

Hello all,

My name is Jesse Ede.

I come to you today as a white American male. My experience with police is not bad but I have had a few occasions where I feel that if I would have been black my life may have taken a different course. Getting into fights while drunk and behaving in a reckless manner behind the wheel are some of the times where being white helped me out.

When speaking to other non-white Americans throughout my life I became aware of many situations where I was given opportunities because of my appearance. With this said I am in a pickle. I want to support the police as their decisions helped me to keep my record clean. The other hand I support and understand that my fellow Black and Brown Americans were not afforded these same graces because of their appearance. Being removed from opportunity seems to be something connected with being black. One important part to realizing your opportunity's comes from someone of authority believing in you. If the actions of the police continue to grant opportunity to a select type of American then all of Americas color will be stripped away. This is why it is important to have transparency in our policing structure. We do not need to just see how it is to work but how it is working.

I spent two tours of duty in Iraq. There I earned experiences that will follow me to my grave. Within these experiences are things that reflect the actions of our American police force. I live in the town of Berlin CT. I have approached police on my own street, bare footed and shirtless, to be met with a hand on the pistol grip and a stance of dominance. I have also been shown that I am not privileged to speak with them about the state of my neighborhood. As I do almost every day I reflect on my service. When I

do this, I find connections with police. I was in a war zone and I had ideas of us and them. Today I see this position expressed by most first responders. I understand how hard it is to turn off the awareness that allowed me to leave a warzone with only two purple hearts. For our police it must be twice as hard as their place of awareness is not separated by a sea but just a highway. This is where training, education and practice become vital to civilian life. When our police see us through the eyes of them crucial connections to those in need will never be realized. Once we as Americans understand that Black lives matter, we will finally see that all lives will prosper within our beautiful nation! Thank you for listening to me and I believe in black lives.