

# Why Black Lives Matter

by Jason Chavez

The spring of 2014, I was only 13 years old. My friend Jon was the same age and his little sister was 11. We were outside playing as most kids do, nothing out of the ordinary. As the day was starting to pass by and it was slowly getting dark, Jon went to go return a lawnmower that his neighbor let him borrow so that he could cut his lawn at his house. Once Jon came walking back we saw a police van pull up, we saw a police officer, run out of the van, grab Jon and throw him against the van. Hearing Jon sound as if he needed help, me and his sister ran down where the van was. The officer had pinned him against the van. Once his sister and I ran down to see what was going on, the officer grabbed his gun and told us both to get back. We were just kids running to see why our friend needed help and the officer didn't even care to talk to us. He then put Jon in the van and drove off. Me and his sister were left alone down at his house, Jon's parents were out working and I did not think to get my mom for help. She starts crying as she just saw the cops go and take her brother. I started wondering, what can I do? Why did the officer not want to hear us out? Why did he put his hand on his gun on two kids? Why did he take Jon? All these questions swirled and later as it got darker, I saw Jon walking down with his older brother. but the cop, nowhere to be found.

The cops were looking for a Black Man, Jon's older brother has autism and sometimes grumbles to himself when he is on his walks alone around the neighborhood. He happened to kick a trash can and a neighbor living up the hill saw that and called the cops. I wonder how she described him. We all started to calm down and we all went home. I was still shocked and wondering what it was that just

happened. Should a 13 year old witness those actions in a nice suburban neighborhood, or are there just nasty people working behind the badge?

As I got older I saw the news of Travon Martin, Eric Gradner and I remember thinking why would the officers want to harm kids around my age? Can we be free to express ourselves and just be able to walk down the street without fear of judgement and prejudice? Why especially were Black Americans targeted for just being themselves? From what I remember learning was that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. marched down to the capitol for this exact same reason. How naive am I to only believe it was an issue only A short time ago and how it could never happen today, but it did.

Why is the movement of Black Lives Matter, important to me, a Peruvian American? It is important because we do not need to kill our own to have justice. Instead of looking at the color of one's skin, look deeper. A lot of the young Black men and People of Color getting hurt, shot, and killed live in areas where they are told they are not important and cannot amount to more than what society says they can achieve. You see very little to none representation of young black scholars who aren't basketball players or rappers. When society brings you and your people down all of their lives how else more can you feel? This movement is set to make change and equality for all. Sadly just because slavery was abolished does not mean the fight is over. My hope for the movement and the youth in America is one day we can all learn to co-exist and not look at one's color of their skin but the character of the individual.