What I do ask you, almost every single day, is to not wear your hood on your sweatshirt. Oh.

People perceive differently if they see you and your hooded sweatshirt versus your brother in your hooded sweatshirt. You know, you’ve told me that you’ve been followed in the Safeway up there, right? Yeah.

So, you know, so both the kids go up to Safeway to go grocery shopping. Do you get followed at Safeway?

I haven’t noticed it.

You haven’t noticed it?

That’s probably no.

Are you worried about your brother? Yeah.

I just don’t want him to get hurt because of the way that he looks, because he’s my brother.

I thought that we were prepared to parent children of color but I remember that the very first thing that really rocked our world was Trayvon Martin. Because I remember that photo that was released of him in his hoodie it looked so much like you, and we took you kids to the march here in Seattle. And that just rocked my world. That could have been you guys.

I’m Trayvon! I’m Trayvon!

I was adopted when I was two days old.

We just wanted a baby that would be healthy that could be ours legally and we didn’t care about skin color.

When I was four years old, we adopted my younger sister Maya from a different biological family. She is my sister just like my parents are my parents. I never really had the ability to distinguish my skin color and how my skin color was different from other folks around me even my parents.

When you’re Caucasian parents, you may go into it thinking on some level that, you understand the concept of colorblindness and superficially we were terrific. I mean, we knew that it would be good to have a name identity, that they could relate to being black.

Alex was named after Alex English, an amazing Denver Nuggets basketball player who is also a poet. And Maya was named after Maya Angelou. And we joined a group for transracial adoptions and we bought the right kind of books and with black characters, but we didn’t understand what it’s like to be black in America, what it’s like to grow up in a transracial family. I didn’t understand about race. I was totally naive.

My name is Alex Landau and I appreciate everybody coming out here this evening. I also am very thankful to be here. I am a human rights activist. I’m a community member in the Denver metropolitan area. I am a survivor of extreme police abuse. I didn’t even fully understand their capabilities.

I assumed, being out of handcuffs, that I could have an interaction with these law enforcement officers who are searching through my 84 Lincoln Town car. And to give you a description, if you’ve seen the Godfather, it would be what some people might consider a mobster mobile, very old, very big body.

I asked if I could see a warrant before they continued searching my car. However, these officers immediately became irate and began to punch me in the face. It’s like right in this area, facing underneath my car and I could just feel the gun pressed to the side of my head. And then, when I regained consciousness, they rolled me out by my ankles and drugged me across the grass. And then let me bleed on an officer’s jacket until the paramedics arrived.

I almost bled out on the way to the hospital because I went into hemorrhagic shock. And so, after the photos were taken, I received 45 stitches. I was treated for a broken nose, diagnosed with a concussion and later with a brain injury.

I want you to know that, like, it affects me all the time. But me, as a person, it’s hard for me to fully come up with the words to just say I’m so sorry for what you went through and I should be more vocal and I’m learning how to do that. I’m learning how to be more outspoken.

Where I had to do after the assault was to begin to talk about it and to fight for Alex. And by fighting and speaking out, I began to lose friends and immediate family members that I would talk about this stuff. But it’s been worth it, because that’s what you do. If you don’t talk, then you’re complicit. If you don’t fight racism, then you are complicit.

It’s made me colder and it’s made me bitter. There is a part of me that has been permanently altered. I’m a different person because of that night and it totally changed the trajectory of my life.