

Pam Sporn's 2020 documentary, *Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route*, is a people's history of the Motor City that aims to depict the city's triumphs and struggles from the Great Migration onwards. As far as lending voices and historical accuracy go, the documentary is an admirable effort, granting a wide-lensed view into Black life and achievement. However, the film's purpose gets muddled when it turns to its main focus--the history of Black property ownership and how to fight for it. Such a thesis demands economic analysis, but very often the film's interview style is too casual to inform an audience beyond anecdotes and it settles for simplistic depictions of gentrification. If this were the documentary's only problem, it might be forgiven, but the film is also unable to advocate for a future, failing both as a call to action and as an informational work. At once, Detroit is too fundamentally ruined, but there are also people fighting for its betterment, although the specifics of either are hardly discussed.

Detroit 48202 trails postal worker Wendell Watkins, who worked in the postal service for over two decades. A lifelong resident of Detroit, as he documents his postal route and interviews his neighbors. His perspective highlights the structural pains of Detroit's financial system. The documentary begins with Watkins introducing Detroit as a multifaceted city, at once abandoned and prosperous at the whim of property-owning giants; this opening challenges the myth of a monolithically decrepit Detroit, and it foreshadows the film's final section on gentrification. This is an effective and grounded beginning which leads into the interviews that counter prevalent narratives of Detroit as a failed city.

Unfortunately, this promising opening loses purpose. The series of interviews assemble a people's history but do not illuminate class or economic institutions such as the Federal Housing Administration or local government. Many of the interviews are short anecdotes about how residents' families emigrated from the South to the booming automobile industry, as well as the hardships of being Black in a city with a history of systemic racial discrimination. Moreover, no indca4.

Even the Boggs School does not have an opportunity to represent