

## **Racism**

**Dear Editor:** I've been reflecting on the man at the roundabout and his sign stating that "blue lives matter" while wearing a rifle across his chest. Several thoughts ran through my mind as I saw him. The first being why did he feel it necessary to make that statement? As a white man his life has always mattered. The second was, wow, if a black man had stood there or anywhere in our country with a sign stating black lives matter while hold a gun, how long would he have remained standing or how long would it have been before he would have been arrested?

As a white woman my life has always mattered and I have always had privilege no matter my politics. I never worried about my husband or son being pulled over because they were white, or worried about them being arrested just for being white and assuming they committed a crime, were carrying a gun or going to commit a crime. As a mother I never worried about my son being gunned down for being white. As a white woman I have never been followed around while shopping in a store or asked to show my receipt when leaving a store (except COSTCO). The list could go on showing all the ways I have had a life of privilege that my fellow men and women of color have not been accorded.

The point of the protests is about all the brown and black lives that seemingly do not matter in this country. It is time that we apologize not for what happened in the past and for what our ancestors did but for what is going on now, for what we are culpable for allowing to happen and continue to happen. I was a college student in the '60s and thought I would never see America burn like it did then nor have to witness all the loss of lives because of skin color. I thought it was a battle worth fighting and that it would end the inequality. In reality, the killing and injustices have continued all along, just not in huge open battles, but the number of the dead over the years since the '60s is shocking. We need to educate ourselves on ways to listen to our fellow humans of color, ask respectfully how can we help, speak up even though it is scary to. Yes, it is scary to ask questions, it might show our ignorance and our lack of true understanding of what it is to be a person of color in America. If I think it scary to get involved it doesn't compare to the daily fear in which people of color in the United States live today.

I'm reminded of a statement I heard Kareem Abdul-Jabbar say on the news this week, "Racism in America is like dust in the air. It seems invisible – even if you're choking on it – until you let the sun in. Then you see it's everywhere. As long as we keep shining that light, we have a chance of cleaning it wherever it lands."

I'm praying we keep the light shining and that we of the white majority will listen and learn, empathize and start cleaning and keep on cleaning until our country really is a leader in the world on human rights and equality.

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