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Greenwood Massacre Descendant

UN Speech for Permanent Forum for People of African Descent, May 30, 2023

Today, on the eve of the 102nd anniversary of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, I sit before you as a descendant of survivors to share a poignant chapter from our history.

Imagine a time when my family and community faced unimaginable horrors. Bullets rained down upon us, as a seething White mob, numbering in the thousands, sought to unleash their anger. When the gunfire ceased, our homes and businesses were looted and set ablaze. As the smoke cleared, a momentary relief washed

over us, only to be shattered by the sight of planes dropping bombs from above. Our promised-land became an inferno. It's crucial to understand that we were only two generations removed from the shackles of institutional slavery. In just 18 hours, racial hatred destroyed what had taken 56 years to build. We found ourselves back at square one, stripped of our generational wealth, starting anew.

For decades, the massacre was concealed, driven by white fragility that prevented its teaching in schools. While White children escaped the burden of collective guilt, Black children were denied the

opportunity to learn about their cultural excellence. They were denied the knowledge that people who resembled them had become doctors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, pilots, and successful business owners—all within a mere two generations of emancipation. I was one of those Black children, unaware of the tremendous legacy I carried being a descendant of this community until a Black scholar in college enlightened me about my roots.

Now, every day, I strive to become the best version of myself, aiming to reach the heights set by my ancestors. However, today I stand

here, troubled by the closing doors for other Black children. In America, states are banning books featuring Black authors, reminiscent of a dark era in Nazi Germany. How can Black children learn the invaluable lessons of resilience and persistence, if they are deprived of the knowledge that they too can rise above adversity?

Although we are still awaiting justice for the massacre, we are still rising.

It is my hope that the nations of the world will exert pressure on our government to fight harder for our children's right to learn, to be represented in the pages of history. Let us ensure that the story of

Greenwood and the triumphs of
Black communities are not erased
nor forgotten. Thank you.