

Dear TorkLaw Family:

I've been struggling to find the right words this past week. It is a very sad time for our country, but one that is long overdue. To think in America, in 2020, that systemic racism in the social, political and justice systems exists is ridiculous - but it is our reality.

Like many of you, I was sickened to watch the video of George Floyd being murdered. My friend Ben Crump represents the Floyd family - he told me that this level of police brutality against Black Americans isn't something new - it's just being recorded now. He handles thousands of police brutality cases every year across America, mostly wrongful death claims and almost all of his clients are Black.

I look at my daughters and I see their innocence and their excitement about life. The simple things excite them. Putting barbies in the bath, melting ice on the floor, making a mess of any kind, playing dress up, dance parties and playing salon so they can do my hair and nails.

It makes me sad to have to explain to them the hate and evil that exists in this country. It breaks my heart to corrupt their innocence with disgusting concepts like racism and hate, bigotry and prejudice.

Both of them know that I am an attorney and when they ask me what that means, I tell them that "I help people and go to court." But now, I have to explain to them that the very justice system that I work in, is inherently unfair - where people are judged in every way because of the color of their skin. That people are treated differently and harassed, discriminated against and abused because of the color of their skin.

Growing up, kids picked on me for my "funny name," and I have been called a "sand n#!%\$r" more times than I can remember. Our family faced discrimination based on our ethnicity, but I have not lived the same experience or felt the same racism as Black Americans.

Hate is the most devastating trait that humanity possesses, and we have allowed it to brew. Incredible men and women face racism on a daily basis, whether it's conscious or subconscious. Staying silent is how this hate breathes. We must stop it once and for all. We have an opportunity and great responsibility to engage, lead, spur dialogue and fight for reforms to help fix these systemic injustices that affect Black, indigenous, and people of color every single day. To end discrimination based on gender, religion or sexual orientation. Reforms that will hold violent police officers accountable when they don't protect and serve us as citizens.

I am not going to stay silent when I can add my voice to the conversation. I hope you won't either.