

Our View: We all matter, but ...

Lee Rozen, Moscow-Pullman Daily News

View a video of a black man lying flat on the ground holding his hands in the air and pleading for his life and the life of the autistic Hispanic man next to him - and then being shot and wounded from some distance by a police officer.

Watch another video of a black man, shot by an officer and bleeding to death in the driver's seat of his car, while an officer holds a gun on him, his girlfriend and their child as they wait for an ambulance. Other officers stand a distance away.

We desperately want to believe that neither of those videos could have been shot in Whitman or Latah county. We want to believe that there is no community here in which police officers could become so callous toward residents' safety.

Even if there were such a community, we want to believe that our officers, deputies and troopers are so well trained and caring they would try harder to control the scene without shooting and would act as soon as it is safe to help anyone who has been shot. That didn't happen in those two videos.

We don't know what was going on outside the frame shown by the videos. Maybe there was more hostility against the police than the videos ever showed. Maybe there was no more than one officer at the scene immediately, although that seems unlikely. Neither would justify why shots were fired in the first place.

Still, those two videos, and the many more online, give one a visceral feel for why the young black community feels a need to remind the nation that "black lives matter."

Those uncomfortable with admitting to themselves that there is a race problem in the country or in themselves, counter with slogans like "white lives matter," "all lives matter" and "cop lives matter."

Well, of course, they do. That's obvious.

Yet, these reactionary sloganeers ignore the word missing from "black lives matter," a word left out because it might make the phrase sound weak or pleading. It is "too." Black lives matter, too.

The black community, or any minority community, is not pleading with police, prosecutors, judges or politicians that their lives matter more, or that only their lives matter.

Have some forgotten that their lives, our lives, matter at all?