

When “Good” Towns Go Bad

I guess it depends on what you would call a good town. A place we used to live called Naperville Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago, was once considered a good town. It had lots of fun things to do, relatively low crime, good schools, and lots of money. It was never my ideal place to live, however, because it was always way too crowded and had way too much traffic for my tastes. But I never considered it a *dangerous* place to live... until yesterday. Being from the Chicago area and having friends and family who still reside there means I maintain an interest in keeping up with their local news. Yesterday I came across the following newspaper article about a murder that was committed in the neighborhood where we used to live: Man Shot, Killed in Naperville

In a city the size of Naperville (about 10 square miles, with a population of over 140,000 people), this incident might not appear to be as shocking to the normal reader as it was to me. However, having lived in this neighborhood only about 7 years ago, I can't believe how much it has changed. We lived in a small townhome; it was very nice and backed up to a school. It seemed like the perfect picture of suburbia at the time. It was VERY over-priced for what I would expect to pay for a 1.5 bedroom where I live now, (we paid \$1380 rent a month, and our place was not more than 650 square feet), however at the time I thought it was worth it because it was a “nice” area and close to family in a place I thought would be safe to raise kids. Needless to say, I was wrong on that account. In the article about the crime, the newspaper drew a nice little map. Turns out the victim (who had an arrest record himself – not that I'm judging, just noting) lived not more than 2 blocks from our old home. The victim's body was found 5 blocks from our old home. We used to take our daughter for walks around the area all the time; there was a Walgreens we used to walk to right near where the body was

found. Readers who posted in the comments section of the story say how the area has become "seedy", and in the article itself, they state that the victim's home was a "high traffic area". All of this adds up to a place where I would NOT want to raise kids, let alone pay through the nose for a small place to live, only to have to worry about protecting my family from the violent crime that seems to have invaded the area. Some might say this is an isolated incident; they can say "this can happen anywhere." That IS true. Anything can happen anywhere. However, one can now say that it can happen anywhere, but it DOES happen there.

It truly makes me thankful every day that we've now found such a wonderful place to call home; away from the city and its crime, pollution, and expenses, not to mention how superficial and just downright unfriendly the residents of a town like Naperville can be. It's baffling to me that they charge EXTRA to live in a place like that! It makes me feel really good knowing that when my kids grow up and want to raise children of their own, they will have the option to stay in the wonderful town where they grew up. I did not have that option, since I grew up in a town next to Naperville, and it is no longer a good place to raise children. If my kids want to spread their wings and fly away to explore the world and see what else is out there, that is fine. I will miss them of course, but I am quite confident that if all else fails out there, they will always have the option to return to the place where they grew up to live safely and prosperously. Country living is not for everyone, I guess, but I don't think I'll ever understand those who choose to pass up utopia for city life ☐