

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

WRITTEN BY OLIVIA BAXTER, NICHOLAS MILLER,
THE SOUTH SACRAMENTO COMMUNITY, AND 916 INK

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT E. LOVE

**SOUTH
SACRAMENTO**



FORWARD BY THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

When it comes to your health, your zip code is more important than your genetic code. Place matters for health because where you live determines how you live, such as whether you have access to healthy food, quality jobs, affordable housing, and high performing schools. Place also shapes your sense of belonging. Particularly for children, neighborhood conditions can affirm one's sense of self-worth or reinforce feelings of hopelessness and second-class citizenship. That is why The California Endowment launched Building Healthy Communities (BHC) – our 10-year investment in 14 low-income communities designed to begin undoing the root causes of poor health and build agency to change the odds for low income Californians.

Every person and every place has a unique story. This graphic novel is a story of people in South Sacramento. A story of different histories coming together to form one community with multiple experiences and yet a linked destiny. As this graphic novel illustrates, unhealthy neighborhood conditions are the result of discriminatory policies by decision makers and long-term disinvestment of public and private dollars. But, the future is not yet written. Despite all of the challenges facing South Sacramento, this is a story of hope. As these illustrations so beautifully depict, residents are coming together to change the story, because everyone deserves to live in a healthy neighborhood.

This story is part of a series profiling each of the places partnering in BHC. Together, they are the story of California's future – a story of dignity and inclusion, where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to live up to their full potential.

URBAN HABITAT

The first *How Did We Get Here?* comic book was created by Urban Habitat in 2005. Urban Habitat provided project support to 916 Ink in the creation of their *How Did We Get Here?* graphic novel. Urban Habitat brings race and class to the forefront of transportation, land use, and housing policies to create a Bay Area where low-income people and people of color can live in just and connected neighborhoods. www.urbanhabitat.org

PREFACE

It may seem that communities emerge out of random interactions, events, and occurrences, but if we leave it there, we only get part of the story. The goal of this comic is to tell a story of how communities develop within a set of historical circumstances...not always perfect and often unequal and violent. It explores the historical legacy and impact of structural inequality and oppression in South Sacramento that has left our community racialized, segregated, and ultimately excluded from resources. This story highlights examples of structural racism, sexism, classism, and their compounding effects that when intersected over time requires us to examine these phenomena. While this oppression may seem invisible to some it manifests through disinvestment in community, including limited and disproportionate access to healthcare, education, transportation, employment, food access, quality housing and wealth accumulation. This story follows individuals and groups who struggle against the outside influences that threaten their communities and we see their contributions to making real systems-level change.



I know I can't tell you not to worry, but she has the best care anyone could ask for here.

That's true, I know that. Thank god for this hospital.

Not a terrible use of this land, I suppose. The fairgrounds used to be in this very spot.

Really?

Yeah, the fairgrounds moved from downtown to here around 1910 and brought people from all over the state. Folks stayed in hotels, dined in the restaurants, and bought stuff from the stores. Even the military used the space during World War II, and not long after that my family was forced out of their house and we had to move to Tahoe Park. Then the city relocated the fair, and that's why it's out near Arden at Cal Expo now. Bad part is, that it took them over a decade to build anything here and the developer who bought the land refused to put single family homes in.



How come?

Why do you think?

They moved everyone out of downtown, or the West End it was called then, and if you weren't white, you went to Oak Park or Glen Elder. The poorer white folks moved with us, but the ones that already lived here and had a little cash left along with the fairgrounds because nobody was spending money in this neighborhood anymore.



How do you know all this? Just from being old?



I spend a lot of time in the library



Maybe Ella can relax in that labyrinth of books you call a living room when she gets out of here. It's probably best she's in the house less anyways. I don't know what I'm gonna do about the black mold. We can't afford anything, especially with these hospital bills now. I don't even know if they take our Medi-Cal.

I've said before that you and the little one can come stay with me. It'd be tight but I hate the thought of you two being in that mold infested place. I know you've got your pride and all, but

look at where you are. Ella will be alright, but that mold caused this pneumonia, it isn't just her asthma.

I feel like a terrible father.

Marcos, it's that slumlord of yours. You ought to sue him. If you'd just let me get my friend Lawrence down here, he'd take the case, and—

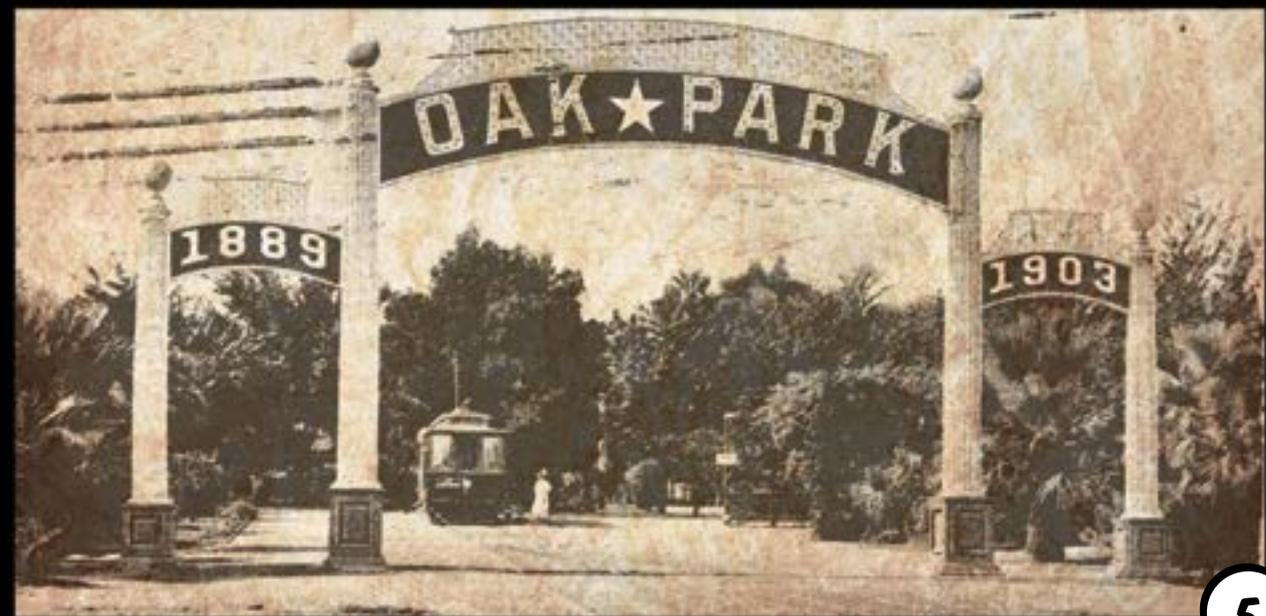
Now, Kathleen, that's enough! I don't want to talk about this anymore. That man you call a slumlord has let me pay rent months late, he's done me a lot of favors, like never raising my rent.

I get that, but you really should consider it.

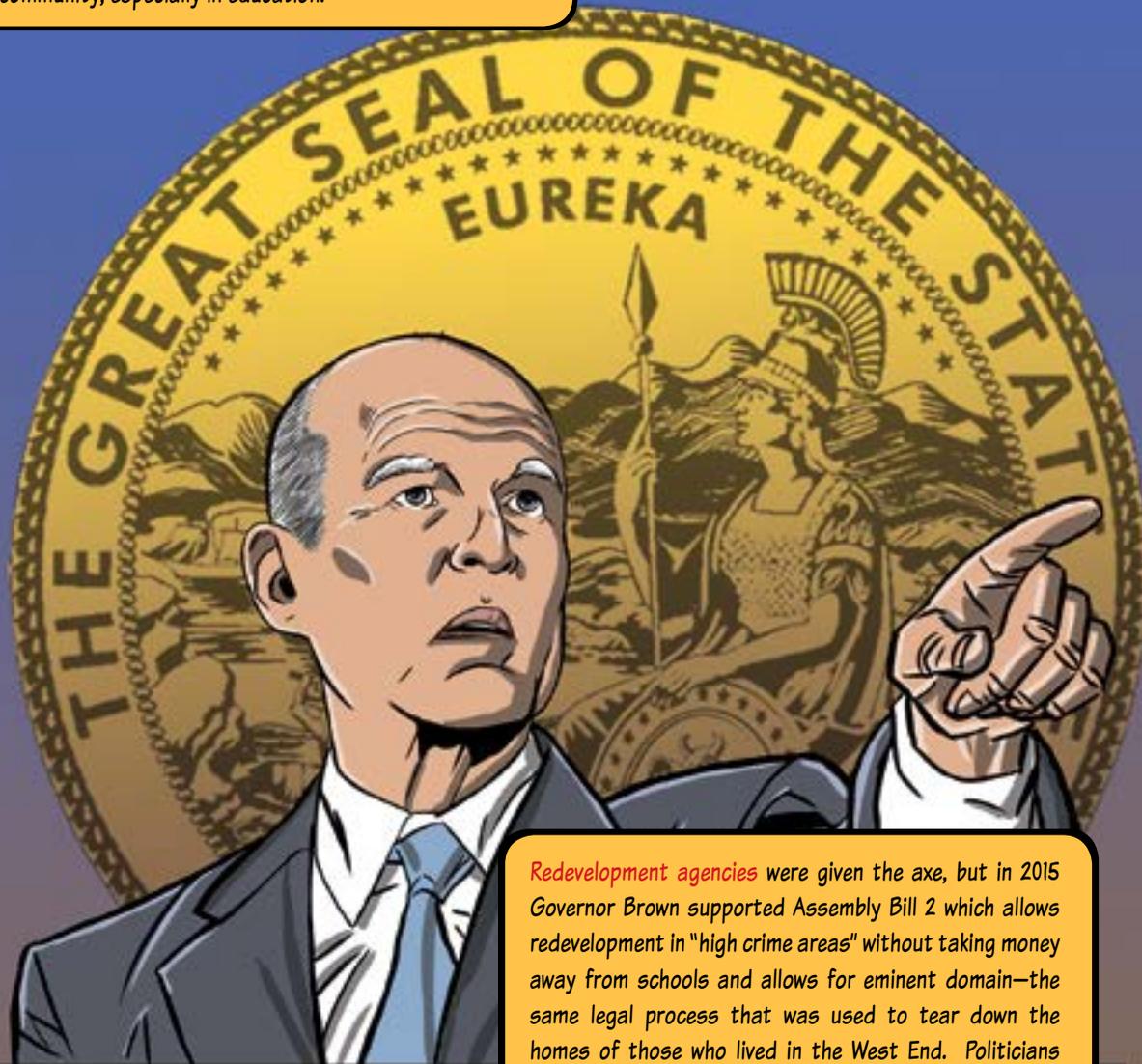


The West End (today's downtown and Old Sacramento) held most of the city's poor and people of color from 1841 to the 1940s and 50's when the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency gained the support to burn down the "blighted" homes of the residents and bulldoze the remains.¹ Sacramento was a major labor hub due to the building of the First Transcontinental Railroad that brought mostly agricultural workers to the area. Those laborers who were poor and people of color had been confined to the West End by **racially restrictive covenants** and when they were relocated, they were sent to North Franklin, Glen Elder, Meadowview, Oak Park, Lemon Hill, and Fruitridge and kept out of Land Park, Carmichael, and Arden. The land where their old homes used to be sat empty and flattened for over a decade. Though the specific language changes, the rhetoric used to justify destroying homes in the West End continues today.

RACIALLY RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS – policies that ascribe property to white owners by prohibiting the sale, occupation, or leasing of any property to people of color, most often Black Americans.



In 2011, Governor Jerry Brown began fighting for the end of redevelopment agencies. He argued that they take money away from resources that benefit the most vulnerable members of the community, especially in education.



Redevelopment agencies were given the axe, but in 2015 Governor Brown supported Assembly Bill 2 which allows redevelopment in "high crime areas" without taking money away from schools and allows for eminent domain—the same legal process that was used to tear down the homes of those who lived in the West End. Politicians require enormous pressure to stay accountable to those they are supposed to represent.



REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES - government agencies that oversee urban renewal of areas marked as "blighted," and generally act on behalf of developers by informing policy and distribution of funds.



Mr. Garcia. Ella is doing very well. She's going to need a lot of rest, so I wouldn't expect to see her up anytime soon, but once she's ambulatory—sorry—once she's up—we'll start seeing her in the Child Life Center.

The Art and Play therapy they do there has been shown to help with the trauma of hospitalization and to help kids understand what's happening.

Well she's very bright, so I'm sure she'll have no trouble.



It'd be nice if us adults had Art and Play therapy to deal with trauma and understanding life.

Yes it would... Excuse me.



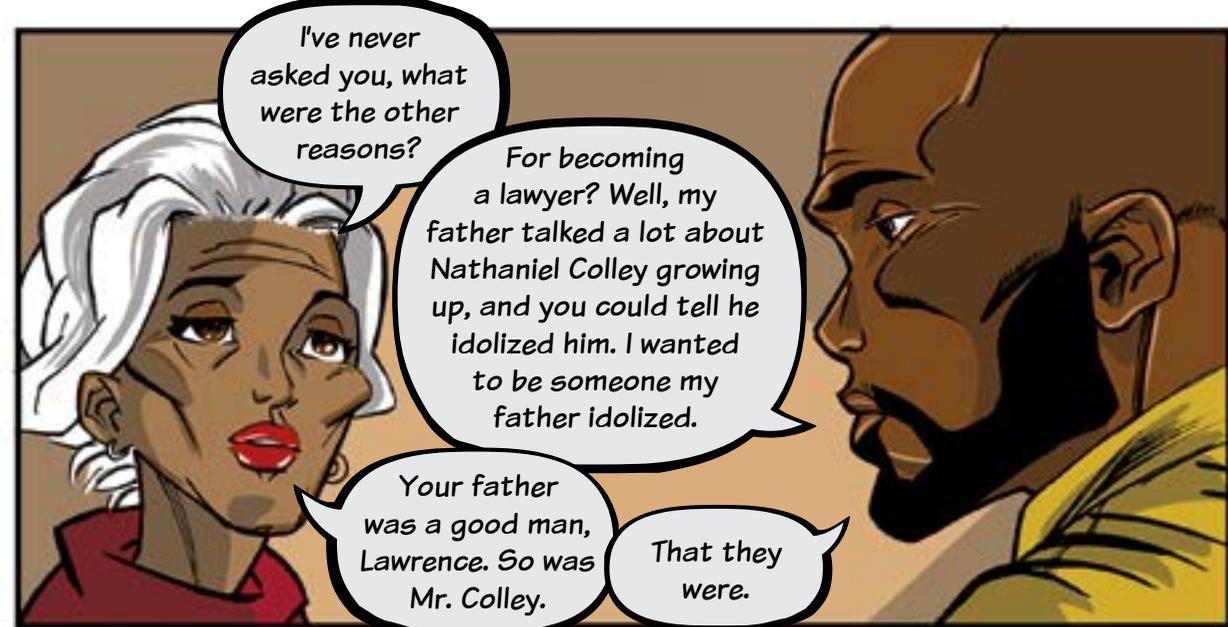
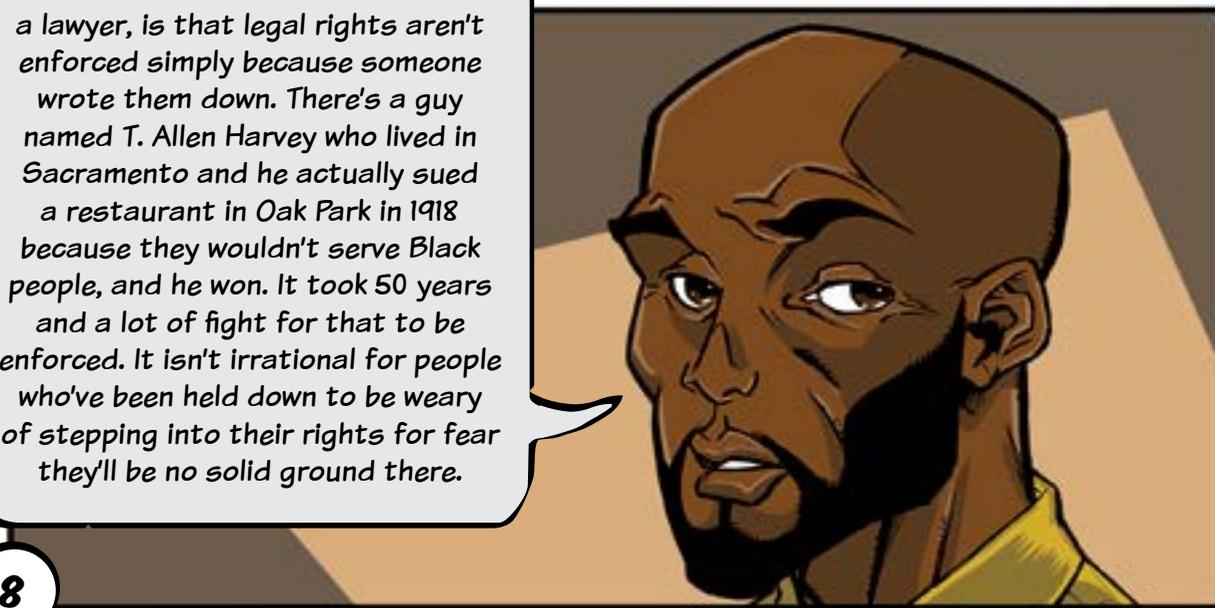
SUNSHINE CAFE

I wish I could convince Marcos that he has a right to sue his landlord.

It's nice of you to be concerned about him.



One thing I've looked at a lot, and one of the reasons I became a lawyer, is that legal rights aren't enforced simply because someone wrote them down. There's a guy named T. Allen Harvey who lived in Sacramento and he actually sued a restaurant in Oak Park in 1918 because they wouldn't serve Black people, and he won. It took 50 years and a lot of fight for that to be enforced. It isn't irrational for people who've been held down to be weary of stepping into their rights for fear they'll be no solid ground there.

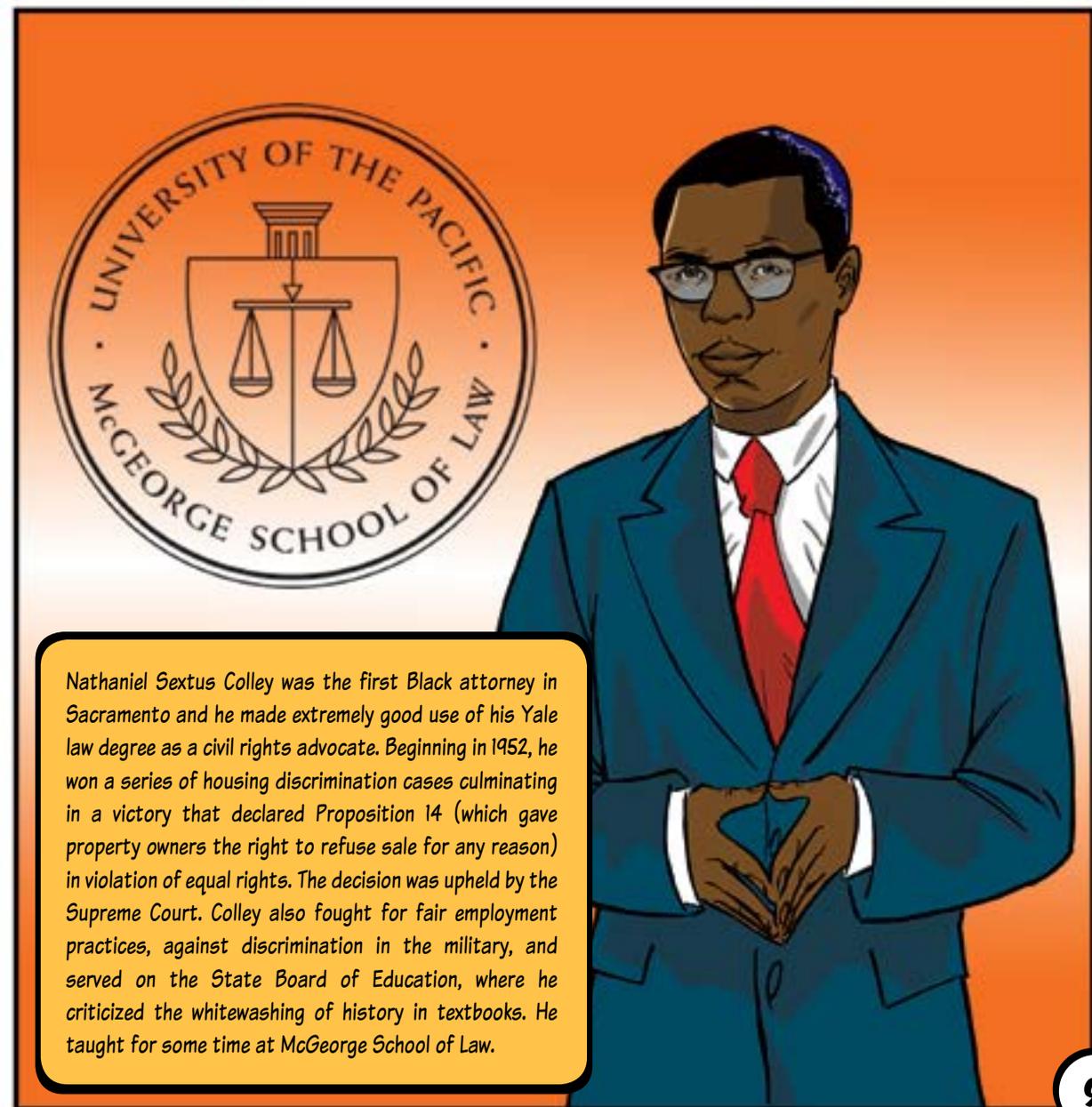


I've never asked you, what were the other reasons?

For becoming a lawyer? Well, my father talked a lot about Nathaniel Colley growing up, and you could tell he idolized him. I wanted to be someone my father idolized.

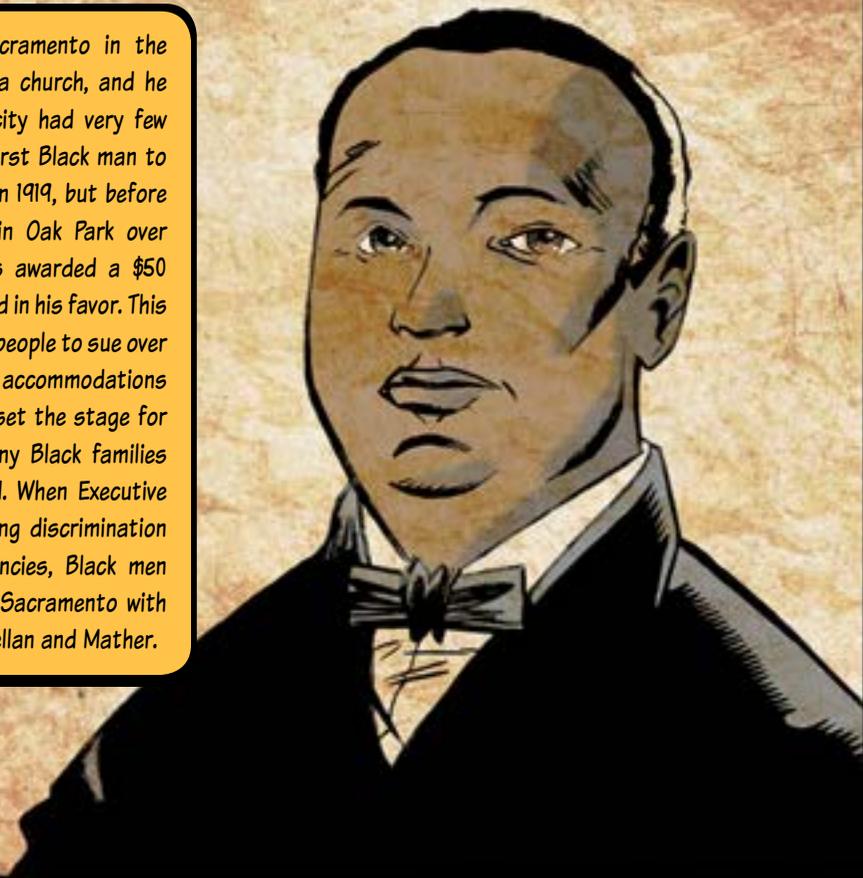
Your father was a good man, Lawrence. So was Mr. Colley.

That they were.



Nathaniel Sextus Colley was the first Black attorney in Sacramento and he made extremely good use of his Yale law degree as a civil rights advocate. Beginning in 1952, he won a series of housing discrimination cases culminating in a victory that declared Proposition 14 (which gave property owners the right to refuse sale for any reason) in violation of equal rights. The decision was upheld by the Supreme Court. Colley also fought for fair employment practices, against discrimination in the military, and served on the State Board of Education, where he criticized the whitewashing of history in textbooks. He taught for some time at McGeorge School of Law.

T. Allen Harvey came to Sacramento in the early 1900s seeking to start a church, and he did during a time when the city had very few Black residents. He was the first Black man to run for office in Sacramento in 1919, but before that he sued a restaurant in Oak Park over racial discrimination and was awarded a \$50 settlement when the judge ruled in his favor. This made him one of the very first people to sue over racial discrimination in public accommodations in the country, and no doubt set the stage for Oak Park to be the place many Black families moved to during World War II. When Executive Order 8802 was signed, banning discrimination in hiring for government agencies, Black men joining the military moved to Sacramento with its major military bases: McClellan and Mather.



Meanwhile, many men were encouraged to relocate from Mexico to Sacramento through the Braceros program to fill the labor need created by Americans going to war. When US soldiers returned, the Braceros were asked to leave, and many never received their wages. Some did, but some stayed and were relocated to areas like Colonial Manor.



Hey Mr. Garcia!

Hello, Kanna. I'm glad you were able to come! Thanks for bringing her, Naoki.



Of course. Glad to hear she is up. Where is she?

She'll be back in about 5 minutes. She was just in the therapy center.

Wonderful.

What are you two up to this weekend?

We just got back from some history thing.



We went to the History Center's exhibit on Japantown. I want Kanna to know more about what our family experienced."



My grandparents were in the camps.

That's terrible, I'm sorry to hear that.

My mother was about 5 years old and her parents were taken from Japantown in Sacramento to Death Valley.

They owned a tiny bit of farmland and their neighbor took care of it while they were interned with a plan to return it, but he died before they got back and they lost everything.



Sacramento's West End had one of the largest populations of Japanese Americans in the country, but they were confined to an area dubbed "Japantown" due to violent racism from whites competing for agricultural jobs and racially restrictive covenants. They were taken from their homes and placed in internment camps during World War II under the guise of fear that they were spies for the Japanese government. If they had places to return to when they were released, they began to rebuild, but were soon pushed south to make way for freeway reconstruction.

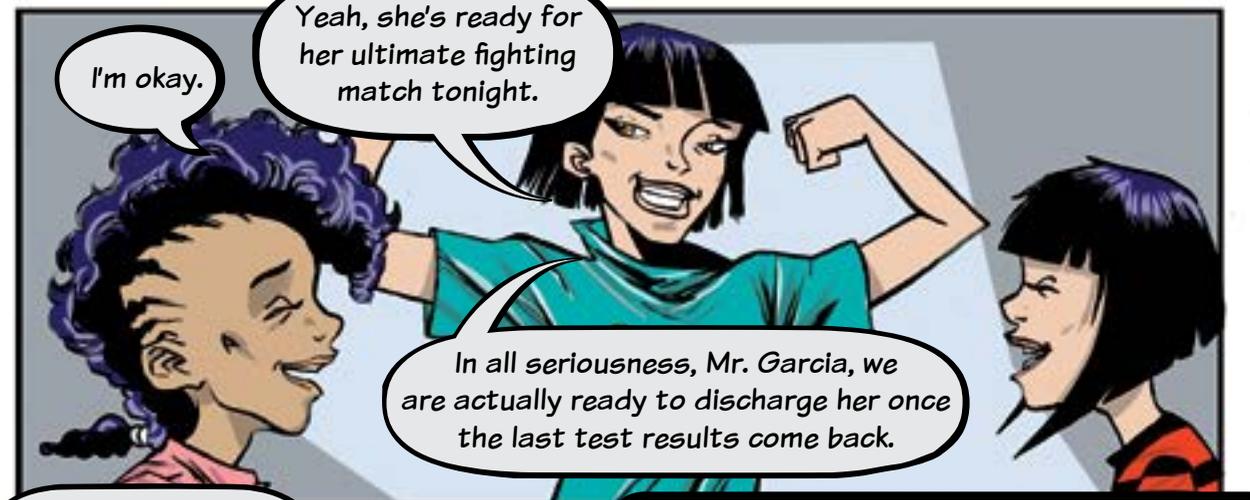


Kanna!

Hi Ella!



Careful now. She's probably a little fragile.



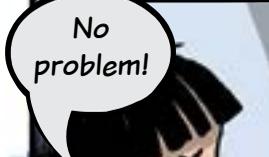
I'm okay.

Yeah, she's ready for her ultimate fighting match tonight.

In all seriousness, Mr. Garcia, we are actually ready to discharge her once the last test results come back.



Great, thank you, Mee. You've been such a light for Ella. I really appreciate you making things a little fun for her in here.



No problem!



My family came as refugees from Laos and experienced post-traumatic stress from the civil war in Laos and then had to adjust to a completely new culture.

I had to develop my own way of coping... mad jokes!

Sacramento had one of the largest populations of Hmong refugees resulting from the Laotian Civil War, as well as a smaller number of Vietnamese refugees who arrived following the Vietnam War. Many of the Vietnamese residents of South Sacramento's Little Saigon moved here during the dot com boom due to rising housing prices in San Jose. Hmong refugees, coming to the US to escape being killed by a government angered at Laotian involvement in aiding the US during Vietnam's "Secret War," were placed in camps where they were guided to assimilate and lose their first language through acculturation practices. Those were the few that were granted entrance into the country.

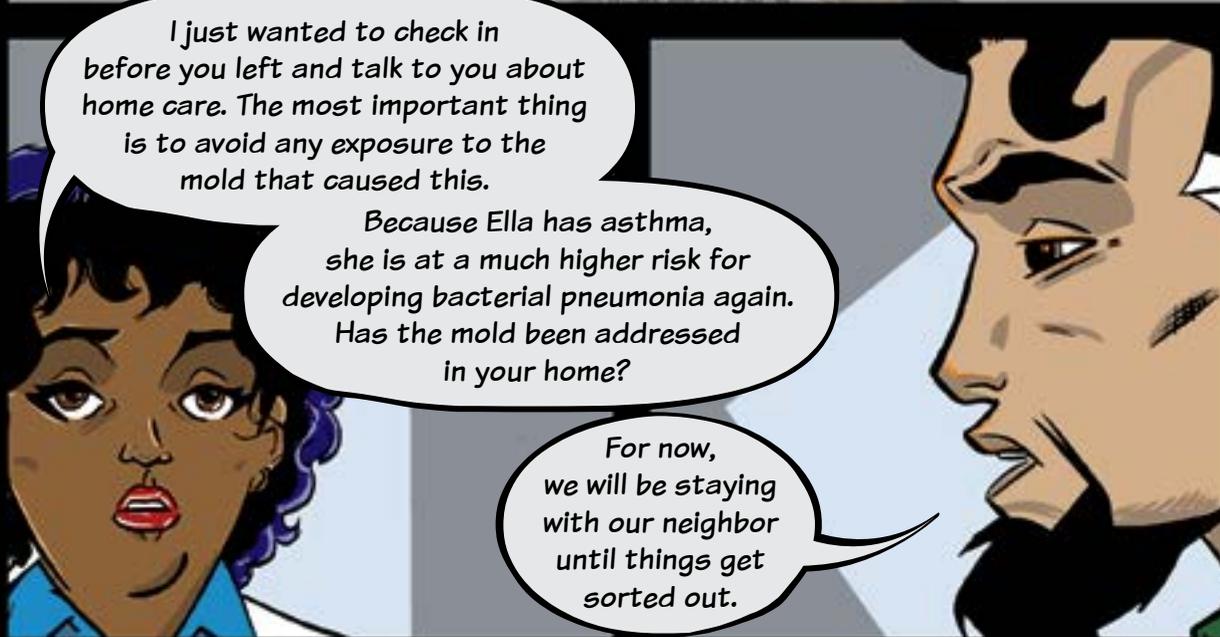




Why do I have to use a wheelchair?

It's hospital protocol when anyone leaves, honey.

That's right. As soon as we get out the door you can leave it there.



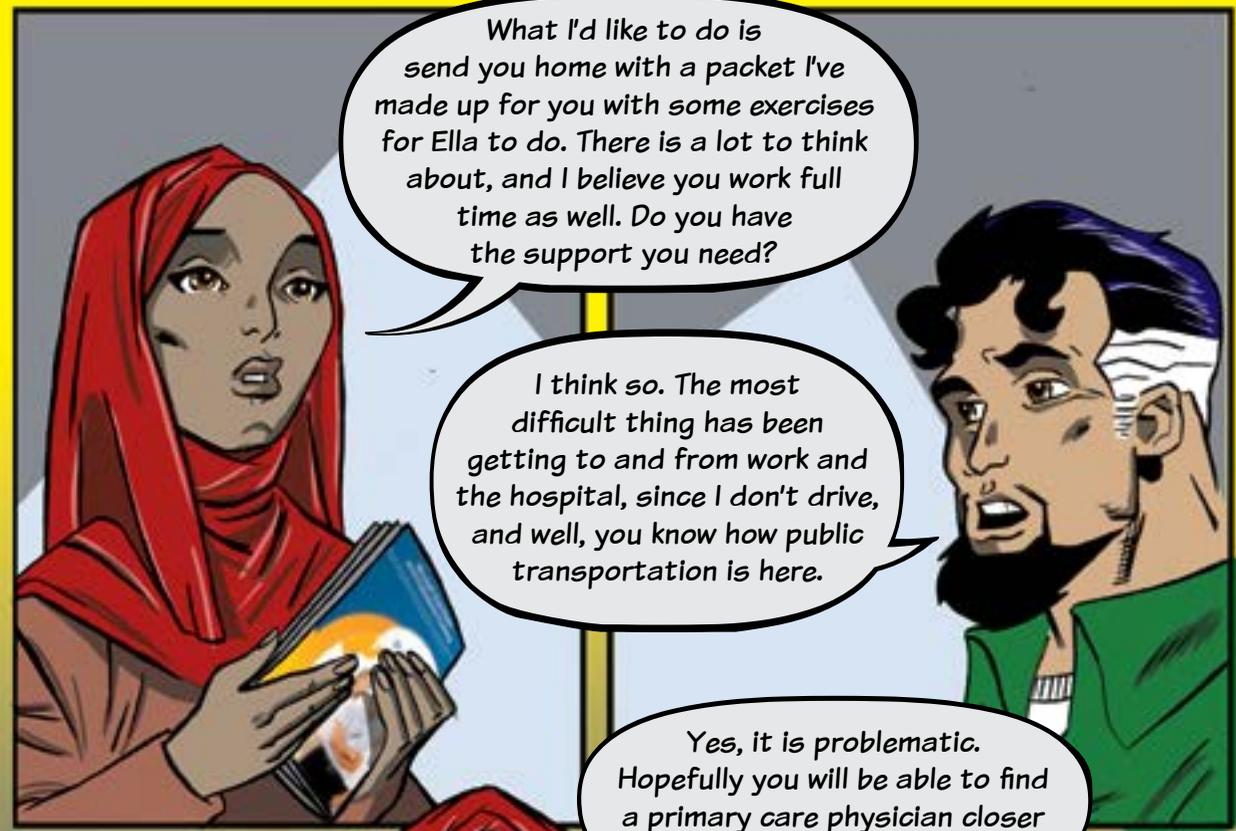
I just wanted to check in before you left and talk to you about home care. The most important thing is to avoid any exposure to the mold that caused this.

Because Ella has asthma, she is at a much higher risk for developing bacterial pneumonia again. Has the mold been addressed in your home?

For now, we will be staying with our neighbor until things get sorted out.



Okay, I'm glad to hear that. Our Respiratory Therapist, Anahita, will be in shortly to speak with you about continued care.



What I'd like to do is send you home with a packet I've made up for you with some exercises for Ella to do. There is a lot to think about, and I believe you work full time as well. Do you have the support you need?

I think so. The most difficult thing has been getting to and from work and the hospital, since I don't drive, and well, you know how public transportation is here.

Yes, it is problematic. Hopefully you will be able to find a primary care physician closer to you for follow up care.



I would prefer to come back here so there is close communication between Dr. Williams and Ella's follow up provider.

Marcos' transportation troubles are not unique. Sacramento has seen the closure of many bus and light rail routes, especially those bridging the South Sacramento area to business centers. Local organizations such as SACTRU are working to improve and expand public transit, which not only increases employment opportunities, but will also be important for addressing climate change and ending fossil fuel use.



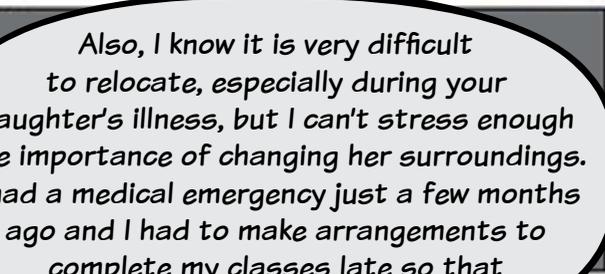


Actually, we do not take new Medi-Cal patients outside of our emergency services, so you will not be covered.

But this is the place that is best for children in the area.



It's not your fault.



Also, I know it is very difficult to relocate, especially during your daughter's illness, but I can't stress enough the importance of changing her surroundings. I had a medical emergency just a few months ago and I had to make arrangements to complete my classes late so that I could finish school.



Did you just finish school?

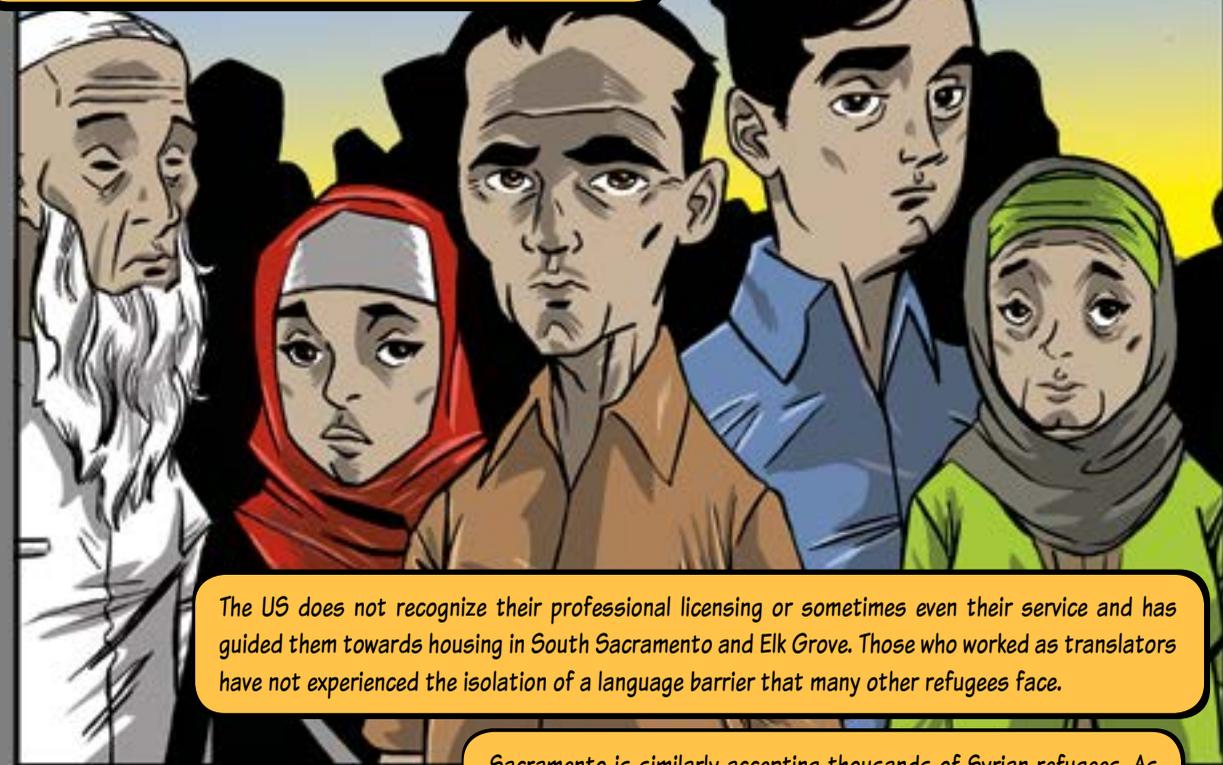


Yes. I was actually a doctor in Afghanistan, but my credentials didn't transfer to the US and I had to start school over.



It is. I'm sorry.

When the US declared the "War on Terror," many Afghans fought with American soldiers against the Taliban. Some 2,000 have been accepted as refugees in Sacramento, but given little opportunities.



The US does not recognize their professional licensing or sometimes even their service and has guided them towards housing in South Sacramento and Elk Grove. Those who worked as translators have not experienced the isolation of a language barrier that many other refugees face.

Sacramento is similarly accepting thousands of Syrian refugees. As is often the case, accepting refugees is seen as a policy solution, but the larger issues are overlooked when refugees are moved from a place of concrete and immediate violence to one of structural racism.



They rarely receive mental health resources to address the trauma they have experienced and are placed in neighborhoods that are over-policed and underserved.



Whatcha reading? Is that a newspaper?



Hey there! Come on in.



Meccah beat you here. I'm afraid we've got some news about school.



Yeah. This is about this woman named Agatha A. Anderson. She was the first Black full-time professor at Sac State, and she did a bunch of other stuff for old people. She sounds cool.

That's cool.



Agatha A. Anderson was the first Black professor to be hired full time at Sac State after receiving a degree in nursing from Fisk University. She taught for 17 years, and, after retiring, created study hall programs for schoolchildren in Oak Park, began a senior center, served as a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging, and was voted into the Educator's Hall of Fame.

Structural violence keeps individuals within targeted groups from gaining positions of influence and financial stability in the community. Firsts are important, and there are many positions (especially political) that have never been graced by women, people of many non-European ethnicities, and those who fall elsewhere on the gender spectrum. Could you be a first in your community?



STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE: as Susan Opatow put it: "Structural violence... is gradual, imperceptible, and diffused in society as 'the way things are done, including whose voice is systemically heard or ignored, and who gets particular resources and who goes without them...because structural violence blurs agency and no one person directly injures another, those harmed may themselves be seen as responsible for their own debilitation'".



ETHNICITY VS RACE: Race is a social construction that sorts people into arbitrary groups based largely on skin color and hair texture and is often prescribed by individuals and groups with a significant amount of social and political power. Ethnicity defines groups of people based on shared language, culture, and a common sense of history and is more often prescribed by self-definition.

GENDER SPECTRUM: a scale of masculinity and femininity based on the idea that people do not fit easily into the two groups traditionally outlined by society—man and woman. As Dr. Milton Diamond put it, "biology loves variety, society hates it."



So, our school is being shut down. The kids will have to take the bus to another school pretty far from here starting next month.

I know, it's terrible. I taught at Maple for over a decade.

What? How can they just do that?

I never knew that.

That's how I actually know so much random stuff. I used to teach history, too.

Wow, that makes more sense now. How did I never know?



There's a lot you don't know about me. I got into history when I first gained my political consciousness as a young woman in the Oak Park Black Panthers, but that's a story for another day.... Anyways, I know you said Ella will be pretty behind in her classes already, and who knows what they'll be doing at the new school. I thought maybe Meccah could come over once or twice a week and we'll help Ella catch up.



Thank you, Kathleen. I don't know what I'd do without your help right now.

You'd figure it out. But I'm glad to help.

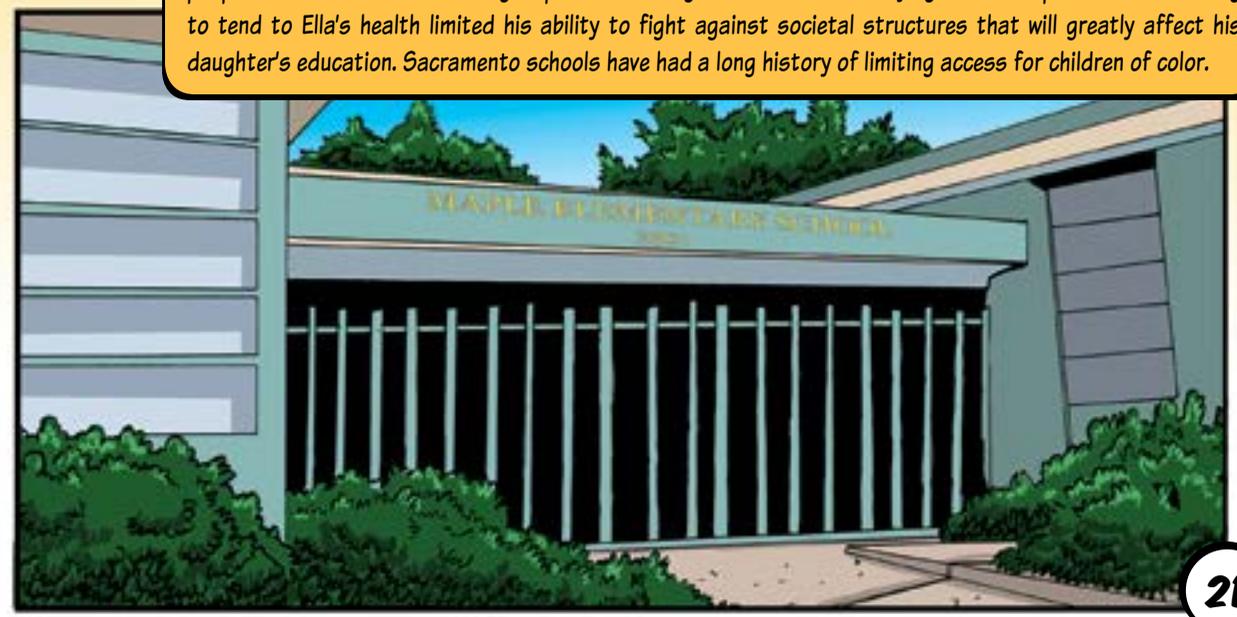


The Black Panthers headquartered in Oak Park beginning in the 1960's were one of the many groups that stood for the tenets of black power: self-definition, liberation, community, **agitation**, social uplift, and standing against police brutality and white supremacy. They led community policing programs, provided free lunch to schoolchildren and others in need, promoted a knowledge of history, and addressed many other needs in the community. These important efforts against structural violence are often overshadowed by the portrayal of the 1969 raid on their headquarters that labeled members as instigators of violence and community degradation.

AGITATION: used here means public protest



In 2013, 7 schools were closed in the same neighborhoods that had once been redlined. The parents were given almost no warning and had little recourse to fight the closures at meetings scheduled during hours that people work. Marcos' time working to provide housing for his child and staying at the hospital while relocating to tend to Ella's health limited his ability to fight against societal structures that will greatly affect his daughter's education. Sacramento schools have had a long history of limiting access for children of color.





Marcos, this is my friend Lawrence that I was telling you about. I asked him to talk to you about your landlord problem.



I don't really want to get lawyers involved, and I have no money to pay for it.

Hang on, now. We need to do something to change your situation and he's willing to take on your case pro-bono as a favor to me. Would you just hear him out?

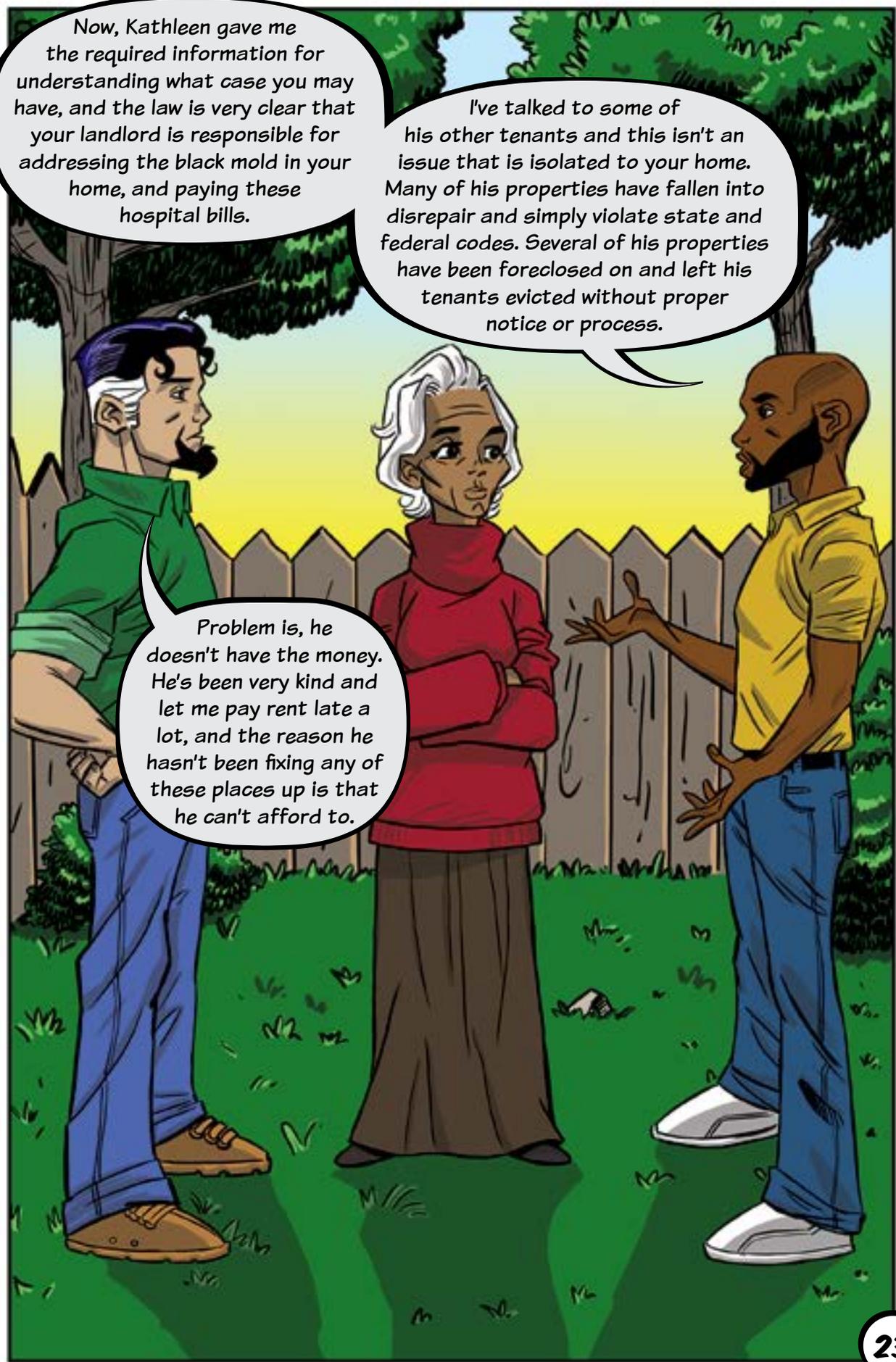
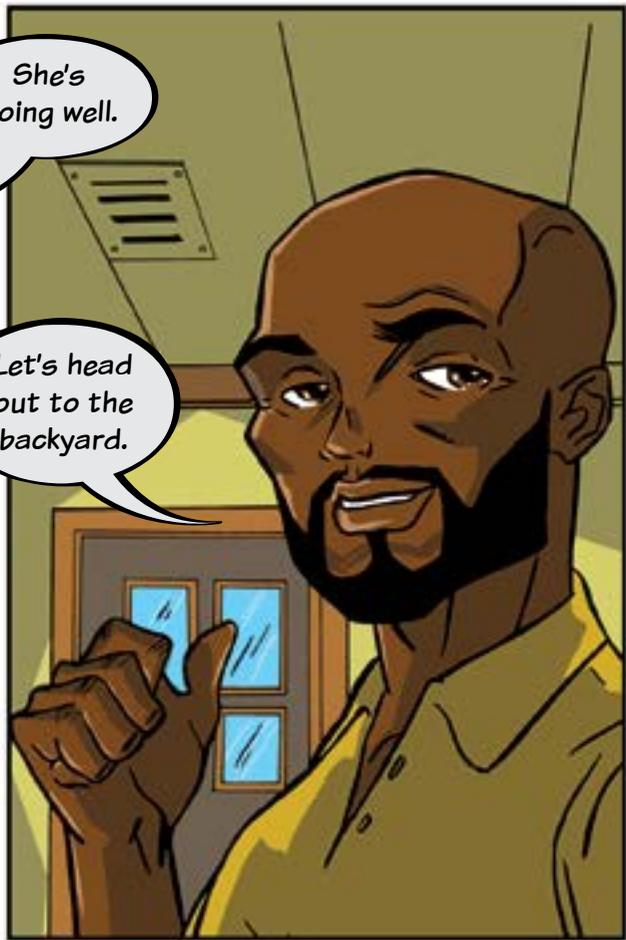
Fine.



Mr. Garcia, it's nice to meet you. I'm so sorry to hear about Ella. How's she doing?

She's doing well.

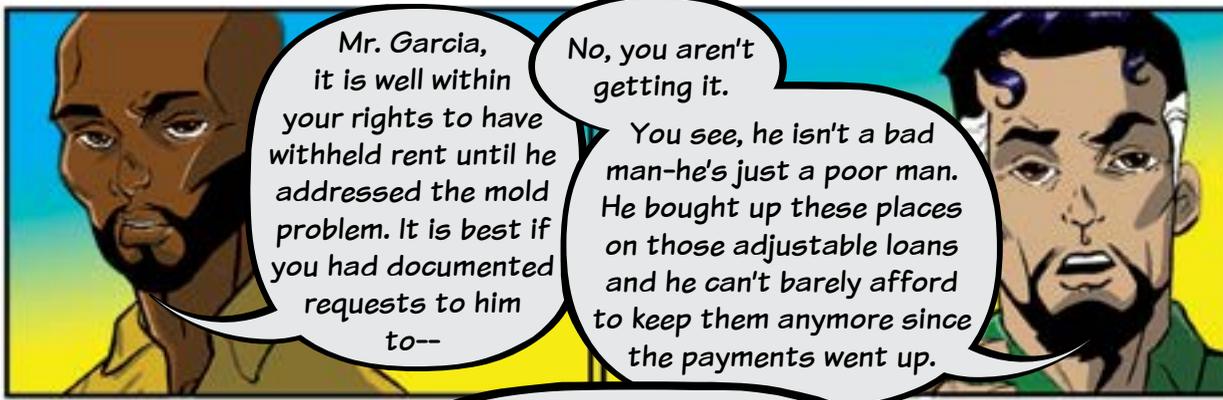
Let's head out to the backyard.



Now, Kathleen gave me the required information for understanding what case you may have, and the law is very clear that your landlord is responsible for addressing the black mold in your home, and paying these hospital bills.

I've talked to some of his other tenants and this isn't an issue that is isolated to your home. Many of his properties have fallen into disrepair and simply violate state and federal codes. Several of his properties have been foreclosed on and left his tenants evicted without proper notice or process.

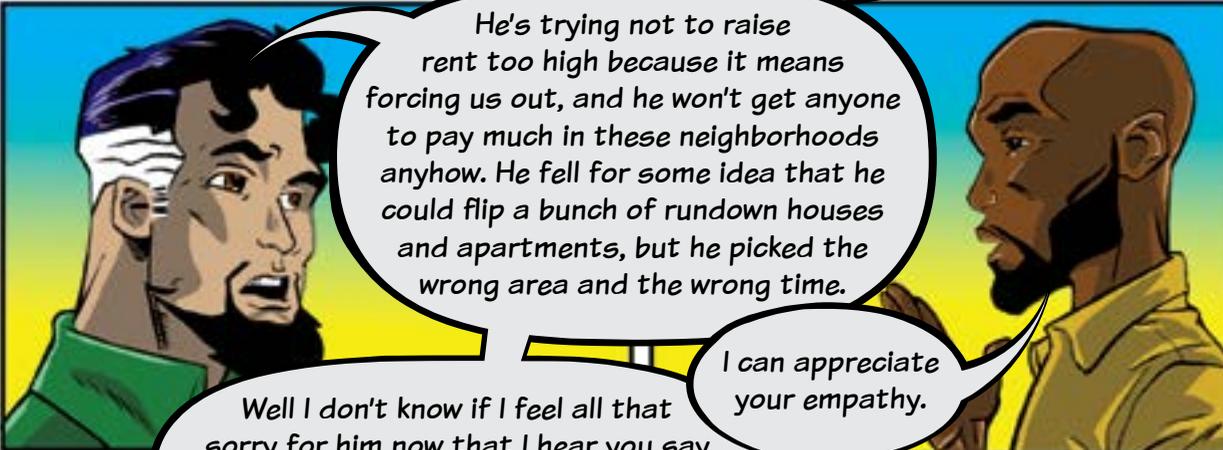
Problem is, he doesn't have the money. He's been very kind and let me pay rent late a lot, and the reason he hasn't been fixing any of these places up is that he can't afford to.



Mr. Garcia, it is well within your rights to have withheld rent until he addressed the mold problem. It is best if you had documented requests to him to--

No, you aren't getting it.

You see, he isn't a bad man—he's just a poor man. He bought up these places on those adjustable loans and he can't barely afford to keep them anymore since the payments went up.



He's trying not to raise rent too high because it means forcing us out, and he won't get anyone to pay much in these neighborhoods anyhow. He fell for some idea that he could flip a bunch of rundown houses and apartments, but he picked the wrong area and the wrong time.

I can appreciate your empathy.

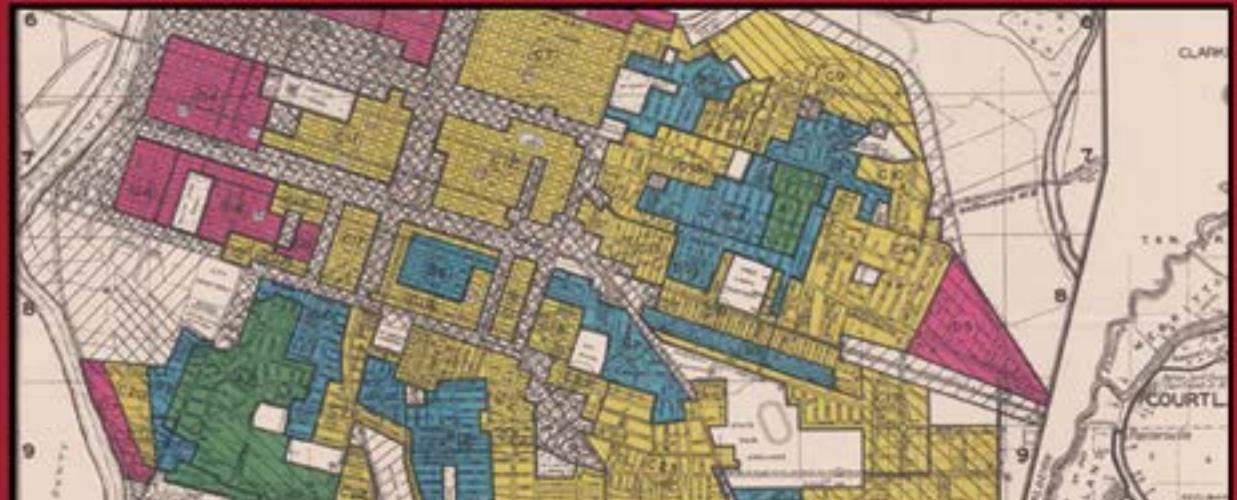
Well I don't know if I feel all that sorry for him now that I hear you say I'm not the only one who he's affected. Maybe he shouldn't be a landlord, after all—even if he is nice.

I don't think that is an unfair assessment.



Alright... I'm willing to move forward on suing with you. I appreciate you coming here to talk to me.

It's my pleasure. I've got a meeting to get to but we will be in touch very soon. Kathleen, you should bring him to one of the HUB gatherings—I think he'd find it a good place for his and Ella.



Marcos' landlord bought a number of houses on credit in 2006 and thought he'd fix them up himself and sell them for a profit. But two years later, he saw his payments go up significantly, and he hadn't made it very far on turning the homes that had been remodeled into apartment units back into single homes before he was in deep financial trouble. The reason those multiple family units were in such bad shape in the first place: **redlining** and **block busting**. MARCOS's landlord bought homes from families who couldn't afford to fix up or keep their houses, even after converting them from single family homes into multiple dwelling units. These were not isolated incidents.

BLOCK BUSTING

The **subprime mortgage** crisis has been ongoing since the early 2000s and many South Sacramento residents will see the damage of this predatory loan practice in the coming years when they lose their housing. Subprime loan originations occur highest in the areas of Sacramento that were once redlined.

REDLINING: a practice used commonly in FDR's New Deal, where the Federal Housing Association (FHA) would outline neighborhoods in red that were considered too "high risk" to receive the mortgage rates and subsidies being offered to families by the federal government. The criteria for determining these areas were high risk: racial integration, or as they put it "instability" – in other words, it was the neighborhoods that hadn't had racially restrictive covenants.

BLOCK BUSTING: a tactic where real estate agencies would convince white families to sell their homes at less than market value in order to move away from people of color that were populating the neighborhoods. Then, they'd sell those homes to people of color at a much higher price, the neighborhood was labeled high risk due to redlining, and no one could get loans to fix their property in the area.

SUBPRIME MORTGAGES: loans offered to people with lower credit that have very high interest rates which are often adjustable, making later payments balloon to amounts higher than the person will be able to afford.



Look at all those veggies!

Yeah, our garden has exploded while you've been in the hospital.

No kidding!

Maybe we can sell some of what you two planted and give the money to Mr. Lewis.

I wish we could. That's actually illegal. Charlie down the road can't even sell what he's been growing in that vacant lot on the corner.

I thought illegal meant wrong. What's wrong with selling food you grow yourself?



It isn't always that simple, honey.

There's nothing wrong with it.

Too bad Lawrence already left. He could've given you a very good summary of all the things we do that were once illegal. People have fought to make things legal because they shouldn't be considered wrong—they're rights.

Charlie couldn't grow anything in that empty lot until people stood up and demanded it.

In 2011, the Sacramento City Council adopted an ordinance allowing community gardens on private vacant lots in 2011, but it was still illegal to sell any of the bounty.



With pressure from Sacramento BHC partners including Soil Born Farms, Yisrael Family Farms, and Hmong Innovating Politics, Sacramento City adopted the urban ag ordinance in 2015 allowing on-site sale of produce on urban farms, at home, and from community gardens. Sacramento County adopted their own version of this ordinance in 2017.



Can you hand me the pink marker?

Yeah, it's a little smudged with blue so I put it over there. Sorry.

That's okay, it doesn't have to be perfect.

Darling girl, what are you doing running around back here? You still need to take it easy.

We are just making the protest signs, Dad.



Down there on the ground? Let me at least put a blanket down for you. Look, your knee is already all scraped up.

Kathleen said that people died protesting, so I think I'm doing okay.

I'm very proud of you girls. We have to fight for what we believe is good and know is right. Hand me a marker.

Limited access for essential needs is prevalent in systems of structural racism. As we have seen, structural racism tends to group people into geographical areas, which is why the efforts of Building Healthy Communities (BHC) to invest in a specific area in coalition with many other organizations is particularly poignant. Here are a few wins that have been made possible by their efforts:

2014

City installs traffic light at 58th and Fruitridge

2015

SCUSD becomes the 5th and largest school district to add an ethnic studies course for high schools—will be a graduation requirement by 2020

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors dedicates 20% of redevelopment funds (boomerang funds) toward the County's Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Sacramento Regional Transit District reinstates bus route 8

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors votes unanimously for a budget which includes funding for healthcare for 3,000 undocumented residents in Sacramento County.

2016

SCUSD designated as a Safe Haven School District which restricts ICE access and the sharing of student files.

\$650K in grants given to create opportunities for youth and promote safety.

2014-2017

SCUSD allocates over \$2.5 million for school climate/ restorative justice implementation

Community, community building and, ultimately, community health are all results of social interactions and structural level policies and practices. If we think of South Sacramento as a patient, just as Ella was, we can see that it is sick. And, just as we can't blame Ella for contracting pneumonia, we cannot blame residents of South Sacramento for the wellness of the community. Similarly, it would be unacceptable to expect Ella or her dad to cure her own illness, and victims of structural oppression and racism cannot be considered responsible for fixing the structure they live in. Yet, it is often the case that we leave communities to try and solve the problems they face while disinvestment has starved them of the resources to do so. They have bandages for pneumonia when they need antibiotics, fluids, respiratory therapy, and rest.

We also saw the enormous responsibility placed on those advocating for the wellness of a sick kid. Community organizations and passionate individuals are often those advocates: knowledgeable about the illness and its causes, connected to the patient in need, and facing the same conditions of structural racism and classism. In Ella's case, there is an institution with power that can administer the care she needs. This, too, exists in communities—through local policy makers. Where the emergency medical and social world begin to divide, metaphorically, is in quality of care and prevention. The medical field cannot prevent Ella's pneumonia, only new housing can. But the illness prevalent in urban land use occupied by structural racism is not in her favor. And while Ella, her dad, and her advocates (like Kathleen) struggle to address the one symptom, they are bogged down by several others: limitations on education, poor transportation, access to healthy food to keep her body strong, possible loss of health care coverage, insufficient income from employment needed to make changes. These multitudes of oppression weigh on anyone they pile on top of, and policy solutions that simply address one facet of resource limitation never remove the burden.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Marcos progress in his understanding and resolve to address his situation?
2. What are three potentially useful tactics illustrated in the comic that support change?
3. Why is Sacramento so diverse?
4. Why do some communities seem to flourish and others do not?
5. What community investments could influence communities to thrive?
6. How does the history of discrimination in Sacramento affect people today?
7. How is Marcos and Ella's story symbolic of the importance of a healthy community?
8. What are restrictive covenants and redlining, and how can you see the effects of these practices today?
9. How can policies systematically affect the health of communities (e.g. structural racism, sexism, classism and violence)?
10. Who do you identify with in this story and why?
11. Where do you fit into this story? Consider how you're connected to (and affected by) the behaviors, attitudes and practices in this story.

WAYS YOU CAN CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE:

1. Talk to to your family, friends, and colleagues about the history of your community. Inquire about their past to learn more to seed conversations that inspire change.
2. Attend city, county, and community meetings where leaders make decisions that affect people and neighborhoods. These meetings can include: city and county councils, neighborhood associations, school boards, commissions, and/or any place where decision-makers congregate to discuss and decide policy. Meet with your city, county, and state representatives. Make your voice heard.
3. Research local nonprofit organizations that work toward bettering an issue, or a multiplicity of issues, and sign up to attend an orientation to get involved. You can volunteer. You can donate money. You can offer free services to help forward their mission.
4. Vote. Encourage others to vote.
5. Spread the word! As you get involved, why go alone? Get your friends and family involved with you.

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Youth Writers

OUR MISSION

916 Ink's mission is to empower children and youth through creative writing.

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