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Hon. Jerrold Nadler
c/o William Emmons
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6216

Written Statement to the Committee

Continuing Injustice: The Centennial of the Tulsa-Greenwood Race Massacre
Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
May 19, 2021, 9:30AM

My name is Dr. Tiffany Crutcher. I am the daughter of Joey and Leanna Crutcher - and I am the great-granddaughter of Rebecca Brown Crutcher; a survivor of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. And as I sit here today, in front of this body, in the very seat of our democracy, I know in my bones that she is here with me in this fight for justice.

Reparations is simply making amends for a wrong. That is what we are asking for today.

One hundred years ago, my great grandmother was simply enjoying her life as a successful entrepreneur in Tulsa's Greenwood neighborhood. And she wasn't alone. You see, in Greenwood, you couldn't go a block without passing a thriving Black-owned home or business. Ten thousand people called this place home.

This was Black Wall Street, where people like my great grandmother Rebecca had found safety and a rare refuge in the grim days of Jim Crow.

But this paradise, this vibrant place my great grandmother helped to build, would soon be wiped away in a flood of racial terror.

On May 31 and June 1, 1921, an angry white mob began their murderous rampage across Greenwood, turning the once-thriving Black community into an apocalyptic pile of rubble, bones, and bodies. Homes were set ablaze with families trapped inside. Men fired guns indiscriminately into the street. And, for the first time in our history, bombs were dropped on American Soil.

Rebecca Brown Crutcher hopped on the back of a wagon and fled for her life. She was one of the thousands of Black Tulsans forced to flee Greenwood and leave everything behind.

Within **hours**, Black Tulsans and their Black neighbors began to rebuild Greenwood from the ashes even as insurance companies, state laws, redlining practices and urban removal would time and again seek to destroy this sacred space.

What happened in Tulsa was perpetrated by our city's own government. Former Tulsa judge William Kellough said it plainly this week: "There was no doubt that white Tulsa officials were largely to blame for the massacre.

They not only failed to prevent the bloodshed, but had also deputized white civilians and Klan members who took part in the burning and the killing."

Tulsa's government failed its people. Tulsa's government failed these survivors. Tulsa's government failed Rebecca Brown Crutcher. And now, we are here asking our nation's government to see that justice is done in the form of reparations.

The vestiges of the massacre are still found in Tulsa's criminal legal system, which has torn my family apart. In 2016, Tulsa police officer Betty Shelby shot and killed my twin brother, Terence Crutcher. Police looking for a weapon instead found gospel CDs in his car. My 40-year-old brother didn't get a fair chance to live. His children didn't get a fair chance to see another day with their father.

For five years now, I have fought for policing reforms like the very ones that each of you have debated and voted on. Just weeks ago, I was in this very building with the families of George Floyd, Eric Garner and Botham Jean - asking our legislators to end qualified immunity. Policing reform that could have saved my brother's life and, according to the Human Rights Watch and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, could save the lives of so many others.

Black people aren't looking for a handout. We are looking for good legislation that recognizes our humanity. We are looking for justice, because for centuries injustice has cost our families an unspeakable price.

Racial disparities are systemic and they extend far beyond issues of policing. Compared to white Tulsans, Black people in Tulsa are far more likely to be relegated to poverty and neighborhoods that don't have access to fresh fruit or produce. As we speak, people in North Tulsa – a predominantly Black part of town – are celebrating their first full grocery store in over a decade. I'm having trouble celebrating finding crumbs in a food desert. We shouldn't have to live like this. We shouldn't have to die like this either.

If you care about racial justice and racial healing, I am asking you to do two things: Number 1, support reparations for the survivors and descendants of the Tulsa Race Massacre and bring reparations bill H.R. 40 to an immediate vote. Number 2, support ending qualified immunity as a part of any police reform legislation that leaves this House.

This nation's government - cannot sit on the sidelines as Mother Randle, Mother Fletcher, and Uncle Redd spend their twilight years fighting for justice 100 years after the massacre. Their health is dwindling as they demand reparations, fighting time and again to convince elected leaders to treat us like we matter.

I hope you see your loved ones in them. I hope you look past the division of politics and see their humanity. I hope you see why they're calling for reparations for the generational wealth, loved ones, memories and opportunities that have been stolen from them.

I know most of you believe in justice. All we're asking for in Tulsa and Black communities across the US is repair, respect and restitution. If Rebecca Brown Crutcher, Mother Randle, Mother Fletcher or Uncle Redd were a part of your family, you would want the same thing.

For them - I implore you to embody our nation's sacred promise of justice for all. Thank you.

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