

Racism in America

June 7th, 2020 (posted on Facebook)

So after sitting back a couple weeks and watching what's unfolding, I'm relieved to see some things going on and also troubled by other trends I'm seeing. As everyone has been stating, the tragic George Floyd murder is a scenario that should never be allowed to happen. One black person dying unjustly at the hands of law enforcement is too many, let alone the alarming frequency in which it happens. It's a terrible reminder that racism is still way more prevalent than anyone wants to admit. Black lives need to matter more than they have. This can't be accepted as the status quo.

To all my black friends and co-workers, I'm sorry that you are going through something so terrible as to be fearful encountering a force that should have your back. Men and women in law enforcement take that oath to serve and protect, but clearly 100% of them do not take that with the seriousness it should entail. One of our basic human rights is supposed to be believing that police officers are here for our protection and to help us when we need it. No one should ever have to fear those encounters. I can't put myself in your shoes, but that must be a terrible mindset to hold onto. I hope the four Minneapolis officers arrested rot away in prison for a long time, as they participated in or watched, a human and civil rights violation of the worst kind take place.

So to anyone that protests for the memory of George Floyd and advocates for necessary change, I 100% support that idea. Protesting where injustice has occurred is a right and should never be frowned upon. It can allow us to start those difficult discussions that need to take place. I've seen a lot of clips online of instances where police have been out of line in the last couple weeks. It's unfortunate to see that there are a lot of people in law enforcement that shouldn't be allowed to wear the uniform. It's horrifying to see peaceful protestors being beaten and having non-lethal force used against them.

Police brutality is one of those tough but legitimate discussions that needs to happen, but I don't know what the answer is. I've been seeing lots of "quick and easy solutions" online on how to get racism out of law enforcement. The thing is though, that this phrase is an oxymoron. There is no quick and easy fix that will cut out racism. If there was a quick fix, it probably would've happened

many murders ago. It can't happen overnight, but the discussion can. I've seen steps listed, hashtags gaining traction relating to stripping funding or abolishing police departments entirely.

There are big flaws with many of these "quick solutions." You can talk about new training methods and steps to take in encounters with civilians as far as a slow escalation in force, but at the end of the day, it's always going to come down to what's inside the heart of that officer. No amount of training can erase those racist beliefs if they are already there. I never needed a class or anyone to teach me about respecting black people or anyone with a different race or cultural background. People don't become assholes once they put on a uniform. The idea of defunding the police to put those funds into other areas is I think hit or miss. It could maybe be done on an individual basis. Not every police department is allocated huge annual budgets. However, it is something that could be looked into. Abolishing police departments is something that I don't see being able to exist outside of a Hollywood movie.

Getting racism/corruption out of law enforcement is something of the utmost importance, but I'm not sure how to make it happen. There are a couple ideas I can think of, but both unfortunately deal with these bad apples once they are already wearing the uniform. Body cameras are becoming more common, and I think could be a big step in holding officers more accountable. Now, this could be directly at odds with the idea of defunding the police. If you could use this technology and mandate it for every single police department, I think that could make a big difference. The goal would have to be a third party constantly monitoring and combing through footage, with the ability to turn off body cams completely out of the hands of those police departments. I also think that outside sources investigating claims made against officers could help. Don't let the departments themselves conduct investigations into their own officers.

One additional thing that I find disappointing and even a little troubling is the pass that so many people are giving the rioters and looters. I've seen numerous friends doing this, and in some cases, taking it one step further and justifying their actions. This is something that I can't really wrap my mind around. In terms of escalation of the chaos that we've seen unfold on the news, a large chunk of the blame should go to the police officers that are acting out against protestors. However, a large chunk of the blame should also be placed at the feet of these rioters and looters. Businesses large and small have been suffering and on the verge of having to shut down with the pandemic.

Trashing, stealing from, and beating the shit out of civilians does absolutely nothing to honor the memory of George Floyd, and actually takes attention away from the cause anyway.

Too long didn't read version

- I fully support my black friends, black co-workers, and ideas of the Black Lives Matter movement. You deserve much better
- We need to get racism/prejudice out of law enforcement, but it won't happen easily or overnight, and a lot of blame should fall at their feet for the current chaos
- Stop giving the rioters/looters a pass for being assholes