

I am a resident of downtown Portland. I am a parent. Originally from New York City, I moved to Portland 10 years ago, as this is where my husband's family has been based for generations. I have lived a long life. And I've attended anti-war and anti-discrimination marches/protests in New York City and Washington DC. But I've never seen anything like I've seen in Portland, Oregon. I first witnessed police attack protestors for no legitimate reason in 2017. But it was in the summer of 2020 that I witnessed Portland Police Bureau - and the feds - abuse their power and use extraordinarily insane amounts of chemical weapons on citizens.

I live blocks from the justice center and the federal building. As you know, this is where many of the protests took place this summer. On several nights (so many I lost count) the use of stun grenades was so frequent and so loud it was as if we were living in a war zone. On some nights police used tear gas close to our building so that it seeped into our home. Note that I have a child. I cannot fully express the level of anger, outrage, and disgust a parent feels under these circumstances. And remember - this is during a pandemic where respiratory health is a critical and fragile thing. Just writing about this is disturbing, and it should disturb any decent, level-headed and compassionate person reading it. On several summer days I could not take my son for a walk in our neighborhood because so much tear gas had been used the night before that the streets still smelled like it. Our eyes would sting, our throats would get sore. Now, how is this okay? As you know, the chemicals go into our stormwater system then into our rivers. If the police and our government don't care about the people that live in the neighborhoods they work in, do they at least care about the water and the animals that live in it? That's a rhetorical question. Of course they don't - they shot tear gas like it was fireworks and every night was the 4th of July.

It should be noted that on several nights I attended the protests near my home; partly to show my support for victims of police brutality (aka Black Lives Matter), partly to document as I am a filmmaker/photographer, and partly to see why police would use chemical munitions banned in warfare on citizens. I'm not sure what type of action would make the use of chemical munitions seem reasonable, but I certainly didn't see it this summer. What I did see was police dressed in hyper-militarized gear attacking American citizens with a perverse excessiveness indicative of a corrupted police force and a disturbed system that employs them; a society whose law enforcement is acting out some kind of military fantasy on citizens of their own country who are practicing a constitutional right.

When police are allowed to disturb neighborhoods with tear gas, long range acoustical devices, and flash bangs it also demonstrates an immense failure at the local and state level. It suggests that the representatives - voted in by the people - are afraid of the police and so have no say in the matter. Because if someone was "minding the store" then how could they possibly allow police to gas homes with children inside of them? Why are police gassing American children? Why is the state quiet on this? Cannot the state stop police from behaving as rioters?

What happened in Portland this summer will go down in history books as a perverse level of police abuse and an immense disregard for our air, water, and urban wildlife. I

had irregular periods this summer, and I am sure it is related to the chemical agents that were so quickly and prolifically used in our neighborhoods. And probably not too far in the distant future, we will get confirmation of the damage done to our bodies and our environment. So I ask you - as our so-called representatives - to really think hard about this and to use whatever moral compass you have. This has to stop. We need change. Now.