

Speaker

Clean Verbatim Transcript

Clay Adkerson: Hi, my name is Clay Adkerson. He/him. I'm a member of Portland's Democratic Socialists of America, or DSA for short. I've been active in the protest the past three months and was recently arrested on Saturday night, or night 100, as I like to call it, along with a few other members.

So, since the beginning, I've seen the evolution of the protests from the early Justice Center days to the federal occupation and to the recent actions we have now. The police response between all them has not fundamentally changed at all.

As of Saturday night, we saw still being used extreme amounts of tear gas in residential neighborhoods and mass arrests. I think it was probably one of the highest, with 59. There have been various injunctions. And, now the mayor is banning the use of tear gas by Portland Police Bureau.

But every single time they've kind of skirted around it, either by bringing in federally deputized state troops or declaring riots for very little infractions. So, they're able to use these weapons of terror against us. And, already they've already had an announcement today that they're going to use more force in response to Ted Wheeler's banning of CS gas.

This has led to a randomness in police response and charges.

Some nights the police are typically hands off, but others are met with threats and immediate orders to disperse when you haven't even left the park yet.

On Saturday night, my group was complying with orders to disperse when they charged at us so violently, tackled us to the ground, and arrested us. One of my fellow members was bloodied and he needed medical attention to this head.

We all received different charges, and it seemed to be based on whatever agency was arresting us. They had OSP, they had the sheriffs, they had Portland Police Bureau, and each of us just received different charges, and there wasn't any rhyme or reason to it. And, that usually happens most nights.

Most of the charges, for all those arrests were those the DA already announced that they would not prosecute. This shows it's not about enforcing laws, but suppressing our voices asking for their own accountability.

It's a very traumatic experience to be arrested, even if you know, your charges may not be pursued. Every night, we go out we have to prepare for the worst, because there is no consistency to the response.

I remember at the sheriff's office on 47th and Burnside a few... it was a week ago. It was a couple hours in. It was very good energy. The police were mostly hands off. They never really appeared at all. We just got done listening to an artist singing a song. It was a very nice time. And then, out of nowhere, while we're slightly distracted there's 20/30 cops in riot gear, rushed out and tried to grab anyone they could.

Luckily, it was only one or two. Sadly, they still got a few people, but it's... it just kind of shows... they could have done nothing. They could have just let it happen. There was really... there's no reason for them to rush out. I was already deciding I was going to head home, some people already starting to trickle out, but all it really did was anger us and energize us more to stay longer.

Link to video: https://youtu.be/N4P4I_rewxg

Subtitle file: FedPowerGrab-CLay Adkerson-DSA.srt

The nightly... there's quote... “nightly violence” would stop if they just, if they just didn't show up because they're the perpetrators of it.

This is just a drop compared to the violence and harassment done by law enforcement to our communities, especially to our BIPOC folk, and these officers must be held accountable in all situations. They can no longer own the streets, and we must make sure they don't act with impunity any longer.