

Daniel Perkins — Aurora Housing Authority

I didn't grow up in public housing but I do have a noteworthy experience. A friend of mine (Kyle) has been employed by Aurora Housing Authority (AHA) as maintenance for the last 18 years. Being a carpenter myself, I used to assist Kyle tend to his overburdened duties at Eastwood, Westwood, Southwind, or other properties overseen by the AHA.

Back then I had nothing but ignorance and naivety to the root causes of, or just the mere necessity of public housing. Nor did I understand our country's checkered history as it relates to systems of slavery and segregation from hundreds of years ago and are still embedded in current policy, particularly, housing. I made comments like, "who the fuck would want to live here?" The answer is simple and it's a fortunate by-product of my academic and personal growth journey which has allowed me to learn from those most impacted by the aforementioned policies.

Kyle regularly changed parts on outdated and dilapidated mechanicals and structures but the most frequent repair; drywall patches. These patches are significant because they're a poignant reminder of the polarizing effect of parents and being in life situations we'd rather not. I know one way we escape our realities is through the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol.

Being under the influence of these substances makes it easy to take shit out on family and loved ones — those close too and especially those living with us. We break, throw, punch and kick shit. Sometimes the violence is enacted on our bodies but oftentimes our walls are left to tell the story.

AHA maintenance building has a shelf with hundreds of pre-cut 24" x 24" gypsum board (drywall) repair kits. This is an uncanny predictor of violence to come. This is an intimate

connection I make to the AHA because I can assure you that repairs to my homes, walls, cabinets, doors and, unfortunately, our bodies were regular.