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In all of last year Minneapolis tallied a total of 41 murders – Chicago had already eclipsed that number in January of 2013 – and the death toll keeps rising.

There appears to be no end in sight to the carnage in the Chicago streets. One Chicago mother lost all four of her children to homicide and just recently, 15-year-old honor student Hadiya Pendleton was gunned down little more than a week after marching in President Barack Obama's Inaugural Parade. Just last week two teenage girls were murdered in Chicago while the president was in the city giving a speech on ending gun violence. One of the murdered girl's, 18-year-old Janay McFarlane, had a sister who was standing behind President Obama as he delivered his speech. Many are questioning what, if anything, can be done to stem the tide of violence in the Midwestern city.

Many in the Twin Cities are keeping a watchful eye on what is happening in Chicago. Several African-Americans currently residing in the Twin Cities region have roots in Chicago. The number of transplants is so vast that some have dubbed areas in Minnesota, "North Chicago."

Shereese Turner and Otha Smith are both Chicago transplants living in the Twin Cities. Turner said she escaped Chicago; Smith said he abandoned it.

Turner moved to Minneapolis in 1995 to get away from the violence in Chicago. During that time, Minneapolis was experiencing an unprecedented spike in violence, but Turner said it was still better than being in Chicago. Turner, who now works with ex-felons to help them adjust to life after prison, said she feared for her three young children and her youngest brother, who was 8-years-old at the time, so she decided to relocate them to Minnesota. According to Turner, the gang lure was too strong to safely raise her family.

"My father was a Black Stone Ranger and my older brother was a Gangster Disciple," said Turner, who said her brother is still affiliated with the Disciples.

Turner said her father died due to the effects of years of addiction, and his death made her stay in Chicago even more perilous. According to Turner, her father was a high ranking member in the Rangers. Because the Rangers and Disciples are rival factions, when Turner's father died, her brother became an immediate target.

"The only thing protecting my brother (from the Rangers) was my father," said Turner.

That dynamic influenced her move to the Twin Cities. Though Turner brought her youngest brother to Minnesota with her, the lure of the gang lifestyle led him back to Chicago at 16. Within a year he was shot. Although he survived, he continued with the gang and at age 27 was shot again. Turner said he was recently released from prison. Her eldest brother is currently incarcerated.

"It's hard to say, but with my brother in jail, at least I know where he is – I know he's alive," said Turner. "With my baby brother, there's not a day that goes by where I don't think this could be the day I get a call that he's been killed. Even though he's not perfect, you don't want to get that call."

Due to the volatile nature of this subject, Insight News has declined to publish the names of Turner's brothers.

As for Smith, it was a promotion at his company that brought him to the Twin Cities. And though he has been in Minnesota for 10 year, he said he's a Chicagoan at heart. But Smith said his heart aches when he thinks of the violence that is killing off mostly minority members of the city that raised him.

"I feel I abandoned my city," said Smith. "Chicago needs young African-American role models who are college educated, who are making a difference. I feel more guilt than relief (that I'm no longer there). My parents are still there; my best friends are still there. I don't apologize for leaving, but the successes I've achieved here, I wish I would have achieved there."

Smith grew up on the southeast side of Chicago near 68th and St. Lawrence. He described the neighborhood as a mix of middle-class and impoverished households. He said as time has passed, it's become less middle-class and more impoverished – and more violent.

"When I was coming up, you settled things with fists. It's not that way anymore," said Smith, who said Chicago has had a storied culture of violence. "Chicago has always been a violent city. Chicago is famous for Michael Jordan, but also for Al Capone."

Smith said gang culture was prevalent in his neighborhood, but what kept him from becoming engrossed in the culture was the fact that his father was very involved in his upbringing. "That and a strong self-desire to succeed," said Smith.

Smith and Turner say that there is no easy fix to end the rampant violence in their hometown. Both say economics and the family dynamic play a role in keeping kids from involving themselves in the gang and drug culture. The two also say city officials are not doing enough to end the killing; mostly because, they believe, the violence is concentrated in primarily African-American and Latino neighborhoods, though with the killing of Hadiya Pendleton, a brighter spotlight shined on the city.

"My heart breaks for that little girl, but I'll be honest; if she didn't march in the Inauguration, we wouldn't have heard about her," said Turner. "She would have been just another statistic. Her death would have been marked by some teddy bears and a couple of vigils. I'm tired of vigils, what are we going to do the stop this madness?

"When these kids join a gang, they're looking for love," said Turner. "At the end of the day, all they want is love."