

My name is Jamon Jordan, I'm a historian of Detroit's rich African American history. There were things that I guess, I always wanted an explanation to and never got one. I needed to know why my mom, my grandma, my grandmother did day-work, which was cleaning the homes of wealthy people in Bloomfield Hills and in Birmingham and Grosse Pointe, and when we would visit her or pick her up from work, we see these big old homes and we think about the house we live in - I guess as a child, I needed an explanation, Why is that?

When I began in high school, you had choices at Highland Park High School, you could go to lunch, or you go to the library. So when I didn't have a lunch, I went to the library. So I had a long time with a lot of these books, and they were beginning to make things understandable, even my grandmother's stories and my grandfather's stories, even though they told me what life was like down South and how things were even when they came to the City of Detroit. Then, while I'm in college, of course, there is the Rodney King event. And now I'm wanting to not just study this stuff, I'm wanting to apply it. So now I'm not a historian just for history's sake. I'm a historian because I want to use history to answer and solve problems - the problem of White supremacy. So now I'm trying to find a way, How can history address that issue? How can history be used to confront racism? Not just to learn about racism, but to use it to deal with, solve problems that come out of or stem from racism?

You can only be successful as part of your community, so if you're doing really well, but you've got people in your community who are starving, hooked on drugs, don't know what's going to happen to them, don't have food - then you're not successful. You can only be successful to the level that you're doing something to help those problems subside.