

Civilized and Gay, Rotted and Polite – Baltimore Revisited

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A “disgusting, rodent and rat-infested mess,” “very dangerous and filthy,” “the Worst in the USA.”

“No human being would want to live there.”¹

What U.S. President used these words to describe Baltimore?

Hint – it was tweeted.

Yes, this is how President Donald Trump described my hometown last July. Most Baltimoreans took offense. But I think most Baltimoreans also heard some truth in those words.

What do you think of when Baltimore is mentioned?

I asked around. “Crab cakes”, my Cincinnati friends said. Also “The Inner Harbor” and “The Ravens”.

What about Fort McHenry, clipper ships, the Orioles?

And Frank Robinson.....

If you’ve spent some time in Baltimore or noticed the city in books and films like Hairspray, you will also know that Baltimore is Quirky with a capital Q. Filmmaker and Hometown Hero John Waters (or “Wooders” as Baltimoreans would pronounce it), says “I would never want to live anywhere but

Baltimore. You can look far and wide, but you'll never discover a stranger city with such extreme style. It's as if every eccentric in the South decided to move north, ran out of gas in Baltimore, and decided to stay."²

Baltimore is the home of Peabody Conservatory and Johns Hopkins, but also of painted screen doors, marble steps, and Formstone – the “polyester of brick”³ as Waters once put it. The quirkiness is on full display at Baltimore’s Visionary Art Museum with its laptop Buddha and Crazy Cat Lady action figure.

Along the U.S. east coast, distinctive city accents abound. Baltimore has Baltimorese, pronounced by those who speak it as “Balmerese” or “Baldemorese”. Linguists tell us the accent originates among blue-collar residents of South and Southeast Baltimore. Its most notable characteristic is the nasally stressed “O” vowel producing a sound close to “Eh-oo”⁴. Baltimoreans headed to Ocean City, Maryland are “goeen downey owe shin, hon”. I grew up in the neighborhood of Pikesville, just outside the Baltimore City limits, and I still have to watch that “eh-oo” when I’m singing. Happily I broke myself of the habit of saying “Warshington” instead of “Washington”, but my mother wasn’t so diligent and finally had to resort to “laundering” her hair. Another idiosyncrasy is to refer to each other as “Hon”. Not far from my old office in the Baltimore neighborhood of Hampden is a well-known restaurant named Café Hon.

Baltimore has been a city of many nicknames: the moth-eaten “Monumental City,” the wishful “City That Reads,” the disparaging “Mobtown,” and the truly disheartening “Bodymore.” But the one that has stuck is Charm City. In the late 1960s Mayor William Donald Schaefer, facing both suburban exodus and the death of Baltimore’s industrial backbone, unleashed a Charm City marketing campaign gracing the pages of *The Baltimore Sun* and *The New York Times*. (Quote) “Baltimore has more history and

unspoiled charm tucked away in quiet corners than most American cities put in the spotlight,” the ads read alongside a photo collage of crabs, marble steps, historic landmarks, and of course, the fiery Blaze Starr, Baltimore’s most famous stripper.⁵

But who knew that the Charm City nickname would stick over the next four decades, surpassing the hyperbolic “Greatest City in America” and my personal favorite, courtesy of Mr. Waters, “Come to Baltimore and Be Shocked”?⁶

“[The ‘Charm City’ campaign] was about history, but in a particular way,” says Mary Rizzo, an American studies historian and author of a book on Baltimore’s identity. “Part of what gave the city value was that its neighborhoods were seen as sites of community, and those communities were really defined as white ethnic communities, like Little Italy and Greektown, where Old-World neighborhoods still existed.” Ascribing special value to those neighborhoods was inherently problematic in a majority-black city. “How do we represent a city, and who gets to tell that story?” poses Rizzo. “Charming, eccentric whiteness has become central to the official way that Baltimore represents itself.”⁷ East Baltimore author Kondwani Fidel writes in his new book, *Hummingbirds in the Trenches*, “My friends and I call it ‘Bodymore Murderland. The white people call it ‘Charm City.’” Writer D. Watkins adds, “I never felt like I was a part of it. But Baltimore has always been multiple places inside one city.”⁸

Yes, Baltimore has long been seen as a city of juxtapositions and contrasts: on one hand, the simply small-town “Charm City,” with its hons and pink flamingos, and on the other, the urban story of systemic injustices and communities trying to rise up, as depicted on the popular TV show “The Wire.” “The reality is, there are two Baltimores,” says Rizzo. “But the problem with seeing it that way ignores that they are locked together. That they affect and intersect with each other, always.”

In my paper this evening, I'd like to delve into Baltimore's history. What did the city get right, and what happened along the way to create a Baltimore where "No human being would want to live". But first, a short pop quiz about my home state of Maryland.

First question – what is Maryland's state flower?

Answer: The Black-eyed Susan

This next one's easy – What is Maryland's state bird? Why, the Baltimore Oriole, of course.

Maryland's state song? "Maryland, my Maryland", sung to the tune of "Tannenbaum, oh Tannenbaum". While Ohioans sing of "beautiful Ohio, where the golden grain dwarf the lovely flowers in the summer rain", Maryland's lyrics refer to Abraham Lincoln as "the tyrant", "the despot", and "the Vandal", and to the Union as "northern scum". It also refers to the phrase "Sic semper tyrannis", which was the slogan later shouted by Marylander John Wilkes Booth when he assassinated Lincoln.

Final bonus question – What is Maryland's state sport? OK, I'm not making this up – it's jousting. Over the years Marylanders have petitioned the General Assembly to change this; one of the most publicized was in 1991 when one group tried to get the sport changed to.....duckpin bowling.⁹ Duckpin bowling was so wide-spread in Baltimore that children of the 60s wondered why Fred Flintstone had holes in his bowling ball.

But back to Baltimore. While those of you who are cradle Cincinnatians were learning about your Losantiville roots in elementary school, we wee Baltimoreans were steeped in the rich history that connected our town to the others within the thirteen colonies.

In 1730, a charter was issued for Baltimore Town, with 60 acres of land located on the north side of the Inner Basin of the Patapsco River – now the Inner Harbor. Baltimore's rise from a small town trading in tobacco to a city rivaling Philadelphia, Boston, and New York began in the 1750's when Dr. John Stevenson, a prominent physician and merchant of Baltimore, started exporting flour to Ireland. The success of this seemingly insignificant venture opened the eyes of many Baltimoreans to the most extraordinary advantage of the city – a port nestled alongside a vast countryside of wheat. Baltimore exploded with energy; the city became a flour-based economy.¹⁰

Baltimore contributed an essential ingredient for victory during the Revolutionary War: Naval superiority. By the 1770s Baltimore had been building the world's most maneuverable ships. These ships could penetrate British blockades, and pirates, privateers and the Royal British Navy were outrun.¹¹

Baltimore was formally incorporated as a City in 1797, just around the time Cincinnati was first settled. George Washington described Baltimore as the "growingest city in America". Development was spreading in all directions, generally following the turnpike roads that led to the rural hinterlands from Baltimore's harbor. Baltimore extended its boundaries in 1816, when the population reached 46,000 people, raising its size from three to ten square miles. By 1827 Baltimore was the fastest growing town in the nation and the world's largest flour market.¹²

Baltimore was also a key player in the War of 1812. Those ships which were so important in the Revolutionary War continued to wreak havoc on maritime trade in England. Captain W.F. Wise of the Royal Navy said, "We cannot build such vessels in England as your 'Baltimore Clippers.' We don't have such models, and even if we had them they wouldn't be of use to us, because we could never sail them as you do." Baltimore privateers were responsible for nearly 25 percent of the 2,000 English vessels lost during the war.

The British described Baltimore as 'a nest of pirates,' and the City soon became a military target. After the British burned Washington, DC, they sailed to Baltimore. The City, left to defend itself, looked to Revolutionary War hero General Samuel Smith to coordinate its defense. Following Smith's direction, every able-bodied man toiled for days, building a formidable defense at Hampstead Hill and making preparations at Fort McHenry. A contemporary of Smith quipped "Washington saved his Country and Smith saved his City."¹³ It was the Battle of Baltimore that was immortalized by Francis Scott Key who, while being held prisoner on a British ship, observed the battle and recorded the event in a poem which became our National Anthem.

Baltimore was the second largest city in the United States with a population of 80,000, according to the 1830 U.S. census. But on November 3, 1825, one small boat completed a voyage which indirectly shaped the history of Baltimore for the next 100 years.¹⁴ The packet boat, Seneca Chief, sailed to New York City from the eastern end of Lake Erie and thus inaugurated the Erie Canal. The next year, 19,000 boats transported goods to and from the Midwest and New York. The new freight rates were \$10 per ton by canal from Buffalo to New York, compared to \$100 per ton by road. By far the canal had become the most efficient and affordable way of transporting goods from the Midwest to the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁵

As Canal trade began to usurp trade on the National Road, Baltimoreans foresaw the eroding of the City's economic strength. Industrial leaders in Baltimore were on the verge of panic. Many ideas for a Baltimore canal were proposed, but the geography of the area stopped all of these schemes from becoming reality. At this point, Baltimoreans' luck and obstinacy began a course of events that changed the world, making even its arch nemesis, the Erie Canal, obsolete.¹⁶ On February 12, 1827, Baltimore merchant Philip Evan Thomas and 25 other merchants assembled to (quote) "take into consideration the best means of restoring to the City of Baltimore that portion of the western trade which has lately been diverted from it by the introduction of steam navigation [on the Mississippi] and by other causes [such as the Erie Canal]." Four days later, the men agreed that (quote) "immediate application be made to the legislature of Maryland for an act incorporating a joint stock company, to be named the Baltimore & Ohio Railway Company." Thus, the B&O Railroad was born. According to J Wallace Brown, Baltimoreans unleashed (quote) "mighty forces that were to revolutionize land transportation, alter the course of trade, make and unmake great cities, and transform the face of the country".¹⁷

During the mid-nineteenth century, Baltimore was notable for the growth and contributions of its African American population, which was the nation's largest by 1820. Resident in the city were 26,000 free blacks and about 2,000 slaves by the time the Civil War erupted. But African Americans were rarely successful in enjoying a piece of the city's economic activities. Racism handicapped free blacks as they competed with whites for skilled and unskilled jobs in the port economy. White working men often resorted to violence during periods of recession to keep jobs among themselves.¹⁸

This was a period of rampant racism across the U.S., but attitudes against the advancement of people of color was particularly prevalent in Baltimore. In 1901 white West Baltimore boiled over in protest when

a newly arrived school superintendent from Denver proposed turning a German-language school into a secondary school for black students in the neighborhood. *The Baltimore Sun* explained why. It was, the newspaper said, a “self-evident fact that the presence of a negro school, or of any negro institution whatever in a neighborhood where white people reside, will lower the value of their property and that the presence of such a school will be an incentive for negroes to move into the neighborhood and by so doing further lower the value of property and reduce the taxable basis of the city.”¹⁹ The "self-evident fact" of *The Sun* was neither, really — but since it suited the prejudices and fattened (or appeared to fatten) the wallets of white Baltimore homeowners, many believed. This idea spawned others — for example, that keeping white-branded homes, schools, and neighborhoods safe from the (quote) "black invasion" was the responsibility of white communities.

And so the municipal government began bumping black Baltimoreans from place to place to suit their white neighbors' whims. Baltimore passed a series of residential-segregation ordinances from 1910 to 1917 which sought to determine where black people could and could not live and served as models for similar ones in hundreds of other American cities. When in the 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* case the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that these laws were unconstitutional, city officials quickly formed other means to the same end, including a municipal commission to (quote) "divide the city into districts with respect to the height, location, and use of land and buildings."²⁰ This type of segregation did not nakedly forbid anyone from moving into any part of Baltimore, so it did not run afoul of the *Buchanan* ruling. Yet zoning met and still meets the same goals the proponents of the segregation ordinance desired. For example, minimum-lot-size rules or prohibitions on multifamily dwellings can make it impossible for low- or middle-income people to live somewhere—a different means to a similar end.²¹

Yes, local officials did everything they could to build an invisible wall around black Baltimore during the first half of the 20th century. But, as they soon discovered, no one was better at making Jim Crow a reality than the federal government. Almost everything the federal government did to help Baltimore — from public housing to highway construction to urban renewal to redlining — had the same animating principle: to (quote) "block the negro from encroaching on white territory," as one federal housing official wrote in the 1930's."²²

With the return of soldiers eager to raise families after World War II, suburbanization accelerated and was spreading to neighboring counties outside the city limits. By the 1950s, 7,000 to 8,000 houses a year were being constructed in the counties surrounding Baltimore. The population within the City boundaries began a slow, continual decline: the city lost 10,000 people in the 1950s and 35,000 in the 1960s.²³ Across the U.S., one of the most important pieces of a large Federal urban-renewal project was the express highway, designed to carry workers and shoppers in and out of city centers while burying slums and blighted areas under a ribbon of asphalt. These roads had to slice through black neighborhoods because those places sat between the city and the new, white suburbs. Baltimore's highway engineers had been battling around plans for highways for decades, but in 1956 the \$26 billion Federal-Aid Highway Act promised to pay 90 percent of their cost. The next year, flush with government cash, planners mapped two dozen miles of high-speed roads through the city's core.²⁴ During the 1960s the bulk of the retail activity in Baltimore's downtown shopping district and neighborhood main streets followed their customers; they moved to the suburbs into shopping centers built around four-leaf-clover exit ramps of the Baltimore beltway completed in 1962.²⁵ Industry too, followed their employees. The City's old, multi-story brick factories were vacated as sprawling, new Federally subsidized industrial parks with quick access to the newly designed highway system were developed.

After a 1968 riot and the 1970s recession, Baltimore faced the double whammy of de-industrialization and suburban flight. Mayor William Donald Schaefer took on the task of convincing those who stayed that they had to work harder, faster, and smarter. He was considered irascible, opinionated, obsessive, but most of all impatient. An *Esquire* magazine article referred to Schaefer as “Mayor Annoyed”, while in the same heartbeat he was proclaimed America’s “Best Mayor.” Today, the ever-growing Inner Harbor stands testament to his transformation of a downtown, often by sheer force of will.²⁶

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, violence was a Baltimore epidemic as it was in many cities. Crack was intruding into a drug market long dominated by heroin. In 1993, the city crossed the 350 homicide mark. These were the years that inspired “The Wire.” They also gave rise to Martin O’Malley, a city councilman who was elected mayor on an anti-crime platform in 1999.²⁷

O’Malley set about implementing what was then known as the New York model. The objectives were: zero tolerance for open-air drug markets, data-centric “CompStat” meetings to track crime and to hold police commanders accountable, and more resources for law enforcement paired with tougher discipline for officers who abused their power. By the time O’Malley, a Democrat, was subsequently elected governor of Maryland in 2006, crime rates, including murders, had fallen across the board. But at a cost. Arrests had jumped to 101,000 in 2005 from only 81,000 five years ago. Baltimore was left full of young men with criminal records and months and years away from jobs and families.²⁸

Early in 2007, a perturbed police detective named Tony Barksdale envisioned a more targeted approach to policing. He presented his ideas to Sheila Dixon, the City Council president who finished O’Malley’s term as mayor once he was elected governor. Dixon, who like Barksdale was a product of the city’s black working class, agreed with Barksdale’s vision for reducing murders without mass arrests. Barksdale was

promoted to deputy of operations by then police commissioner Fred Bealefeld, and arrests fell by a third from 2006 to 2011. Also, homicides plummeted to 197 in 2011, the first time under 200 in almost four decades. A study by Johns Hopkins found that the new approach to policing was the city's most effective in recent years.²⁹

But there was a downside. On Bealefeld and Barksdale's watch, there had also been a rise in shootings by police officers, which roughly doubled between 2006 and 2007 before dropping to earlier levels. Barksdale remained unapologetic. He recalls telling Dixon and Bealefeld, "To hit the brakes on crime, there will be police-involved shootings. I know their mind-set. They'll respect you if you're willing to die just like them. And there are people who just don't get that."³⁰ It was a controversial approach and one that Anthony Batts, Baltimore's next police commissioner hired in 2012, did not subscribe to. He replaced much of the command staff, and others left on their own.

In 2014, Maryland elected an new governor: Larry Hogan, a Republican suburban real estate developer. Where O'Malley had been a Baltimore mayor and made sure there was close coordination between City Hall, state prosecutors and Maryland's parole-and-probation office, Hogan put less pressure on state offices to work closely with the city.

Also elected in 2014 was state's attorney Marylyn Mosby, who called for diverting more nonviolent drug offenders into treatment. One halfway house used for this purpose was in West Baltimore, but drug dealers zeroed in on its residents as clientele. On March 17, 2015, Mosby's office asked a police commander to target they halfway house for "enhanced" drug enforcement.³¹ A few weeks later, two officers on bike patrol nearby encountered a man named Freddie Gray.

Among the deaths at police officers' hands that animated the Black Lives Matter movement in its early stages, Freddie Gray's was uniquely ambiguous. He was not shot, as were Laquan McDonald in Chicago, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Tamir Rice in Cleveland and Walter Scott in North Charleston. All that is known for certain is this: When he encountered the police officers, Gray — who had engaged in low-level dealing over the years — ran. When the police gave chase and tackled him, they found a small knife in his pocket and placed him under arrest. Gray was put in the back of a police van shackled and unbuckled, in violation of a new department policy. When the van arrived at the Western District's headquarters, Gray was unconscious with a nearly severed spinal cord. He died seven days later.

Protesters took to the streets after Freddie Gray's death. Baltimore Police Commissioner Batts appealed to Hogan for state police reinforcements but received fewer than he hoped. Still, the demonstrations proceeded mostly peacefully for a week until Saturday, April 25, when rowdy baseball fans heading to Camden Yards taunted a group of protesters who had marched into downtown. In the mayhem that ensued, some teenagers and young men smashed police cruisers' windshields, bar windows and looted a 7-Eleven. The police held back, making only about a dozen arrests. It appeared as if Commissioner Batts wanted to set himself apart from the heavy-handed tactics in Ferguson, where anti-riot police officers bristled with military hardware. That night, Batts hailed his officers' limited response. (Quote) "We're taking our time to give them the opportunity to leave," he told reporters.

The approach was notably different the day of Freddie Gray's funeral. The police were on edge over social media rumors about a youth purge into downtown after school and possible gang violence. Batts responded heavily, sending 300 officers to confront students at a big west-side transit hub and to guard an adjacent shopping mall. When the transit system was ordered shut down, some of the stranded

teenagers started throwing rocks and bricks at the police. The police lacked proper protective gear and had received little riot-response training. Before long, a CVS pharmacy was on fire and being shown on newscasts across the nation.

In hindsight, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that the riot was probably avoidable — if Police Commissioner Batts had had more officers at his disposal, if his officers had been better trained, if there hadn't been the seeming overreaction to Monday's swirling rumors. But within three hours it was out of his control. Governor Hogan dispatched National Guard troops and established a command center in West Baltimore. That Friday, Mosby — whose policing request may very well have led to Gray's arrest — held a televised news conference announcing a long list of serious charges against six officers, including death through indifference. She declared "I have heard your call for 'no justice, no peace,'" ³²

Mosby's announcement of charges helped stanch further unrest. But it was based on an investigation her own office conducted because she did not trust the police department. The charges delivered a profound blow to morale among rank-and-file officers, who were already aggrieved over their leadership's handling of the riot in which 130 officers were injured. They bridled at the ringing, declamatory tone of Mosby's announcement, and responded swiftly.

By doing nothing.

In Baltimore it came to be known as "the pullback": a months-long retreat from policing, a protest that was at once undeclared and unmistakably deliberate. Many officers responded to calls for service but refused to undertake any "officer-initiated" action. Cruisers rolled by trouble spots without stopping or didn't roll by at all. Compounding the situation, some of the officers hospitalized in the riot remained

out on medical leave. Arrests plunged by more than half from the same month a year before. Lt. Gene Ryan, head of the police union, called the pullback justifiable. He told *The Sun*, “Officers may be second-guessing themselves. Questioning, if I make this stop or this arrest, will I be prosecuted?”³³

In the vacuum, gangs took new corners and people settled old scores. While not a single person was killed on the day of the rioting, the following month would conclude with 41 homicides — the most the city had experienced in a month since the 1970s, and more than the city of Boston would have for the entire year. The city ended 2015 with 342 homicides, a 62 percent increase over the year before, and within a dozen deaths of the worst year of the trouble-ridden 1990s. Ninety-three percent of the victims were black. The rate at which detectives were able to close homicide cases fell as residents grew even warier of calling in tips or testifying.³⁴

Finally in July 2016, after trials resulted in three acquittals and one hung jury, Mosby’s office dropped all remaining charges against officers in the Freddie Gray case.

It takes remarkable fortitude to remain an optimist about Baltimore today. In most of the rest of the U.S., large city disorder and dysfunction common several decades ago, have been replaced by a great urban rebirth. A wave of reinvestment coupled with a plunge in crime rates has left many major cities enjoying a sort of post-fear existence. Happily, Cincinnati has been a part of these recent positive changes as well.

Up until 2015, Baltimore too seemed to be enjoying its own, more modest version of this upswing. Though it is often lumped in with Rust Belt economic casualties like Cleveland, St. Louis and Detroit, Baltimore had in fact fared better than these postindustrial peers. Because of the Johns Hopkins biomedical empire, the city's busy port and its proximity to Washington, metro Baltimore enjoyed higher levels of wealth and income — including among its black population — than many former manufacturing hubs.

The city still had its ills — its blight, suburban flight, segregation, drugs, racial inequality, concentrated poverty. But as recently as 2014, Baltimore's population, which is 63 percent African American, was increasing, up slightly to 623,000 after decades of decline. Office buildings downtown were being converted to apartments, and a new business-and-residential district was rising east of the Inner Harbor. The city was even attracting back those ultimate urban renaissance imprimaturs - food halls.³⁵

But since the Freddie Gray death in 2015 the murder rate has jumped from the low 200's the first half of the 2010s to 344 in 2015 and now 348 in 2019.³⁶ Baltimore City students consistently score near the bottom in reading and math assessments compared to children in other cities and large urban areas.³⁷ Nearly 24% of Baltimore's population is living below the poverty line. Life expectancy rates in the poorer Baltimore neighborhoods is 63 years old.³⁸ Baltimore has the highest overdose fatality rate of any city in the United States.³⁹ No surprise, Baltimore's population continues to plummet.⁴⁰ The number of vacant houses in Baltimore has remained stubbornly flat for a decade with almost 17,000 abandoned buildings blighting the city's streets.⁴¹

My hometown is in bad shape. What can be done to fix it?

There is no dearth of people with solutions. Some ideas involve fiscal tweaking, such as lowering property tax rates, investing in infrastructure or cutting city employee benefits.⁴² Other solutions are less concrete, such as “making black neighborhoods matter”, confronting police bias, expanding voting rights for ex-offenders, or wealth redistribution to historically disinvested neighborhoods.⁴³

Is Federal intervention an option? State and local governments are tied to the ups and downs of the economy. Baltimore’s government can only muster spending from resources within the city’s economy. But many of Baltimore’s residents are poor, which means the city’s economy is poor. Some suggest we experiment with federal revenue sharing to close state and local budget gaps.⁴⁴

Baltimore is well-equipped with anchors; that is, institutions like universities and urban hospitals that are major employers and economic development generators. Let’s get these eds and meds to reboot any adversarial relationships with the city and recommit to community outreach.⁴⁵

Cincinnati’s amazing turn-around in the past sixteen years is often attributed to nonprofit, private real estate development firm 3CDC.⁴⁶ Baltimore has similar relationships, such as the Baltimore Development Corporation – it remains to be seen whether they can make a significant impact.

And what about attracting new employers? The latest and best hope is Kevin Plank – the hometown entrepreneurial success story and billionaire founder of Under Armour, the athletic-apparel giant. His real estate project – a \$5.5 billion waterfront development plan named Port Covington – is one of the largest in the U.S. Will it survive the Covid-19 crisis? But also consider, the project has received the largest package of tax incentives in Baltimore history. Which raises the question of whether the city is

once more prioritizing well-off, mostly white newcomers at the expense of its mostly black long-term residents.⁴⁷

Once the economy begins to expand again, perhaps a rising tide will be able to lift even Baltimore's dilapidated schools, urban deprivation and decrepit infrastructure. But in 2019, Baltimore had more homicides than New York, which has fourteen times more people. Businesses and their people will not stay where they do not feel safe. The violence must stop.

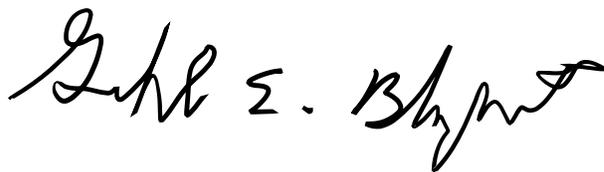
A "disgusting, rodent and rat-infested mess," "very dangerous and filthy," "the Worst in the USA."
"No human being would want to live there."

Unless Baltimore can get crime under control, it will continue to lose businesses and better-heeled residents and the taxes they pay. The risk is that one of America's great metropolises enters a death spiral, as Detroit had by the 1990s.⁴⁸ If that happens, Mr. Trump's tweets will be the least of Baltimore's problems.

Baltimore must change, and some of its old charms will get buried in the wreckage. But as we move further into the 21st century, we see in the clearing many new (and old) images that would make it into a vision of a city campaign: the increasingly inclusive arts scene, the new restaurants laser-focused on community, and yes, the historic structures all over Baltimore that citizens still continue to fight for. Baltimore still has the city's arabbers that keep hoofing produce to hungry Baltimoreans; the shot-and-a-beer bars that let you linger past last call; the Formstone facades and screen paintings that stubbornly remain on rowhomes like badges of honor. There are other things, too, that are harder to capture in a

photograph or catchphrase, though they are the pulse of Baltimore: enduring grit, endless gumption, a self-deprecating sense of humor, and, perhaps most importantly, a collective love for the city.

In closing, a quote from F. Scott Fitzgerald. He was only 36 when he and Zelda came to Baltimore in 1932. In their five year stay, Baltimore gave the peripatetic Fitzgerald family something they'd never really had before: a home. Fitzgerald wrote this on Baltimore hotel stationery in 1936: "I love Baltimore more than I thought— it is so rich with memories— it is nice to look up the street and see the statue of my great uncle and to know that Poe is buried here and that many ancestors have walked in the old town by the bay. I belong here, where everything is civilized and gay and rotted and polite. And I wouldn't mind a bit if in a few years Zelda & I could snuggle up together under a stone in some old graveyard here. That is really a happy thought and not melancholy at all."⁴⁹

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. E. Blumenthal". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

¹ "How to Fix Baltimore," *The Economist*, August 2019 edition,

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/08/01/how-to-fix-baltimore>

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⁴ Labov, William (2007) "Transmission and Diffusion", *Language* June 2007 p. 64

⁵ Woolever, Lydia, "Are We Still Charm City?" *Baltimore Magazine*, December 12, 2018, <https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2018/12/3/are-we-still-charm-city-exploring-baltimore-nickname>

⁶ Woolever, "Are We Still Charm City?"

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- ⁷ Woolever, “Are We Still Charm City?”
- ⁸ Woolever, “Are We Still Charm City?”
- ⁹ McCord, “Duckpins a state sport? Surely you joust DUCKPINS -- MARYLAND'S REAL STATE SPORT”, *Baltimore Sun*, October 8, 1991, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1991-10-28-1991301036-story.html>
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- ¹¹ “The History of Baltimore”
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- ²⁷ MacGillis, Alec, “The Tragedy of Baltimore,” *New York Times Magazine*, March 12, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/magazine/baltimore-tragedy-crime.html>
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