

Hello. I'm Reverend Billy Talen, candidate for Mayor of New York City on the Green Party ticket, and I'm grateful for this opportunity to talk with you.

We New Yorkers have shared an experience in recent years and months, and we're all talking about it - on the corner, in line at the deli, waiting for the subway. We are saying extraordinary things and that's because these are extraordinary times.

"We wuz robbed." That's something we hear again and again. The Wall Street-financed invasion of our neighborhoods, which has caused such chaos in our attempts to raise our families, has taken many forms: skyrocketing rent, chain stores and big boxes, eminent domain evictions, and erosions of our rent controls. The landlords and developers entered a fevered pitch last year with construction cranes and

weekly worker accidents, and then suddenly the bulldozers ran out of gas. Everything stopped with the market crash.

Now we are checking our money, asking our children how they are doing in school, looking for neighborhoods, talking to people back and forth. "We wuz robbed"; yes, Wall Street looks bad right now. But our neighborhoods are looking pretty good. Some neighborhoods are almost entirely destroyed but many of us are grateful for the chance to have more control of our lives.

Neighborhoods were and are economies, often good ones, before the chain stores and gentrification invaded. Neighborhoods have elements of a "gift economy" when they're healthy, with the people in the community being of service to one another, often inventing roles, entering into skill-sharing, and bartering, helping each other.

The City should recognize this, partner with us, protect our leases, give micro-loans to hardware stores and flower shops and diners that might not be sporting an international logo. Protect the shopkeepers and families. Protect our economic rights and our constitutional rights. Stop-and-frisk activities by the police are introducing fear and racial tension.

Our newest Americans deserve the hope that Lady Liberty has promised them. Stop warrantless raids of our neighbors' homes, dragging off parents in front of terrified children. Let the neighborhoods live and breathe.

A luxury condo isn't always the same thing as prosperity. Sometimes an older, more modest home that's kept up, that's the best. A farmers market might be better than a big box, a bike lane better for our children's lungs than more cars and more trucks; children need to run and breathe and

shout in our parks. Let's think of our family's safety and well-being.

Why is the greening of New York stalled while climate change gets worse? Weatherizing our homes, ride-sharing, getting off big energy grids, these are neighborhood solutions, not national policies. Green collar jobs would flourish in New York City if neighborhoods had the chance.

That's why in our campaign we call for the Rise of the Fabulous 500 Neighborhoods. Amen.

We have a lot to learn from our everyday common sense. We wuz robbed but we can bounce back. We have a proud tradition. We're citizens of New York City.

As your Mayor, I will partner with neighborhoods, I will partner with you.

Thank you.

I'm Reverend Billy. Take care.

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