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Disinvestment and Carceral Investment in Black Neighborhoods

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DISINVESTMENT AND CARCERAL INVESTMENT IN BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS

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This is because, in DC, home values in White neighborhoods **INCREASED** during the twentieth century

While home values in Black neighborhoods **REMAINED STAGNANT.**

The racial wealth gap is largely due to public investment in White neighborhoods alongside disinvestment and carceral investment in Black neighborhoods.

Well-funded schools, parks, and swimming pools in White neighborhoods translated into rising home values.

On the other hand, Black neighborhoods experienced public disinvestment.



A prime example is Theodore Roosevelt High School, in the Petworth neighborhood of DC. Roosevelt High was desegregated in 1954 and became nearly all Black within a few years.



Roosevelt High was a “blue ribbon” school when it was a segregated White school.

After desegregation, it continued to offer an excellent education.

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson became the first Black woman to earn a doctorate at MIT.



and Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis became the President of Southeastern University.

Sharon Pratt became the Mayor of DC,

These highly successful Black women all attended Roosevelt in the 1950s and 1960s.

However, by 1992, Roosevelt High School ranked nearly last—at 16 out of 17 schools in DC—for its promotion rate.

ONE IN THREE STUDENTS who enrolled in the ninth grade **DID NOT GRADUATE** from high school.

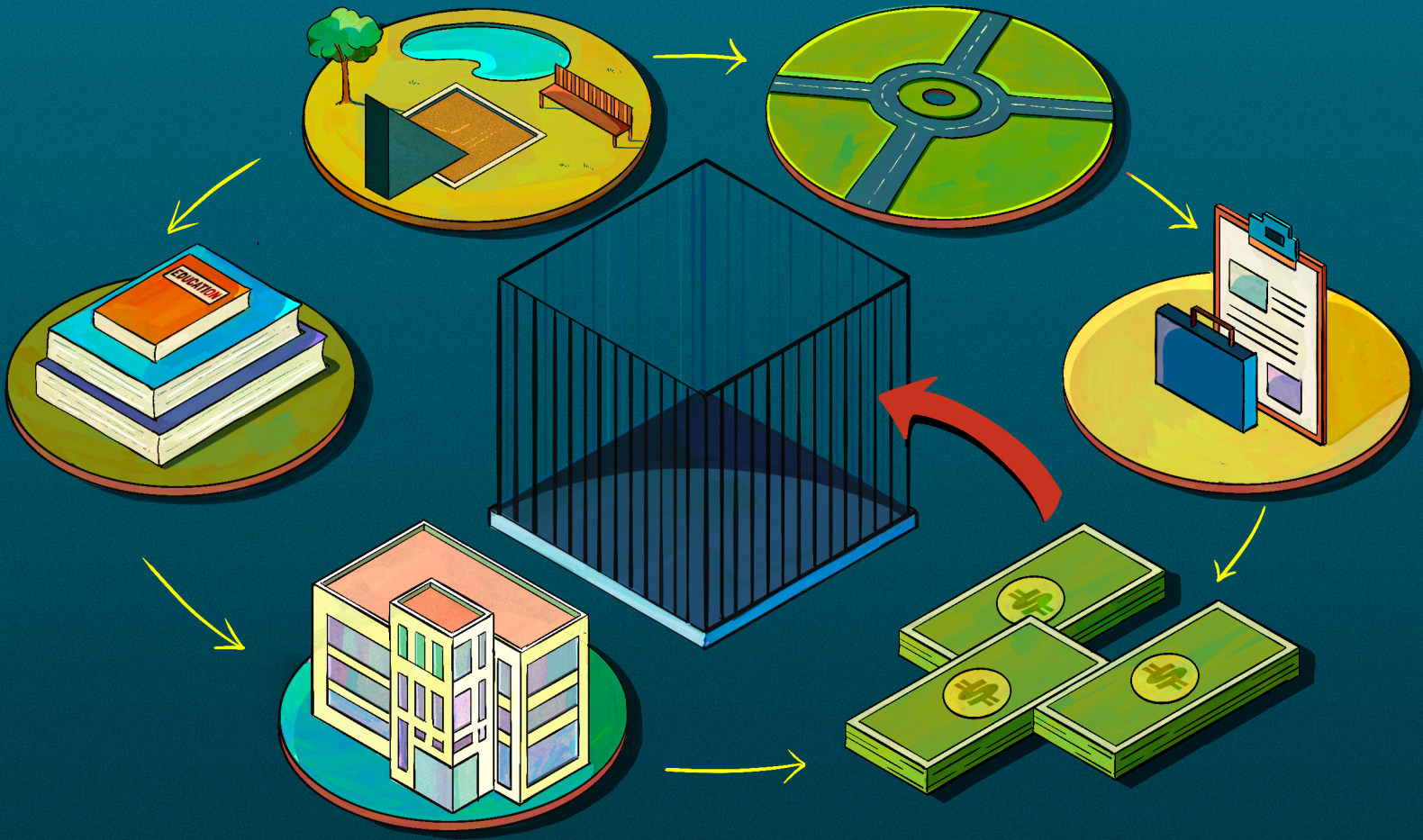


In that same year, only **33 OF 915 STUDENTS** enrolled in Advanced Placement classes. **NOT ONE OF THEM PASSED THE AP EXAM.**

Roosevelt High School went from being one of the best schools in the city in the 1960s to one of the worst by the 1980s. As Roosevelt and most of the other public schools in DC became majority-Black, they experienced disinvestment: Congress didn't allocate enough funds to the DC public school system to provide Black students an excellent education.

Although the city did not invest money in schools in Black communities, it did invest in prisons and policing.

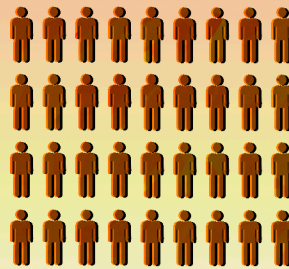
In 1989 alone, the city redirected nearly \$80 MILLION AWAY from the Department of Public Works, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Recreation, the Department of Employment Services, and the University of the District of Columbia and \$227 MILLION TOWARDS LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS.



Decades of disinvestment in Black neighborhoods LED TO A RISE IN VIOLENCE IN THESE COMMUNITIES.



The city's overwhelming response to the violence of disinvestment was to strengthen the coercive arm of the state.



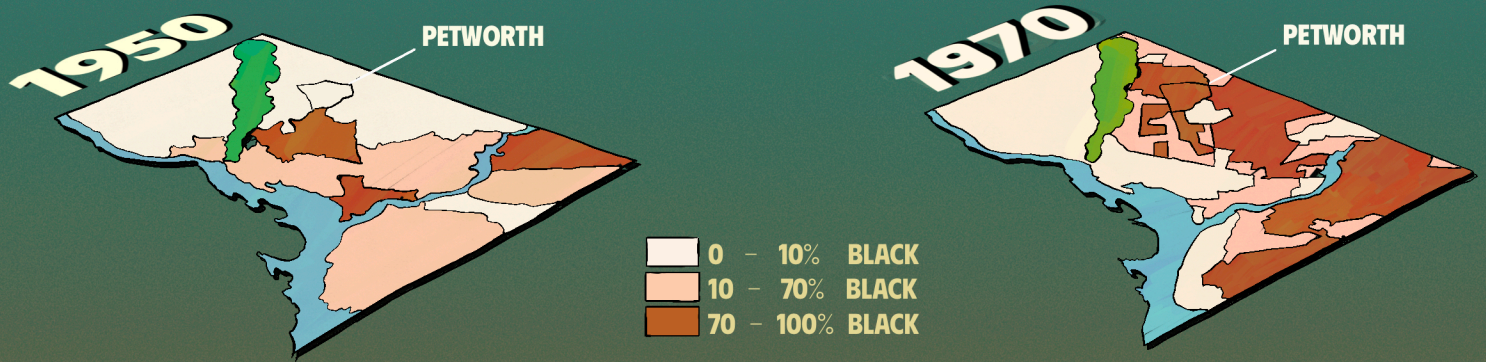
Black men in DC had an incarceration rate **36 TIMES** that of white men.

By 1997, HALF OF YOUNG BLACK MEN IN DC were under the control of the criminal legal system.



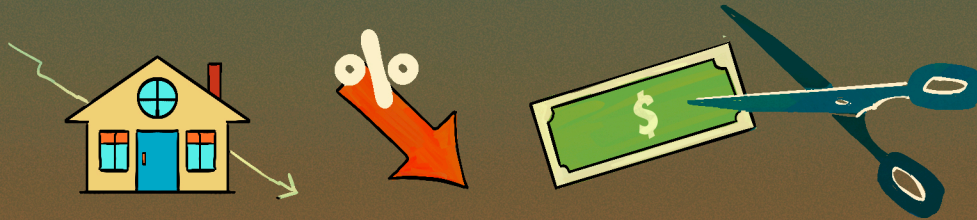
Disinvestment, heavy policing, mass incarceration, and stagnant home values in Black neighborhoods set the stage for GENTRIFICATION AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF THE BLACK POPULATION from DC in the 21st century.

In 1970, Petworth was a majority Black community, with half of Black families living in homes they owned. Whereas homes in White neighborhoods increased in value, the value of homes in Petworth remained steady from 1980 to 2000.



DISINVESTMENT

combined with low housing prices, record-low interest rates, and tax incentives made Petworth



attractive to **INVESTORS** after decades of abandonment.

Now, it was profitable for investors to purchase devalued houses, abandoned properties, and foreclosed homes to build new homes for new people.



According to a report from Redfin, the average gain of a home flip in Petworth was **\$337,000 IN 2016**, HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE U.S.



When Petworth was primarily Black, it experienced disinvestment, and carceral investment - both of which worked in various ways to depopulate the neighborhood, making it an optimal site of reinvestment.

Understanding the role of disinvestment and carceral investment in Black neighborhoods helps us understand why Black families in DC have had difficulty maintaining homeownership and building generational wealth.

