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Late Assignment

**City of God**

Rio De Janeiro hosting the 2016 Olympic Games was supposed to bring the country to new heights financially and athletically; however, only after a year of hosting these games, the country became shrouded by corruption, dept, and violence. According to ESPN writers Wayne Drehs and Mariana Lajolo, authors of *After the Flame,* the Rio Organizing Committee still owes $40 million dollars to creditors and according to Brazil’s Institute of Public Safety, street robberies have gone up by 48 percent since the Olympics and deadly assaults up by 21 percent. In the first three months of 2017, violent crimes have spiked 26 percent compared to the same period last year. Rio is still unable to pay their teachers, hospital workers, police and other public employees on time (Wayne Drehs and Mariana Lajolo, *After the Flames*). In 2017, at least 120 police officers were killed and through December, 6,590 people were slain, which is the highest rate in nearly a decade.

Rio was not always like this. In recent years Rio’s economy was booming. Rocinha, Rio’s largest favela, was once a place of rising fortune as the middle class began sprouting, bank branches and jewelry stores began to open, fast food chains began appearing, fashion designed from around the world began coming to the county, and the streets were even portrayed in the animated movie “Rio”. The streets were much safer than they used to be thanks to the city’s police program who had a mission to drive out all the drug trafficking that had taken over the city in previous years. The nation seemed to be on the right track to greatness; however, now the town is a symbol of violence and corruption

Gun violence is an everyday occurrence in Rio and citizens such as Samantha Almeida and her family fear for their life every day. Samantha has been living in Rio her entire life and she explains the that “Nobody locked their doors. In the middle of the night, if you needed something, you’d go out and get it at the pharmacy. You’d go to the cafe if you were hungry, and at any hour. But these are bad times.” She describes that the city she lives in now feels like a war zone. Listing to gun shots buzzing outside their house and just above the roof is an ordinary thing to experience for them now, as the police are in a constant battle with the drug traffickers.

One night while Samantha and her family were sleeping, they were awoken by gunshots taking place above them. Samantha began organizing an escape route from the house as she feared for her and her daughter’s lives. She explained the to the girls to move fast, stay low, and stay clear of the windows. Samantha heard another gun shot fired, she rose, and told her daughters to follow her. Her younger daughter moved quickly toward Samantha; however, her older daughter began moving slowly. Samantha noticed her older daughter had been shot. She quickly brought her daughter to the hospital and when they got there, Samantha noticed gunshot patient after gunshot patient arriving at the hospital. Doctors in Rio explain that these scenes where dealing with gunshot wound and even shrapnel from grenades are very common. Ricardo Vassallo, chief of general surgery at Miguel Couto, explains that they are dealing with weapons of war being used in the urban area, which is horrific.

This huge outbreak in violence was caused by mostly by the economic crisis and corruption throughout the country. There was a financial scandal involving President Dilma Rousseff that resulted in her losing her job and the former governor Sergio Cabral was sentenced to prison in June of 2017 for being involved in a massive corruption and bribery scandal known as Lava Jato. Authorities say he received more than 224 million dollars from this scandal.

The police officers in Rio are also known for being corrupted. The government cannot pay them their normal wages, so a lot of officers began making deals with drug traffickers. In May of 2017, evidence surfaced that officers in northern Rio rented an armored vehicle to drug traffickers for the equivalent of $300,000. In October, four officers, including a unit commander, were arrested after an illegal cache of marijuana and cocaine and more than a thousand rounds of ammunition for high caliber guns at their station were found at their police station.

There have been many efforts in try and stopping this huge epidemic happening in Rio. Michel Temer, the current President of Rio, spent the past year fighting corruption allegations. There are also people like Nanko van Buuren, who organized a foundation called Soldados Nunca Mais (Soldiers Never More) project. The purpose of this program is to keep young adults away from joining drug trafficking trade. He uses sports, art and peer counselling to help 4,300 “child soldiers” live a life that doesn’t involve getting drugs.

Most people get into drug trafficking because they don’t know what else to do. In this community nobody can mount to anything due to the lack of education; however, people like van Buuren, along with many others, attempt to run organization to help the youth and show them that there are other options other than being part of drug trafficking.