

## **The Ugly Truth vs. the Big Lie: The Difference between BLM and Capitol Rioters**

by Nick Gier

*Peaceful protestors should be protected  
and arsonists and anarchists should be prosecuted.*

—Joe Biden (7/30/20)

*People not affiliated with the protests are creating havoc on the streets.*

—Minneapolis activist Mike Griffin

*The Capitol is not a liquor store.*

—Rabbi Yosie Levine

At the beginning of the Black Lives Matter protests, I was dismayed that some BLM leaders were saying that rioting was justified. This incendiary declaration from New York City's BLM leader Hank Newsome was most unfortunate: "If this country doesn't give us what we want, then we will burn down this system and replace it."

### **MLK Condemned Rioting**

What troubled me even more was misquoting Martin Luther King to condone violence. In a 1967 speech "The Other America," King made his position crystal clear: "Let me say, as I've always said, that riots are socially destructive and self-defeating." He also declared: "I will continue to condemn riots, and continue to say to my brothers and sisters that this is not the way."

BLM leaders argued that the hundreds of police shootings and the insidious persistence of racial discrimination justified these actions. These same excuses were offered to King 60 years ago, but he bravely adhered to what he learned from the non-violent teachings of Gandhi and Christ.

### **Democratic Leaders Reject Violence**

To their credit Democratic Party leaders have condemned the rioting. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi warned: "Our democracy has no room for inciting violence or endangering the public, no matter the ideology of those who commit such acts."

Black leader Rep. James Clyburn explained: "Peaceful protest is our game. Violence is their game. This looting and rioting, that's their game." At the time President Joe Biden said that "protesting police brutality is right and necessary and the American response. But burning down communities and needless destruction is not."

### **Kamala Harris and Minnesota Bail**

For hundreds of years there have been charitable organizations that have paid bail for those accused of crimes, particularly those from the lower classes. The Minnesota Freedom Fund is part of this long tradition, and it is committed to the elimination of cash bail because of

its devastating discriminatory effects. Those well off buy their freedom, but the poor remain in jail.

With contributions coming in from around the world because of the Georg Floyd murder, the MFF has paid bail for some of those arrested in the Minneapolis BLM protests. At that time Vice-President Kamala Harris joined celebrities such as the Black Madonna in contributing to this fund.

Sen. Tom Cotton has charged that some of those released with MFF aid have gone on to commit more crimes. Fact checkers at *The Washington Post* have concluded that this claim is false. Furthermore, only 8 percent of those cited in the protests had to post bail.

### **BLM and Capitol Rioting Equivalent?**

Republicans are now pointing to infractions associated with BLM, and crying “they did it too” as an answer to the Capitol insurrection. By condoning violence, BLM leaders have lost the moral high ground that King always preserved. Trump did not call off the Capitol rioters, but neither did, as far as I know, BLM’s Newsome.

It is true that there were white nationalists marching under BLM banners setting fires and breaking windows. For example, Richmond, VA’s Mayor Levar Stoney announced that “that white supremacists marching under the banner of Black Lives Matter had spearheaded the violence.” On the other hand, they were not the main instigators of weeks of rioting in Portland.

Largest civil rights movement in American history has been marred by violence, and one poll showed a 9 percent drop in approval for BLM—from 61 to 52 percent. That difference pales into insignificance when we learn that only 19 percent of those polled approved of the Capitol insurrection, and 58 percent blame Trump.

### **Ugly Truth vs. Big Lie**

I submit that the difference in response is a recognition that BLM was fighting the Ugly Truth of systemic racism and police brutality versus Donald Trump perpetrating the Big Lie about election fraud that led to an attack on the seat of our democracy. Wide-spread burnings and window breaking are certainly criminal, but, as New York Rabbi Yosie Levine tweeted: “The Capitol is not a liquor store.”

One commentator put it this way: “the two events were fundamentally different. One was an intentional, direct attack on a hallowed democratic institution, with the goal of overturning a fair and free election. The other was a coast-to-coast protest movement demanding an end to systemic racism that occasionally, but not frequently, turned violent.”

### **275 to 1: Right vs. Left Murders**

Since 1994, the largest number of domestic terrorist attacks have come from the far right. According to a report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, two-thirds of the attacks came in 2019 and an alarming 90 percent in 2020. Over the past decade 275 deaths have been attributed to the far right, but only one murder, which happened during the Portland protests, was committed by an anti-fascist.

## **Antifa Not at Capitol**

Although 70 percent of Republicans believe that Antifa was involved in the insurrection, this claim is demonstrably false. *Newsweek* fact checkers have concluded that John Sullivan, the one suspected anti-fascist, was not “a member of Antifa, Black Lives Matter, or any other left-leaning group.”

It is significant that GOP leader Kevin McCarthy stated: “There is absolutely no evidence of Antifa’s presence.” One of Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene’s associates and Capitol insurrectionist Anthony Aguero said: “We were all there. It was not Antifa and it was not BLM. It was Trump supporters that did that yesterday. I’m the first to admit it, being one myself.”

White nationalists infiltrated BLM protests, but no left-wingers were at the Capitol that day. Furthermore, six Capitol policemen were suspended and 29 others are under investigation for enabling the rioters. White nationalists within our police forces are a serious problem.

## **Bias in Police Response?**

Some off-duty police marched peacefully with BLM, but most of those on duty were in riot gear and pushed back the protesters with force. The chaos at Lafayette Square was a shocking example of this, complete with helicopter harassment. Even though there was intelligence that the pro-Trump mob would be violent, why was the Capitol police not ready for them?

Civil rights leaders are rightly worried that there must have been a biased assumption that led to white demonstrators being given an easy pass. During the BLM protests in Washington, D.C., the Capitol and other sites were heavily guarded, but not so on January 6.

## **Trump Sued under KKK Law**

Race-baiting Donald Trump and his rogue attorney Rudy Giuliani are being sued under the 1871 “Klu Klux Kan” law, which criminalizes anyone who uses “force, intimidation, or threat” to prevent people from performing the duties of their office. It is only proper that a law aimed at the most vicious form of racism is being used against a person who invited racists and neo-Nazis to storm the Capitol of the United States of America.

Nick Gier of Moscow taught philosophy at the University of Idaho for 31 years. He is a long-time member of the Latah County Human Rights Force. Read his articles on civil rights at [webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/CivilRights.htm](http://webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/CivilRights.htm), and read from his book on Gandhi at [same/VNV.htm](http://same/VNV.htm). Email him at [ngier006@gmail.com](mailto:ngier006@gmail.com).