

# Chicago Native Explains Why He's 'Leaving and Never Coming Back'

Brandon Vezmar grew up in Chicago. As a teen from Hammond, he'd escape to the city "every chance I could get," he said. He later attended college there.

But the last eight months have spoiled the city for Vezmar, [he writes](#) in an op-ed in the *Chicago Tribune*.

*The caustic combination of corrupt politicians with nothing but contempt for the public; a police force so broken down in spirit it visibly resents interaction with even law-abiding citizens; a criminal underclass empowered by the incessant drone of liberal rhetoric wandering the streets posing clear and present danger to everyone around them; and the enablers, who are everywhere, to say nothing of the ugly, decaying infrastructure, poor economy and joyless entertainment and leisure opportunities – it is for these reasons I have made the decision to disconnect forever.*

Vezmar, you see, had spent the last few years in the inland Northwest and Texas. He returned last year to be with his cancer-stricken mother.

During that time, he says, he has been the victim of two thefts and an assault on Michigan Avenue. He has endured numerous episodes of public harassment and lectures on white privilege from "Cook County's soda-taxer in chief." But what finally put him over the edge was the recent torture inflicted on a young man with special needs, an event livestreamed on Facebook.

Vezmar said he no longer recognizes the city he grew up in.

He's moving on.

We've written at length about the dysfunction in Chicago, one of America's most beloved and iconic cities. The [soaring murder rate](#). The [breakdown of the family](#). The [bad policy](#). The [collapse](#) of its public school system.

In light of these systemic problems, it's no surprise to see people such as Vezmar giving up on the city. (I can think of few circumstances in which I'd want to live there, and I wouldn't dream of raising a family in most parts of the city.)

Still, it's tragic to see native Chicagoans leaving. And, if more people decide they've had enough, it could have dire consequences.

My fear is that the worsening conditions could result in mass flight from the city. Such a scenario could result in the city experiencing one of those frightening "tipping points," the term Malcom Gladwell coined that describes sudden and profound social and economic changes or trends. If a tipping point is reached, a trickle of residents leaving could quickly become a flood. Such an event would cripple the city's tax base and leave it unable to sustain its already teetering public infrastructure.

Can Chicago still be saved? If so, what is the best antidote to the struggles the city is facing?

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