

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Frank Meeink. I am a former White Supremacist Neo Nazi gang member. After I was sentenced to 3 years in prison, I left the skinhead movement with the antibodies to the virus of hate. I have spent the last 25 years speaking out against racism. I have conducted hate crime trainings for police officers, FBI and homeland security agents. I volunteered with the Des Moines Police Department as an announcer at an annual fundraising hockey game.

I am now an activist for the Black Lives Matter movement. Black lives matter.

I have spoken out about the fact that white supremacist leaders encourage their followers to join the police force as a means to cause harm to people of color. I was there when it was said. I was in the room where it happened.

I am here to bear witness to my own experience.

I grew in a lower-middle class, tough Irish neighborhood in South Philadelphia. I had a mother who had a drug habit, and an abusive stepfather. I **feared** going home so much, that some days I tried to get hit by a car.

At the age of 13, I was kicked out of my mom's home, and made to move in with my dad, who lived in a mixed and very rough neighborhood in Southwest Philadelphia. I was the new kid, a skinny punk rock white boy at an all-Black middle school. This is where the fear turned to hate.

That summer, I went up to visit my cousin in Lancaster County. This is Amish Country, although my family was not Amish. And I promise you, there are no Amish neo Nazis. I thought my cousin and his friends were so cool. They were older and they were neo Nazis. I would hear them make racist comments, even though they'd never spent any time with Black people. When they heard where I went to school, I became the urban, inner-city expert. I began to feel like I mattered.

The day that I decided to join their movement was the day I saw other people **fear** my new group of friends. I saw them as powerful. Up until that point, I might have been a teenager, but in reality I was a 7 year old scared little boy who feared everything. I feared my parents, my stepparents, my school, and I feared I wasn't going to have enough food to eat.

I wanted people to fear me. So I became a member of the neo nazi movement. I got a swastika tattooed on my neck to prove my undying loyalty. I joined this movement for survival, which made me grasp onto every word that was said in the room. And here's what I heard.

In 1991, I attended a meeting run by the White Student Union at Temple University. This was a monthly meeting of about 15-20 members. They were college guys, so they were career minded. They would say to us that we need to grow out our hair, stop getting tattoos, and get ready to go into the military or police. Two people who attended that meeting became cops.

That same year, I attended a small meeting in Baltimore, run by the National Socialist Movement and a group called SS Action. I heard the same rhetoric there. They told us to join law enforcement, so that we can give Blacks felonies. So that they wouldn't be able to legally arm themselves. So that they wouldn't be able to vote.

Later in Lehigh County, PA, I attended a Hitler birthday party put on by the Christian Posse Comitatus. At the party, Mark Thomas talked to us about how he is happy with our numbers – we had a lot of members. But he thought we were too rowdy. He said we needed to chill out, get rid of our tattoos, and be better soldiers for the movement.

Mark Thomas held a bible study regularly. We would all gather inside the military tent he had in his back yard. We would read the bible, shoot some guns, and prepare to destroy Sodom and Gomora. This experience was meant to militarize us and push us to gain more professional training in law enforcement.

In 1992, I attended a meeting of about 100 people in Montgomery, AL. This meeting was run by the Aryan Youth Front, where Bill Riccio urged us to join the military where we could get real training.

Late in 1992, I went to Aryan Fest in a desert town in California. At the time, I still had a big swastika tattoo on my neck. Many people made comments about me needing to get rid of it, and grow out my hair, because we needed all our people to join the military and police.

The fact that many of these neo Nazis became cops, means there is something not right with the screening process in law enforcement. And I believe it's possible to fix it.

I hope that by speaking out today, we can at least start stitching this wound in America, and not just put on a bandaid on it. Breonna Taylor matters and black lives matter. Thank you.