

My name is Chase Cantrell. I'm a proud native Detroiter and a city builder that's trying to preserve Black space here in Detroit. My parents bought me a memory book, probably when I was in kindergarten or first grade, and it's a cute little book where it's like, what's your favorite color? Who's your best friend? Who's your favorite teacher? And what you wanna be when you grow up? And from a very early age, I would write president and lawyer.

2008, I started my career as a lawyer. It was September of that year, two weeks before the recession hit. After a while, I began to realize that most of our clients were wealthy, older White men in a city that's at the time, you know, 85% African American. So this is 2010, 2011. So as I was thinking about the point at which I would probably depart the firm, that deepening sense of, I'm helping the wrong group began to deepen for me, it's like I'm building the skill in a Black city, but I don't feel that I'm having the positive impact on Black people. And after talking to community members, after talking to a lot of my mentors who are in the community development space, I decided that I would start a organization to actually impact development in the city. So it's called *Building Community Value*. Started it in March 2016... and we teach Detroiters how to do real estate development in their neighborhoods. And we also help community development organizations do commercial developmental corridors.

The same things that we're facing, Baltimore is facing, Memphis is facing, New Orleans is facing is questioning the way that we built the system and whether the work that I'm doing now can actually have the impact to change the system or whether we're just spinning our wheels.

To me, it's like what would happen if we gave a people who are so creative and so adept at just survival, the actual resources to thrive. I think that we will create a place that doesn't currently exist in the United States. I think Detroit could be that kind of breakthrough urban place. And we're although we're seeing a lot of rapid evolution in our downtown and midtown. The city is so large that we still have the opportunity to make that kind of Detroit possible.