Hello, my name is Travis, I've been a Portland resident for most of the last 20 years. I love so much of what this city offers its citizens and I consider Portland my home. I've been following the Black Lives Matter movement since 2014. Sometimes attending marches, sometimes donating to fundraisers, and most recently, following the news from home while I'm self-quarantining.

Like most Americans, when I wake up in the morning, I get the coffee going, cook up some breakfast and read the news. Most of the news lately has to do with Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement. It doesn't take much news paper page turning or news feed scrolling to see instances of police violence at protests.

Most recently, I watched a video of a 26 year old protester named Donovan La Bella be shot in the head with "less lethal" rounds by a federal officer. In the video, Donovan is holding up a speaker in the same pose as John Cusack from the 1989 romantic comedy Say Anything... I watched multiple angles of this video and while they all have a lot of blood, there isn't any logical answer as to why this man was shot in the face for holding up a speaker. Was the speaker playing Peter Gabriel's In Your Eyes like in the movie? Does it matter what song it was playing? What cause could they possibly have for fracturing this man's skull from across a two lane street?

There are so many more videos on local news sites and from bystanders on social media that show police violently lashing out at anti-police-violence protesters as tax payers such as myself stare blankly into our computers and smart phones at these atrocities from our homes.

I am aware of Don't Shoot PDX's lawsuit and the current ruling local police face when it comes to CS and tear gas. These rules are not enough. We're in the middle of a GLOBAL respiratory pandemic and I absolutely can not think of a reason why gassing people makes any sense. It's complete madness. I've seen the footage and I've also heard from friends who live nearby these so-called "riots" complain of the gas wafting into their homes.

It does not make sense to me, and on top of all of this, allowing federal officers to now come into our city and act like an occupying army seems to be a giant step towards outright fascism.

All this violence for what? A few spray painted walls? A few smashed windows? I'm sure most of these businesses are insured. I'm sure that human life is more important than an old statue or a shopping mall. Gassing people, shooting less lethal rounds, meeting protests against violence with any form of violence is amoral and outright satanic.

What strange world do we live in where protests against police brutality are met with more and more police brutality? How can Portland claim to be a sanctuary city or a progressive city when our police force is some nightmarish band of droogs out for a bit of the old ultraviolence? Oregon has a long history of white supremacy dating back to the Black Exclusion Laws of 1844, I want to believe that Portland and Oregon are better than this racist history, I'd like to believe that, over time, things will get better, but when i turn on the TV or scroll through social media, all i see is state sanctioned violence and mayhem against protestors who are simply suggesting that Black Lives Matter.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts on this situation. I hope that our country can use this moment to take an honest look at itself and decide what our values really are.

-Travis W
Portland, Oregon