

Across the tracks: Where a child lives in America – often down to the block – offers stark predictions for whether they will grow up to be rich, poor or even land in prison

- Some of the American communities that provide children with the most promising futures are just a few miles away from those where kids are most likely to grow up to be poor or incarcerated
- The pattern repeats itself around the country, with inherited poverty significantly higher in certain communities and sometimes the defining difference in a child's future comes down to less than a mile
- The American South has the greatest concentration in the nation of children who grow up without ever escaping poverty, while the Northeast leads in wealth-based outcomes for kids in those communities
- Factors that contribute to disparities include: uneven access to education, transportation and affordable housing, as well as a lack of good-paying jobs that offer health care

By VALERIE BAUMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS REPORTER FOR DAILYMAIL.COM **PUBLISHED:** 09:19 EDT, 26 November 2018 | **UPDATED:** 09:18 EDT, 27 November 2018



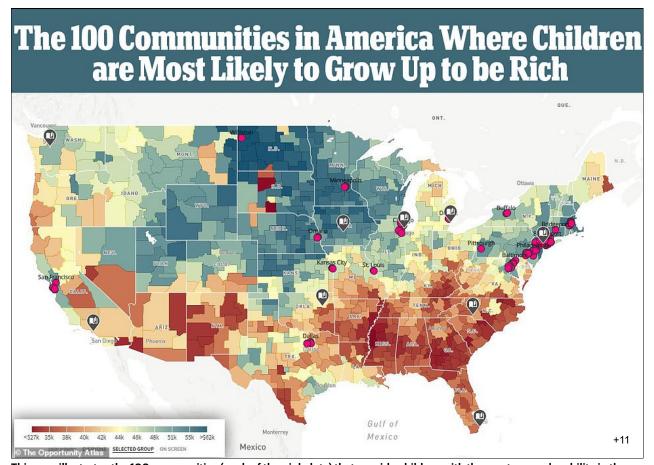


For some children, America is failing to live up to its reputation as the land of opportunity – and often, the neighborhood where they grew up is the single biggest predictor of what their future will hold.

Some of the most upwardly mobile communities in the country are just a few miles away from those where children are most likely to grow up to perpetuate a multi-generational cycle of poverty, according to **The Opportunity Atlas**, an interactive map that uses more than three decades of government data to predict childhood outcomes.

The Atlas bases its projections on U.S. Census data and federal tax information gathered over time (through 2015) on people born from 1978-1983 – now age 34-40. The project, conducted in partnership by the U.S. Census and Harvard University's Opportunity Insights group, illustrates the average actual outcomes of children who grew up in every community in America.

The maps reveal some national trends on poverty and wealth – for example, the American South has the greatest concentration in the nation of children who grow up without ever escaping poverty, while the Northeast leads in outcomes of upward mobility.



This map illustrates the 100 communities (each of the pink dots) that provide children with the most upward mobility in the nation, with a high concentration of positive financial outcomes in the Northeastern United States. The map also illustrates median incomes through color coding with red reflecting dense concentrations of poverty and blue indicating higher incomes

This map illustrates the 100 communities (each of the pink dots) where American children have the least potential for climbing out of multigenerational poverty, with a concentration in the South. The map also illustrates median incomes in each region through color coding, with red reflecting dense concentrations of poverty and blue indicating higher incomes

However, they are most useful when used at the most granular level to analyze highly localized data broken down into 'Census tracts' (geographic regions defined for taking a Census) for a detailed snapshot of poverty, wealth and opportunity in America.



While the U.S. is considered the land of opportunity – a nation where everyone is supposed to have a chance to pursue happiness – the Atlas offers evidence that for some children that ideal is an unfulfilled promise. In some cases simply merely because of where they were raised.

'There is an untold narrative about the fact that there is a divide between those who have money and those who don't,' said Lillian Singh, director of the racial wealth

A Tale of Two Cities:

divide initiative for Washington D.C.-based think tank **Prosperity Now**.

'It really is a difference between the haves and havenots in this country,' she told DailyMail.com.

For example, in Pittsburgh, children from the predominately African American neighborhood of Larimer grew up to have median incomes ranging from \$17,000-\$22,000 a year and a 3.5-7.4 percent incarceration rate, while just 10 miles away in mostly white Mt. Lebanon, median salaries for people who grew up there range from \$64,000-\$70,000 and the incarceration rate is less than 1 percent.

The pattern repeats itself around the country, with incarceration rates and multigenerational poverty significantly higher in certain communities – and sometimes the defining difference in a child's future comes down to less than a mile.

The city of Hollywood, Florida – 19 miles north of Miami – is home to just such a division.

People who grew up in the Emerald Hills community of Hollywood had a median salary ranging from \$65,000-\$67,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate. Just across the railroad tracks and Interstate-95 from Emerald Hills is the community of Liberia, where children grew up to the reality of a \$20,000 median salary and a 5.7 percent incarceration rate.

Liberia was established as the railroad was being built in that region in the 1920s and 1930s, largely as a community for African American rail workers. By contrast, Emerald Hills was built in the early 1970s on pasture land for wealthy, predominately Jewish and Italian residents, Hollywood city Commissioner Richard Blattner told DailyMail.com.

'The houses (in Emerald Hills) were large, it represented the style of the time and it just boomed,' Blattner said. 'Emerald Hills is sort of a self-invested community ... Liberia was very different and we have put significant resources in there to upgrade all the infrastructure: water, sewer, electrical, lighting, roadway improvements.'

Comparing the best and worst outcomes in communities across America

Seattle: The Madison Valley section of Seattle's Central District has a median income of \$30,000 and an incarceration rate of 3.2 percent, while just to the north – across East Roy Street – residents in the eastern Capitol Hill neighborhood have a median income of \$60,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate.

Dallas: Median incomes in North Dallas range from \$62,000 - \$75,000 and the incarceration rate is below 1 percent, while 15 miles away, the Cedar Crest community is home to people making a median of \$21,000 and incarceration rates range from 4.7 -7.8 percent.

Chicago: To the west, the Indian Head Park community has a median income of \$74,000 a year and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate, while Englewood, on the city's South Side has a median income ranging from \$17,000-\$20,000 and incarceration rates from 4.4-8.3 percent.

Atlanta: The Grove Park community has a median income of \$19,000 and a 5.5 percent incarceration rate. Meanwhile, the Buckhead community, just five miles northeast, has a median income ranging from \$65,000-\$83,000 and an incarceration rate of less than 1 percent.

Pittsburgh: The neighborhood of Larimer has median incomes ranging from \$17,000-\$22,000 a year and a 3.5-7.4 percent incarceration rate, while just 10 miles away in Mt. Lebanon, median salaries range from \$64,000-\$70,000 and the incarceration rate is less than 1 percent.

Hollywood, Florida: The Emerald Hills community north of Miami has a median salary ranging from \$65,000-\$67,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate. Immediately next door is the community of Liberia, with a median salary of \$20,000 and a 5.7 percent incarceration rate.

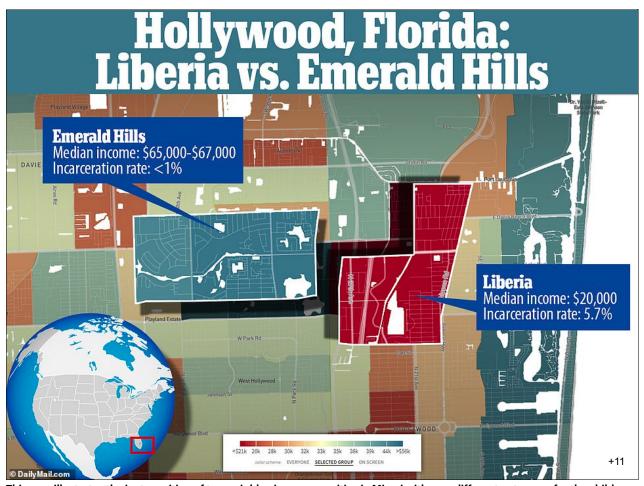




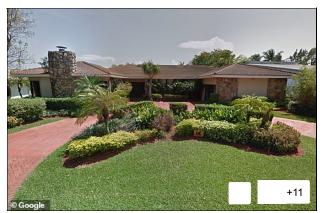


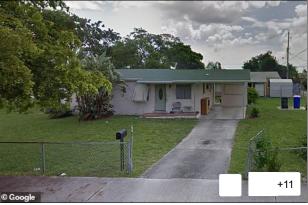
Blattner attributes some of the differences in outcomes to educational disparities.

Many parents in Emerald Hills enroll their children in private and charter schools, while Liberia, on the other hand, has a high proportion of single-parent families who Blattner said place less of an emphasis on education. He pointed to the failure of several free and low-cost preschool programs in Liberia due to low participation and community enrollment.



This map illustrates the juxtaposition of two neighboring communities in Miami with very different outcomes for the children who live there. In blue, is the Emerald Hills community, with a median income ranging from \$65,000-\$67,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate. In red is the community of Liberia, with a median salary of \$20,000 and a 5.7 percent incarceration rate.





The photo on the left is a typical house in the Emerald Hills community in Hollywood, Florida - 19 miles north of Miami. Children who grew up in Emerald Hills have much better financial outcomes than those in the neighboring community of Liberia (right). Children who grew up in Liberia, Florida, adjacent to Emerald Hills, had a median salary of \$20,000 and a 5.7 percent incarceration rate

Similarly, children from the low-income Madison Valley section of Seattle's Central District grew up to have a median income of \$30,000 and an incarceration rate of 3.2 percent, while just to the north – across East Roy Street – those who grew up in the eastern section of the Capitol Hill neighborhood have a median income of \$60,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate.

The disparity is a legacy dating back to the early 1900s, when Seattle had racially restricted covenants that limited where Jews, Asians and African Americans were allowed to live, said Nicole Vallestero Keenan-Lai, executive

director of Puget Sound Sage, a Seattle-based community revitalization nonprofit.

'It's a long history of some explicit policies that led to intergenerational poverty,' she told DailyMail.com.

The separation was perpetuated decades later through the introduction of redlining – a discriminatory real estate practice in which lenders refuse to provide loans or extend credit to minorities in certain parts of a town or city.

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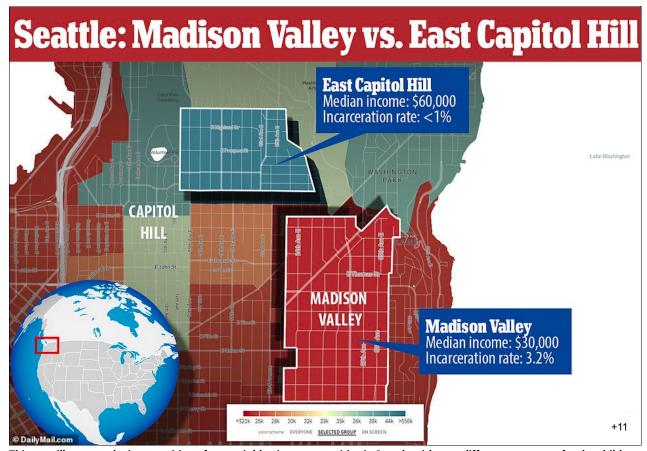


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In Seattle this manifested itself with the Asian population largely contained in what is now known as the International District, while Jewish people and African Americans were limited to the Central District. The demographic makeup of those communities persists today.

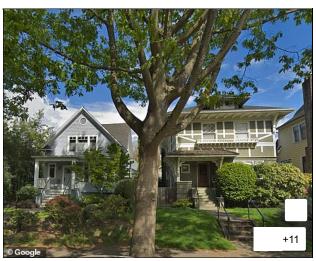
'It's not just one generation or two, but since the formation of the city itself we've created a lack of access to opportunity,' Vallestero Keenan-Lai said.

It is impossible to talk about poverty and income disparity in America without also addressing race. Beyond income disparity, the Opportunity Atlas illustrates a consistent pattern of poor communities predominately populated by people of color.



This map illustrates the juxtaposition of two neighboring communities in Seattle with very different outcomes for the children who live there. In red, is Madison Valley, which has a median income of \$30,000 and an incarceration rate of 3.2 percent. In blue is the eastern section of the Capitol Hill neighborhood, where residents have a median income of \$60,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate

The photo on the left shows homes in the eastern section of Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, where children grew up to achieve median incomes of \$60,000 and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate. The photo on the right shows a duplex in the adjacent Madison Valley community of Seattle, where children grew up to achieve median incomes of \$30,000 and an incarceration rate of 3.2 percent





For example, Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas is home to nine

Census tracts with some of the best predictors for childhood earning outcomes – as well as nine where children have some of the worst financial potential in the nation.

The communities with the best outcomes are predominately white, while the poor ones are mostly African American.

It's about 15 miles and a 20 minute drive from Dallas' Cedar Crest neighborhood to the northeastern section of North Dallas, and while the two communities look similar, they couldn't be more different when it comes to childhood outcomes.

Median incomes among children growing up in the northeast section of North Dallas range from \$62,000 - \$75,000 and their incarceration rate was below 1 percent, while children from Cedar Crest are making a median of \$21,000 and incarceration rates range from 4.7 -7.8 percent.

Cedar Crest was once a middle class black community, but in the past three decades many have moved away to wealthier suburbs leaving behind poor African Americans in a community that has limited options when it comes to grocery stores, pharmacies and retail shops, while North Dallas is home to high-end options like Louis Vuitton, said ReShunda Morrow, program manager at the Dallas-based Shared Housing Center.

'There's a lot more crime, a lot more disparity (in Cedar Crest),' Morrow told DailyMail.com. 'There used to be a mall. That mall has diminished a lot because there's not a lot of people able to get there.'

Similarly, in Atlanta, the Grove Park neighborhood – formerly known as Bankhead – has limited resources to serve the high number of African Americans caught in the community's multigenerational cycle of poverty, said Debra Edelson, executive director of the **Grove Park Foundation**, a nonprofit focused on combating poverty.

Children from Grove Park grew up to have a median income of \$19,000 and a 5.5 percent incarceration rate.

Children with rich parents are more likely to be successful than intellectually gifted kids born to low-income families, study finds

Rich children of average intelligence are more likely to succeed in life than brilliant people born into poor families, according to a new study that focuses on the intersection of genes and economics.

Researchers found that intellectual gifts are actually fairly evenly disbursed between the rich and poor – but eventual success and educational attainment is weighted heavily in favor of the haves over the havenots, according to a working paper recently published in the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Ultimately, less than a quarter (24 percent) of highpotential people born to low-income fathers graduated from college, compared to 63 percent of those born to high-income fathers.

At the other end of the spectrum, 27 percent of those with low-potential but high-income fathers graduate from college – a slightly greater proportion than that of the smartest among the poorest families.

Co-author Nicholas Papageorge, an economist at Johns

Meanwhile, children from the Buckhead community, just five miles northeast, had a median income ranging from \$65,000-\$83,000 and an incarceration rate of less than 1 percent.

'It's rough (in Grove Park),' Edelson told DailyMail.com. 'There's no supermarket. There's no pharmacy, there's just no resources here. People don't have cars. They don't have a lot of ways to even get those resources. How do you get to a pharmacy if you don't have a car and your child is sick? Buckhead is the exact opposite.'

An estimated 30 percent of the homes in Grove Park are unoccupied, and the community doesn't have basic infrastructure like curbs, gutters and sidewalks, she said.

Hopkins University, told The Washington Post that the results allow researchers to do something they hadn't been able to before when analyzing educational and economic outcomes – control research variables based on home environments and family income.

For example, wealthier parents are more likely to feed their children vegetables, read to them and get them to take classes that will enhance their early development.

'Two people who are genetically similar can have strikingly different IQ test scores because the richer ones have invested more in their kids,' Papageorge said.

This occurs even when two people are genetically 'actually quite similar,' he added.









'It started as a white middle class community because

there were jobs, then the civil rights era and desegregation happened and African Americans started moving out here,' Edelson said. 'It was white flight - it flipped in two years from completely white to completely black, from 1962-1964.'

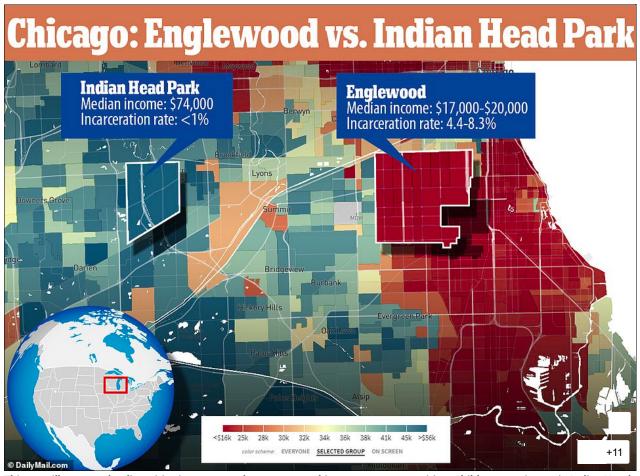
Edelson said it was a 'very comfortable' middle class African American neighborhood for nearly two decades in the 1960s and 1970s, but that population began moving to wealthier areas in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to disinvestment in the area. Things only worsened after the economic collapse of 2008.

'The supermarket closed, the bank closed, everything closed,' Edelson said. 'There's no neighborhood services. There's tire shops and mechanics, some nail salons. It's just really low-grade retail and services.'

Chicago has similar issues in many of it's neighborhoods, where the boundaries of poverty are particularly pronounced along racial lines. To the west, children who grew up in the Indian Head Park community had a median income of \$74,000 a year and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate – and it's among the 100 most upwardly mobile communities in the nation.

Meanwhile children raised 13 miles away in Englewood, on the South Side of Chicago – one of the 100 communities in America where children are least likely to escape poverty – had median incomes ranging between \$17,000-\$20,000 and incarceration rates from 4.4-8.3 percent.

Indian Head Park is a community of perfectly manicured lawns with large middle- and upper-middle class homes set back on spacious plots of land. Blackhawk Park is nestled in the center of the community, providing children with a safe place to play.



This map illustrates the disparities in outcomes between two Chicago-area communities. Children growing up in Indian Head Park had a median income of \$74,000 a year and a less than 1 percent incarceration rate. Meanwhile children growing up 13 miles away in Englewood, on the South Side of Chicago, had median incomes ranging between \$17,000-\$20,000 and incarceration rates ranging from 4.4-8.3 percent





The photo on the left shows two abandoned, boarded up houses in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, one of the communities with the worst financial outcomes in the country for children who grow up here. The photo on the right shows a typical home in the Indian Head Park community of Chicago, one of the neighborhoods with the best financial outcomes for children in America

Englewood, on the other hand, is filled with condemned homes, boarded up buildings and overgrown, empty lots. The housing that is occupied is cramped together, often with garbage littering the front lawns. The city closed six schools in Englewood, which remain shuttered, covered in graffiti and subject to frequent vandalism.

Englewood is also consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in a city now known for high

rates of violent crime.

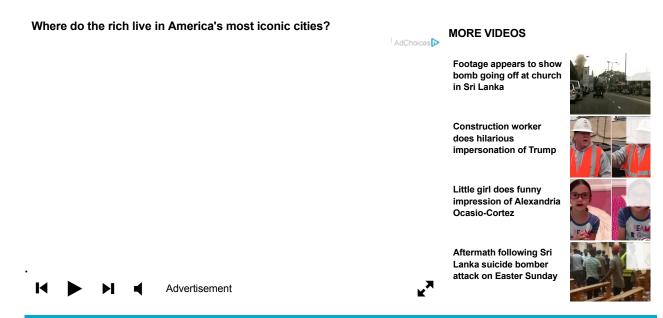
'The story of Englewood is the story of black Chicago, which is decades of disinvestment (and) decades of segregation, which has led to minimal opportunities,' said Amisha Patel, executive director of **The Grassroots Collaborative in Chicago** in an interview with DailyMail.com. 'There's just a continual story of resources leaving the neighborhood and the community.'

Asiaha Butler, president of **RAGE**, a nonprofit focused on community revitalization in Englewood, estimates Englewood has 10,000 vacant plots of land due to demolitions of zombie homes – housing that has been abandoned by the owner or left in disrepair after being repossessed by the bank.

'This is a result of white flight that happened in the 1970s when migrations of blacks started entering the community,' Butler told DailyMail.com. 'What we have now, visually, is an area that was targeted with predatory lending that now has a housing market that's gone bust. Many people foreclosed and lost their homes here ... many of these homes became so-called zombie homes.'

The community currently has very low rates of home ownership, leading to absent and frequently slum landlords allowing the appearance of the neighborhood to deteriorate overall.

'There's still a beacon of hope among people who like myself choose to live in this community and attempt to rebuild,' she told DailyMail.com. 'We want to see Englewood transformed in a way that we will not see people displaced but have some of the same amenities of the North Side.'



Expert solutions to ending multigenerational poverty

Affordable housing: In order to escape poverty, low-income Americans need access to housing that is 30 percent or less of their income, experts say. Cities can pass laws that would require making affordable housing a certain proportion of all new housing built.

In addition, as large cities develop, adding new buildings and businesses, often the local population is displaced by the resulting rising housing prices. These shifts disproportionately affect poor people, forcing them to relocate to more far-flung locales and adding to transportation costs for them to get to work. Experts say it's critical to find a way to keep people in their communities, even as new, pricey housing and developments are built.

'There are builders coming in developers coming in - and guess what's happening? ... The taxes go up,' said Jacqueline Jones, director of mortgage lending for the Dallas-based nonprofit BCL of Texas. 'So now some of the residents can't even pay for the taxes in areas that they have lived for 30 years in houses they have already paid off.'

Education: In most of America, school resources are distributed based on the local tax base. In poor communities - particularly those of color - this can lead to dramatic underfunding of education. Potentially combining poor and rich

school districts or more evenly distributing education funding could address these issues, some experts argue.

'If you give black and brown kids the same resources as middle income whites, will they succeed? Can they succeed?' said Lillian Singh, director of the racial wealth divide initiative for Washington D.C.-based think tank Prosperity Now. 'Not only do we succeed, but we will succeed and we have succeeded becoming first generation college students as well as becoming first-generation wealth builders for our families.'

Transportation: Poor people often can't afford cars and rely on public transportation systems to get to work. Investing in robust, affordable public transportation helps support gainful employment in depressed communities. It also makes it easier for low-income families to avoid being displaced as new development comes into their communities.

Job Creation: Poverty experts say it's not just about creating new jobs, but creating good-paying jobs that offer health care benefits that will help lift people out of multigenerational poverty. In addition, offering job training, apprenticeships and paid internships can help people build new careers in industries that pay better than minimum wage - which is not enough in most states to elevate families above the federal poverty line.

Financing and loan tools: Low-income families, particular people of color, have a history of being targeted for predatory loans with high interest rates and bad terms that ultimately become unaffordable - whether for housing or for short-term payday loans. Some nonprofits, like BCL of Texas, have focused on finding ways to help provide more affordable financing and loan options that will help people rise out of poverty instead of digging themselves deeper. In addition to connecting people with affordable homes and low-interest loans, BCL helps work with people to train them on how to live responsible financial lives so they don't wind up in cycles of debt.

'We take them and make sure that whatever got them into that situation, we identify that and then we say here are some behaviors you can put in place so this does not happen again,' Jones told DailyMail.com.









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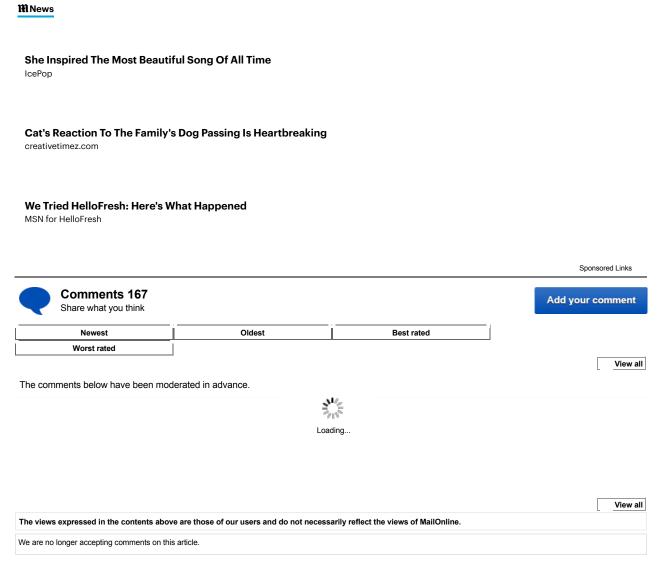
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