretations of meaning and legacy. By the close of the third year of memory work, virtually all work was concentrated at the local level. For the "up-scale" groups, the memory's use-value had diminished. The data reveal a trend of decreasing involvement by up-scale parties in memory-work.

As individuals and groups work to prosecute their memorial agendas, they weave variegated threads of memory into the fabric of the community. The years immediately following a tragedy are of particular importance in revealing the formation of the memorial landscape as its threads take on increasing ambiguity. The gradual nature of local-scale memorial landscape formation should be seen as evidence of the ever-presence of memory as a cohesive property within communities.

6.3 Future research

Important questions have arisen out of this research which merit further research. Important among these is an investigation of the set of community resources, such as memory, which may be built upon as a means of moving a stressed inner-city community to a more stable position. Questions include: how may social and ecological conceptions of stress and resilience be linked to address these questions? What is the potential for the use of memory in community development-based model building?

Another important question is the role of intimidation as a dominant force in inner city landscapes. This dissertation revealed how criminals represent an occupying force in neighborhoods. Little recent research exists on the geographic dynamics of inner-city landscapes in the United States. Political and social geographers should address questions of how political landscapes of intimidation and violence emerge to the exclusion of almost all residents. Research into the real and imagined boundaries of the inner-city would provide insight into sources and solutions to disputes.

An explanation for the relative lack of research on inner-city landscapes is somewhat complex. Notable is the lack of researcher access to the criminals who control space. This sort of research is inherently dangerous and often requires surrogate data such as police interviews. In addition, the data collection effort for this study was hindered by racial differences. My white skin prevented me from gathering all of the data I sought. Certain respondents projected an instrumental tone toward me which had the effect of categorizing me as just another white boy with a school project. Until such simple questions of access can be addressed, geographic research in inner-cities will remain limited. Future methodological research should address these issues of race-based access.

The role of churches in the survival and prosperity of stressed communities is an understudied area with great potential to inform community development efforts. This dissertation has indicated that the Baptist church plays an important role in efforts to rebuild Oliver. It is clear that the city-wide role of the Baptist Church is as an important force in sociopolitical affairs. An investigation of the geographic manifestations of this force would be a welcome addition to the literature on African-American landscapes.

The most important question which has arisen out of this research is on the power of collective memory to enliven local landscapes. This research has addressed a gap in the research on the early stages of local scale memorial landscape formation. This gap is by no means filled. Much remains to be learned about the processes and products of memory work at the local scale. Additional research should focus upon the variability of memory work across race, class, gender, faith and geography at the

local scale. As an attribute of identity, I predict that such an investigation would yield even greater degrees of complexity and ambiguity.

Appendices

APPENDIX ONE: TIMELINE

May 17, 1992 – The Sun reports on the uneven development occurring in the Baltimore Metro Region. Oliver and its community association president are used to illustrate the losing side of the development. This is an excellent example of Oliver 10 years prior to the Dawson tragedy.

August 7, 1992 – The Sun reported on the 15th Annual Oliver Family Festival. The report includes an interview of a man who grew up in Oliver and who reminisced about the old days. He said that “it was one big happy family” and that he learned manners and respect for others in Oliver. He said that kids now don’t have any respect and that the drugs have taken over.

July 5, 1998 – Fifteen year-old Jermaine Jamar Jordan was shot and killed by 77 year old Albert Sims, the only resident of the 1600 block of Llewelyn Street. Sims shot the boy after the boy allegedly threw a brick through his car window. The boy’s friends claim that it was an accident and that they were throwing bricks at vacant houses. Sims was the sole resident of the block.

July 14, 1998 – The Sun reports on the funeral and burial of Jordan. The boy, his life in Oliver, and the neighborhood are profiled in the story.

July 17, 1998 -- 22 homes in the 1600 block of Llewelyn Street were demolished by City wrecking crews. The block was on a City demolition list for over a year. It was moved up on the demolition schedule after the July 5, 1998 shooting death of 15 year-old Jermaine Jordan who was in town visiting family and friends from the military school he attended in Georgia. The report in The Sun focuses on residents’ memories of the block.

Fall 1998 – The Dawson family moves to 1401 E. Preston Street from a two bedroom apartment on E. Biddle Street (source: Alice McNack, Mr. Dawson’s sister, as quoted in The Sun).

December 30, 1998 – The Sun reports a follow-up to the Llewelyn Street murder and states the following: “Five months have passed since the gunfire in the 1600 block of Llewelyn Avenue, enough time for that ragged stretch of East Baltimore to be torn down, the condemned houses erased from the landscape.”

October 7, 2000 -- BUILD surveys community. About 100 community activists fanned out across the Oliver neighborhood in East Baltimore yesterday to knock on doors and ask people what the neighborhood needs most. Drugs topped the lists as the biggest problem.

February 21, 2001 – BUILD members and the community gather at Ark Church to discuss their “wish list.”

March 21, 2001 – The first documented (by police) attempt by the Dawsons to rid their corner of drugs.

August 2001 – Led by Rev. Calvin Keene, 200 Oliver residents marched by the side of a single mother who had received numerous threats to herself and her children after asking drug dealers to move from her back alley. The crowds marched from Memorial Baptist Church to the woman’s home. At the time it was seen as a symbolic victory. The effect was short-lived and the woman moved out of Baltimore City two months later after continued threats.

September 30, 2001 – Over 1,000 people pack a BUILD event at which the Mayor was blasted for his unwillingness to fund the group’s Child First after-school program.

December 2001 -- Carnell Dawson was arrested by police who spotted him buying drugs a few blocks from his house. Police seized four vials of crack cocaine from his pocket. Dawson was given probation before judgment by a District Court judge.

June 2, 2002 – BUILD unveils its 6-point agenda at its 25th anniversary fete. Both gubernatorial candidates attended. Mayor O’Malley did not attend the event.

June 26 – October 16, 2002 -- 35 calls are made from the Dawson house to the 911 and 311 call center.

August 23, 2002 – Mrs. Dawson filed a police report against Jonathan L. Colbert (alias: John L. Henry) claiming that he slapped her and that he spray-painted a curse word on the side of their house.

August 25, 2002 – The Dawsons accuses Henry of throwing bricks throw the windows of their houses.

September 4, 2002 – Again, the Dawsons accuses Henry of throwing bricks throw the windows of their houses.

September 25, 2002 – Mrs. Dawson called 911 to report to police that she had just been assaulted by a man who hit her in the chest with a bottle. Mr. Dawson called 311 later that day to report that “the same guys I’ve been having trouble with” are smoking blunts on the corner in front of his house. Mr. Dawson asked police to come and move the men along. Again, on the same day, Mr. Dawson called 311 to report that the same men were back in front of his house. This time he reported that they were yelling “red top, black top” to let people know the variety of drug they were selling.

September 26, 2002 – Mr. Dawson called 311 to report that a man named “Durrell” was throwing bottles at his house in an attempt to break the windows.

September 29, 2002 – Mr. Dawson called to report that “the drug dealers are down on my corner” and asked for police to come to move them along. Police has already moved the dealers from the corner of Preston and Caroline.

October 1, 2002 – Mr. Dawson called police from his employer to report that “drug dealers are all around my house...my wife and kids are terrified and crying.” Mr. Dawson was at work and could not leave.

October 3, 2002 -- The Dawson home at 1401 E. Preston Street was the site of an attempted arson when two Molotov cocktails were thrown through the kitchen window of their house. Mr. Dawson called 911 to report that “somebody just gas-bombed my house.”

October 7, 2002 – according to police Mr. and Mrs. Dawson met with prosecutors who offered to place the family under witness protection. The family declined saying that they didn’t want to move.

October 16, 2002 -- Darrell L. Brooks firebombed the Dawson home killing Mrs. Dawson and her five children. Mr. Dawson jumped from an upper floor window and died of burn and fall injuries a week later.

October 17, 2002 -- Darrell L. Brooks was charged with arson and six counts of murder by Baltimore City Police.

October 19, 2002 -- The Sun reported that Mr. Brooks should have been in jail on a parole violation. Brooks was never properly supervised by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

October 19, 2002 -- About 100 people gathered at Preston and Spring streets to remember the Dawson family, within sight of their burned-out home. Many of those who attended the rally, broadcast on X105.7 FM, were from outside the East Baltimore neighborhood where an arson fire took the lives of Angela Maria Dawson and her five children Wednesday. (The Sun, 10.20.2002)

October 21, 2002 -- A memorial service was held to remember the Dawson family. This event lasted for two hours and was marked by an official feel.

October 23, 2002 -- Carnell Dawson Sr. died at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

October 24, 2002 -- The funeral of Angela Dawson and her five children at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. 2,000 people attended. Speakers included: Rev. Clifford M

Johnson Jr., John Walters (Director of the Office of National Drug Policy), Police Commissioner Edward T. Burns, and Mayor Martin O'Malley.

November 1, 2002 – The ABC News program Nightline focuses on the Dawson tragedy. The story was told without a reporters narration. Rather, images were shown of the neighborhood and its residents with their own words as a “rebuke to the media” (The Sun, 11.01.2001). The shows producers wanted to capture the fact that people die in these neighborhoods everyday.

November 11, 2002 -- Mayor O'Malley calls the Dawson family "martyrs" of the Baltimore Believe campaign.

November 13, 2002 -- Mayor launches his "Inspire" effort at Oliver's Nazarene Baptist Church.

November 23, 2002 -- A Baltimore Boy Scout organization held a ceremony at the Dawson family home in East Baltimore in memory of the two adults and five children who died in an arson fire that police believe was set in retaliation for the family's stance against neighborhood drug dealing. About 30 Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts from Roots of Scouting Inc. participated in the observance at Preston and Eden streets.

Roots of Scouting urged the city to build a permanent memorial at the spot and to proclaim Oct. 16 -- the date of the fire -- as "Dawson Family Day." The Scouts service served as the launch for a petition drive supporting the memorial and proclamation effort. (The Sun)

November 25, 2002 -- The Sun reported that Commissioner Norris used the Dawson family home as the backdrop for a five-minute video meant to motivate police vigilance in arresting criminals.

November 29, 2002: The Maryland Hip-Hop Alliance hosted a "Mental Food Drive" in front of the Dawson home at Eden and Preston. Copies of the commemorative CD "Strength in Numbers" were sold for \$5. All proceeds went to the Angel Family Fund.

December 10, 2002 -- Dr. Bernard Harris Elementary School honored the Dawson children by dedicating the classroom library and playground at a ceremony at the school. Dawson Memorial Playground.

December 11, 2002 -- Darrell L. Brooks is indicted on federal charges in the arson deaths of the seven members of the Dawson family.

December 26, 2002 -- The Sun reports that the deaths of the Dawson family as a complicating factor with regard to the major issues facing Baltimore and its mayor in 2003.

January 7, 2003 -- Johnnie Cochran's firm notified Mayor O'Malley and his administration that a lawsuit will be filed which claims that the "Baltimore Believe" campaign is, in part, responsible for the Dawson family deaths.

January 8, 2003 -- O'Malley "derides Cochran's claims" as pretrial "hype" which is meant to spur a settlement. The mayor said that the Dawson family exemplified the ideals of "Believe."

February 17, 2003 -- The Sun reports that 911 and 311 recordings, police records reveal fear and frustration in the Dawson home in the months prior to the arson.

March 8, 2003 -- "Reason to Believe" effort is announced. Dawson deaths prompted a new spirit of cooperation.

April 25, 2003 -- Dawson family is posthumously honored as recipients of The Sun's first ever "Citizen's Service Award. Presented by O'Malley and Denise E. Palmer (Publisher and CEO).

June 11, 2003 -- The Lombard Writers Project distributed its book "Growing up in a notorious world" in front of the Dawson family home. The book was written by these middle school students in honor of the Dawsons.

July 3, 2003 -- The "Believemobile," a 28-foot tractor-trailer that opens into a full performance stage, was unveiled at 5:30 PM at a news conference at the Dawson Family Memorial Playground at Bernard Harris Sr. Elementary School, 1400 N. Caroline St. The program included a news conference and free concert.

July 27, 2003 - Rep. Elijah E. Cummings announced a bill called the Dawson Family Community Protection Act that would provide up to \$1 million annually to Baltimore and other cities that are battling severe drug problems and violent crime.

August 27, 2003 – Darrell L. Brooks was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Brooks' entered a guilty plea in lieu of facing the death penalty. Prior to his sentencing, Brooks addressed the Dawson family survivors.

August 29, 2003 -- The Sun reports on the "struggle" of Oliver in the wake of the Dawson tragedy.

September 30, 2003 -- A bill that honors Baltimore family members who were killed for "snitching" on neighborhood drug dealers passed the U.S. House of Representatives in a voice vote. (The Sun).

October 15, 2003 – At the invitation of Home Secretary David Blunkett, Mayor O'Malley addressed a crowd of 1,000 British politicians, drug-abuse counselors, nurses, and social service providers on Baltimore's approach to drug crime and drug addiction treatment. The Mayor associated the Believe Campaign and the "assassination" of Carnell and Angela Dawson and their five children.

October 16, 2003 -- The Sun reported on the clergy of Oliver who began building a "safety net" for the community. Profiles Rev. Tucker.

October 19, 2003 -- About 400 people attend a rally held by Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development in Oliver. The group outlined its \$100 million vision for the community.

November 3, 2003 -- Mayor's office announces an "Operation Crime Watch" program to recruit residents in crime fighting while protecting their own safety. Dawson family's deaths is listed as a reason for the program.

March 4, 2004 -- The Sun reported on a federal legislation proposal to ban the release of balloons as part of ceremonial activities out of concern for wildlife. This is notable because a balloon release in remembrance of the Dawson family is mentioned alongside the release of balloons in NYC at the turn of the millennium and to remember victims of the 9/11 attacks.

May 8, 2004 -- The Dawson Family Memorial Garden was unveiled and dedicated. The site, across Eden from the house, was formerly a vacant lot.

September 3, 2004 -- Mayor O'Malley unveiled a new anonymous tip line for residents to use. The Sun reported that efforts to promote anonymous tips were renewed after the death of the Dawson family.

October 16, 2004 -- Profile of the progress made in Oliver appeared in The Sun.

October 17, 2004 -- Several hundred people gathered at a church yesterday to share a dream of a better Oliver, the blighted East Baltimore neighborhood where seven members of the [Carnell Dawson Sr.] family died in an arson fire in 2002.

State Sen. Nathaniel J. McFadden said he has requested \$2 million be set aside for Oliver in next year's state budget. Douglass Austin, Baltimore's deputy housing commissioner, said the city will provide \$400,000 in demolition funds and donate 100 properties that it controls.

A bulldozer demolished a row of homes, marking the first phase of BUILD's revitalization efforts.

October 17, 2004 -- Jonathan L. Colbert was shot and killed in front of a house in the 1400 block of E. Preston St. His death announcement appeared in The Sun on October 22, 2004.

November 2, 2004 -- Mayor wins second term election.

January 10, 2005 -- State officials have awarded almost \$230,000 to Knox Community Development Corp. for the creation of the Dawson Safe Haven for Children, Youth and Families.

January 16, 2005 -- The home of community activist Edna McAbier was firebombed by drug criminals in Baltimore's Harwood neighborhood in an attempt to prevent her from interfering with their drug business.

Jan 30, 2005 -- Oliver's BUILD clergy travel to Annapolis to support state anti-intimidation measures.

February 1, 2005 -- AmeriCorps members cleanup trash from the Oliver and Reservoir Hill neighborhoods in honor of the Dawson family.

February 17, 2005 -- Dawson family survivors file a lawsuit against city, state, police. The suit claims that the family was not protected despite the City's awareness that they were in danger.

May 25, 2005 -- Oliver's BUILD clergy "peacefully hijacked" the City Council meeting in order to get the funds they claim were promised to them.

October 25, 2005 -- The third anniversary of the Dawson tragedy is honored by a ceremony and groundbreaking of the Dawson Safe Haven for Children Youth and Families / MAAFA Center.

November _____, 2005-- MAAFA Suite presentation at New All Saints Catholic Church. The suite was augmented to include a scene in honor of the Dawson family struggle. The first scene is an interpretation of Mrs. Dawson interaction with street thugs. The second scene is an interpretation of the arson act as the Brooks character shows his friends that he is a "soldier" and that he has what it takes to succeed in the drug game. The final scene is an interpretation of Brooks' statement to the family in the courtroom as his plea deal is accepted by the court and he is sentenced to life in prison without the opportunity for parole. The character states that "he didn't mean to kill anyone. He was just trying to get his name out there in order to establish some credibility on the street." He went on to say that he "doesn't deserve anything but death, but that more death would just bring more pain."

Appendix Two: 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fact Sheet

General Population Characteristics	Baltimore City		Baltimore County		State of Maryland		U.S.
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
TOTAL POPULATION	651,154		754,292		5,296,486		
Male	303,687	46.6	357,347	47.4	2,557,794	48.3	49.10%
Female	347,467	53.4	396,945	52.6	2,738,692	51.7	50.90%
Median age (years)	35	(X)	37.7	(X)	36	(X)	35.3
Under 5 years	41,694	6.4	45,252	6	353,393	6.7	6.80%
18 years and over	489,801	75.2	575,929	76.4	3,940,314	74.4	74.30%
65 years and over	85,921	13.2	110,335	14.6	599,307	11.3	12.40%
One race	641,600	98.5	743,529	98.6	5,192,899	98	97.60%
White	205,982	31.6	561,132	74.4	3,391,308	64	75.10%
Black or African American	418,951	64.3	151,600	20.1	1,477,411	27.9	12.30%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2,097	0.3	1,923	0.3	15,423	0.3	0.90%
Asian	9,985	1.5	23,947	3.2	210,929	4	3.60%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	222	0	242	0	2,303	0	0.10%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11,061	1.7	13,774	1.8	227,916	4.3	12.50%
Household population	625,401	96	736,652	97.7	5,162,430	97.5	97.20%
Average household size	2.42	(X)	2.46	(X)	2.61	(X)	2.59
Average family size	3.16	(X)	3	(X)	3.13	(X)	3.14
Total housing units	300,477		313,734		2,145,283		
Occupied housing units	257,996	85.9	299,877	95.6	1,980,859	92.3	91.00%
Owner-occupied housing units	129,869	50.3	202,579	67.6	1,341,751	67.7	66.20%
Renter-occupied housing units	128,127	49.7	97,298	32.4	639,108	32.3	33.80%
Vacant housing units	42,481	14.1	13,857	4.4	164,424	7.7	9.00%
SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	U.S.
Population 25 years and over	419,581		511,434		3,495,595		
High school graduate or higher	286,882	68.4	431,380	84.3	2,930,509	83.8	80.40%
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	162,044	27.2	127,794	18.2	854,345	17.6	19.30%
Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	84,227	35.9	160,753	57.2	1,110,118	56.3	56.70%
Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	80,894	28.8	160,170	49.3	1,087,740	49.7	52.10%
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	U.S.
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	287,159	56.6	396,897	66.6	2,769,525	67.8	63.90%
Median household income in 1999 (dollars)	30,078	(X)	50,667	(X)	52,868	(X)	41,994
Median family income in 1999 (dollars)	35,438	(X)	59,998	(X)	61,876	(X)	50,046
Per capita income in 1999 (dollars)	16,978	(X)	26,167	(X)	25,614	(X)	21,587
Families below poverty level	27,864	18.8	9,058	4.5	83,232	6.1	9.20%
Individuals below poverty level	143,514	22.9	47,603	6.5	438,676	8.5	12.40%
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	U.S.
Single-family owner-occupied homes	116,580		182,909		1,178,779		
Median value (dollars)	69,100	(X)	127,300	(X)	146,000	(X)	119,600
Median of selected monthly owner costs	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	
With a mortgage (dollars)	853	(X)	1,169	(X)	1,296	(X)	1,088

Appendix Three: The Dawson Family Community Protection Act

108th CONGRESS, 1ST SESSION
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE

H. R. 1599

2003 H.R. 1599; 108 H.R. 1599

SYNOPSIS:

A bill to amend the Office of National Drug Control Policy Act Reauthorization Act of 1998 to ensure that adequate funding is provided for certain high intensity drug trafficking areas

DATE OF INTRODUCTION: April 03, 2003

SPONSOR(S):

Sponsor and Cosponsors as of 04/07/2003
CUMMINGS, ELIJAH E (D-MD) - Sponsor
SOUDER, MARK E (R-IN)- Cosponsor

TEXT:

HR 1599 IH

108th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. R. 1599

To amend the Office of National Drug Control Policy Act Reauthorization Act of 1998 to ensure that adequate funding is provided for certain high intensity drug trafficking areas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 3, 2003

Mr. Cummings (for himself and Mr. Souder) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the Office of National Drug Control Policy Act Reauthorization Act of 1998 to ensure that adequate funding is provided for certain high intensity drug trafficking areas. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Dawson Family Community Protection Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In the early morning hours of October 16, 2002, the home of Carnell and Angela Dawson was firebombed in apparent retaliation for Mrs. Dawson's notification of police about persistent drug distribution activity in their East Baltimore City neighborhood.

(2) The arson claimed the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Dawson and their 5 young children, aged 9 to 14.

(3) The horrific murder of the Dawson family is a stark example of domestic narco-terrorism.

(4) In all phases of counter-narcotics law enforcement—from prevention to investigation to prosecution to reentry--the voluntary cooperation of ordinary citizens is a critical component.

(5) Voluntary cooperation is difficult for law enforcement officials to obtain when citizens feel that cooperation carries the risk of violent retaliation by illegal drug trafficking organizations and their affiliates.

(6) Public confidence that law enforcement is doing all it can to make communities safe is a prerequisite for voluntary cooperation among people who may be subject to intimidation or reprisal (or both).

(7) Witness protection programs are insufficient on their own to provide security because many individuals and families who strive everyday to make distressed neighborhoods livable for their children, other relatives, and neighbors will resist or refuse offers of relocation by local, State, and Federal prosecutorial agencies and because, moreover, the continued presence of strong individuals and families is critical to preserving and strengthening the social fabric in such communities.

(8) Where (as in certain sections of Baltimore City) interstate trafficking of illegal drugs has severe ancillary local consequences within areas designated as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, it is important that supplementary HIDTA Program funds be committed to support initiatives aimed at making the affected communities safe for the residents of those communities and encouraging their cooperation with local, State, and Federal law enforcement efforts to combat illegal drug trafficking.

SEC. 3. FUNDING FOR CERTAIN HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREAS.

(a) In General. Section 707(d) of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Act Reauthorization Act of 1998 (21 U.S.C. 1760(d); Public Law 105-277; 112 Stat. 2681-670) is amended--

(1) by striking "The Director" and inserting the following: "(1) Limitation. The Director"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph: "(2) Specific purposes. The Director shall ensure that, of the amounts appropriated for a fiscal year for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, at least \$1,000,000 is used in high intensity drug trafficking areas with severe neighborhood safety and illegal drug distribution problems. The funds shall be used-- "(A) to ensure the safety of neighborhoods and the protection of communities, including the prevention of the intimidation of potential witnesses of illegal drug distribution and related activities; and "(B) to combat illegal drug trafficking through such methods as the Director considers appropriate, such as establishing or operating (or both) a toll-free telephone hotline for use by the public to provide information about illegal drug-related activities."

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