

# #1364 Fundamentalist-Driven Sectarian Violence (And I am Not Talking About a Foreign Country)

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast, in which we shall learn about the protests and counter-protests roiling the nation and recognize the conspiracy-laden fundamentalism of the far right that is fueling the violence. Clips today come from Counterspin, Last Week Tonight, Democracy Now, The Young Turks, The Muckrake Podcast, and The Real News.

## Marjorie Cohn on Portland Secret Police - CounterSpin - Air Date 7-24-20

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** As we record this show on July 23rd, demonstrations in Portland, Oregon show no signs of slowing. Protesters demanding an end to racist policing in the wake of, and even before George Floyd's murder, had been met with what local activists described as typical from Portland's police department, the indiscriminate firing of tear gas and other munitions into peaceful crowds, flash bang grenades, beatings with batons.

But then came the footage; a man dressed in black stands apparently alone on a darkened sidewalk when two heavily armed men in camouflage walk up on him, hustle him off into an unmarked van and drive off, refusing to identify themselves to observers. We've since learned this is part of an orchestrated effort by the Trump Administration to deploy federal law enforcement agents to deal SWAT-style with what they call violent anarchists. What's more, they plan to replay those nightmarish scenes from Portland wherever they see fit. As acting Homeland Security chief Chad Wolf says, "I don't need invitations." Wolf also subsequently described federal agents as arresting demonstrators proactively.

Alarm seems appropriate. Here to help us think about what we're seeing is author and legal scholar Marjorie Cohn. She's professor emerita at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and a former president of the National Lawyers Guild. She joins us now by phone from San Diego. Welcome back to Counterspin, Marjorie Cohn.

**MARJORIE COHN:** Thanks for having me, Janine.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** Well, these streets pickups -- when you first see it you think it's a movie -- as I understand it, the line is that these federal agents see someone, not necessarily anyone they've seen commit a crime, they say they want to talk to that person, have a consensual conversation with them, and then they, the agents, fear for their own safety, so, they decide they want to have that conversation elsewhere, like the Courthouse. And then, Oh, you're free to go. This wasn't even an arrest at all. Is that legal or constitutional?

**MARJORIE COHN:** No, it's not. In order to have a legal arrest, you need probable cause to believe that the person committed a crime, and these snatches by unidentified federal officials in unmarked vehicles, snatching peaceful protesters off the streets, transporting

them to unknown locations without informing them of why they're being arrested and later releasing them with no record of their arrest violates the law.

And this proactive arrest that the Department of Homeland Security is intending to carry out violates the Fourth Amendment, which requires that, as I said, an arrest to be supported by probable cause. This reminds me of the movie *Minority Report* where they're trying to predict who's going to commit a crime. There is nothing in the law that allows proactive arrests.

There have been lawsuits filed, and they basically allege violations of the First Amendment freedom of speech and press, the Fourth Amendment prohibition of unreasonable searches and seizures, the Fifth Amendment right to due process and the Tenth Amendment which says that powers not delegated to the feds are reserved to the states. And this is what is being litigated now.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** One attorney, Juan Chavez, with the Oregon Justice Resource Center said it's like stop and frisk meets Guantanamo Bay. Well, federal law enforcement [is] permitted to go into states to protect federal property like courthouses and to prosecute federal crimes. But policing protests, you know, just at the letter of the law, goes beyond that function.

**MARJORIE COHN:** Yes, it certainly does, and, in fact, a lawsuit that was filed yesterday -- no, actually, two days ago -- on behalf of the First Unitarian Church of Portland, a public benefit corporation, and two Oregon State Representatives allege a violation of the Tenth Amendment and says that these abductions occurred outside the jurisdiction of federal law enforcement, those abducted we're not attacking federal property or personnel and they weren't on federal property at the time that they were abducted.

The ostensible or the stated reason for these federal goons to go into Portland and other cities as well, which is happening as we speak, is to protect federal monuments and statues. Trump issued an executive order on June the 26th saying that his federal forces were going to protect these monument. And there's no monuments around where they were.

Mark Pettibone, who is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed by the Oregon Department of Justice against Homeland Security and the US Marshals, was accosted -- he was one of these people who was snatched off the street and then released without any citation -- he was taken in this unmarked van to a federal courthouse, the Marco Hatfield, US Courthouse.

And actually, neither the Mayor of Portland nor the Governor of Oregon invited or welcomed these federal troops. And last night, it's my understanding, that the Portland Mayor was teargassed when he was standing near this courthouse doing nothing. He was standing there. And he was his first time he'd ever been teargassed.

So, they're just going way beyond any legal authority that they might have, and mayors in other cities as well, who are on Trump's hit list, I guess you would say, are also saying we don't want federal troops in our cities. Now, these mayors often welcome federal assistance when they're working cooperatively in drug enforcement or other kinds of criminal enforcement, but this goes way beyond that.

And it's calculated by Trump to boost his sagging poll numbers. He's taking a page out of Richard Nixon's law-and-order playbook because he's so botched the response to the coronavirus, in fact, responsible for thousands of deaths when he's been in denial about it, and actually stood in the way of really responding in an effective way.

So, now he is trying to shift the conversation, shift the discourse to anarchists, violent anarchists, left wingers, Joe Biden would be behind this, and he's going to come in on his white horse with his federal troops and take care of it and restore law and order. But in effect, he's breaking the law. His troops are breaking the law and creating chaos.

You know, it's interesting, Janine, because why didn't he send in the military? I think there's a reason why he sent in Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection troops. They're loyal. They're also not trained for this kind of thing, either, even if they were legally allowed to be in these cities.

But the Uniform Code of Military Justice provides that service members must obey lawful orders, but they have a duty to disobey unlawful orders. And these people, these troops, this secret military force that Trump has been sending into these cities, or sent into Portland -- and Chicago is next on the list and Albuquerque -- these could be reasonably construed as unlawful orders, orders to carry out unlawful actions. And I think it's not altogether unlikely that he's worried that military people would resist those orders refuse to carry them out. And maybe that's why he has cobbled together this secret paramilitary militia. It has been the Customs and Border Protection, US Marshals, Federal Protective Service, and now they're going to add the FBI, the ATF, The Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms drug enforcement agency to this list of federal agencies.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** Well, I can see the worry about maybe not using the military because, as you've written about, there was military official pushback after his photo-op thing where he used military officials to clear out the space in front of the church, and there was some indication that, you know, we're not going to necessarily have your back.

Now, I did though want to say, yeah, so, we're bringing in this cobbled-together force that includes Customs and Border Patrol, maybe some of them now deputized into this kind of vague federal protective service, and these people, as you mentioned, aren't trained to do crowd control, much less trained to do the kind of deescalation that would be necessary to protect a protest that is against police. But what those folks do have a history of, what they do have training in, is rolling up on people and taking them away in vans when those people's crime is being undocumented. And that's something that people are reminding that not only should we be careful about saying these tactics aren't American since the US has done and is doing them in other places, but we also shouldn't say that this has never happened here before, because that's not really true, either.

**MARJORIE COHN:** Well, it hasn't happened in this kind of a setting in this way.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** Right.

**MARJORIE COHN:** But you're right. The Customs and Border Protection agencies are notoriously -- I'm not saying every single one of them -- but notoriously racist, anti-immigrant, nativist and very brutal and violent when they are supposedly enforcing the

immigration laws. They kill people, deny them of their rights, and you're right. They're absolutely not trained in crowd control, which is not in their purview, anyway. They have no right to be in the middle of Portland doing crowd control where they're stated authority is to protect federal monuments. They've gone way beyond the purview, and they are actually saying that they're enforcing the law where it's really the purview of the state authorities to be enforcing state law. And, unfortunately, I think we're going to see this expand and escalate throughout the country as Trump gets more and more desperate to elevate his falling poll numbers.

**JANINE JACKSON - HOST, COUNTERSPIN:** Right. Well, and speaking of context, I mean, there is something, I agree, especially eerie and frightening about this bundling people into vans, seeing footage. And it's true that we had seen it in the past sometimes with undocumented immigrants, including people kind of forming bands around them to protect them from being hustled off. But the thing is we don't want that to be so -- while it's especially horrible -- we don't want that to be because we've become numb to images of demonstrators being shot with munitions, being beaten with batons, being tear gassed. And you wrote earlier this month, I saw it on Truth Out, about we're not just seeing videos of extremely rare, nearly unique instances. There really is a widespread problem of police abuse of protestors going on.

**MARJORIE COHN:** Yes, there is. And I think it's going to get worse. You know, when you think of the image of people being snatched off the streets -- peaceful protesters doing nothing illegal -- being snatched off the streets by people that aren't wearing uniforms and placed into vans.

This reminds me of the dictatorships in Latin America that were supported by the United States, which "disappeared" people. It was called disappearing people, and they would do it in broad daylight, snatch them just like this and put them in a van, and many of them were never heard of, since many of them were killed. This is kidnapping. And they did it in broad daylight to send a message to other people that if you don't do what we want you to do, this will happen to you, as well.

You know, in the Department of Justice, the Oregon Department of Justice's lawsuit against Homeland Security and the US Marshals, they wrote, ordinarily a person exercising his right to walk through the streets of Portland, who is confronted by anonymous men in military-type fatigues and ordered into an unmarked van, can reasonably assume that he's being kidnapped and is a victim of a crime, and kidnapping by a militia and other malfeasants dressed in paramilitary gear would trigger the lawful right of self-defense. So, what they're doing is setting up a situation where people think they're going to be kidnapped and would fight back. And if they're armed, they could use weapons and this could lead to killing, it could lead right to a horrible situation. This is kidnapping pure and simple, no probable cause for these arrests.

## **Kenosha - Last Week Tonight with John Oliver - Air Date 08-30-20**

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Actually, it brings us to the second part of our story this week: what happened in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where, to reiterate, Jacob Blake was

shot seven times in the back by police, with three of his children in the car. And then in the protests that followed, Kyle Rittenhouse, a 17-year-old who traveled there from out of state, and was illegally carrying a weapon, killed two people. And look, I don't know if he saw the McCloskeys speak the night before he chose to drive to a city he didn't live in to defend property he didn't own. What I do know is that he was an avid Trump supporter, even sitting front row at a rally back in January. And Trump and his media ecosystem have been delivering essentially the same message as the McCloskeys for years now.

Just look at how quickly Tucker Carlson moved to try and explain away Rittenhouse's actions as a natural response.

**TUCKER CARLSON:** So are we really surprised that looting and arson accelerated to murder? How shocked are we that 17-year-olds with rifles decided they had to maintain order when no one else would?

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Well, you don't seem to be shocked and that alone should actually be pretty fucking shocking.

'Cause let's be clear: a 17-year-old vigilante with a rifle cannot maintain order because a 17-year-old vigilante with a rifle trying to maintain order is himself the definition of disorder. Except of course, if you're a regular viewer of Tucker Carlson, they show that exist to teach its views, precisely three things: property damage is violence, homicide is order, and pillows are for sale.

And the events in Kenosha really hammer home the flagrant double standard baked into American society. Just look at the difference in how the police in Kenosha responded to Blake and how they responded to Rittenhouse:

**REPORTER:** Alleged gunman Kyle Rittenhouse, walking away, gun in tow, as people scream that he just shot protestors. One law enforcement officer seeming to ask Rittenhouse if anyone was hurt. ["Someone injured straight ahead?"] Two incidents, two videos with some asking why two different responses?

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Why two different responses? I think the answer to that is pretty obvious. It's the same reason why ahead of the shooting, there was video of the police trying to enforce a curfew against protesters even as they offered water to Rittenhouse and the militia saying, and I quote, "we appreciate you guys. We really do." And if you're looking for a better visual illustration of the differences between being black and white in America, I don't think you're going to find one except maybe forcing exactly who sits down and who stands up when "Cotton Eye Joe" comes on in a wedding.

And that disparity in treatment continued even after the shootings. Just watch how the next day the Kenosha police chief couldn't help but spread blame to the protesters who were shot at and killed.

**POLICE CHIEF DANIEL MISKINIS:** Everybody involved was out after the curfew. I'm not going to make a great deal of that. But the point is the curfew's in place to protect. Had persons not been out involved in violation of that, perhaps the situation that unfolded would not have happened.

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** OK. First of all, thanks so much for not making a great deal out of that. The people who got murdered were up way past their government-imposed bedtime, and you were nice enough not to even mention it except to imply that maybe it was a reason they kind of had it coming. And that is the kind of restraint that we've all now come to expect from the Kenosha police department.

And you might think, well, hold on. That's just one guy. Surely not all law enforcement there thinks that way. Although I will point out to you that the guy standing next to him is the Kenosha sheriff who, just two years ago, gave a pretty striking press conference. A group of five young black people had allegedly stolen some clothing from an outlet mall, and it led police on a chase that ended in a minor car accident. And in that press conference, he expressed some views that are pretty explicit:

**SHERIFF DAVID BETH:** Let's put them in jail. Let's, let's stop them from truly, at least some of these males going out and getting 10 other women pregnant and having small children. Let's put them away. At some point we have to stop being politically correct.

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Sorry. Can I quickly interrupt you there? Because calling for American citizens to be stopped from having small children, isn't politically incorrect so much as politically 1940s Germany. And he wasn't just idly saying that; he'd really thought through a whole plan and I know it is deeply unpleasant. But honestly it is worth listening to just how detailed his solution was.

**SHERIFF DAVID BETH:** If there's a threshold that they cross, these people have to be warehoused, no recreational time in the jails, we put them away. And maybe we got to do is build warehouses that after this generation is gone, they've perished in these buildings. We can turn them into something else. Maybe it'd be malls, maybe, maybe a, um, Amazon will buy him as his warehouses later. But at some point we have to get rid of this group of people. We have to lock them up. I don't think I'm saying anything different than most people in society aren't thinking, but they're afraid to say it. And I'm just to the point that I'm saying it.

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Okay. If that is what most people in society are thinking, then we are, and this is true, a terrible society. And I honestly cannot believe that that was an idea from a still-employed sheriff and not a pitch from Shark Tank, Light's Genocide Edition. Good question there, Mark Cuban. Ah, the answer is these concentration camps could easily be converted into Amazon warehouses. Ooh, looks like I've got a bidding war on my hands.

And look, the events in Kenosha would be infuriating at any time, but it's somehow especially infuriating that they took place in the same week where the RNC was desperate to reassure the country that America isn't racist while simultaneously fear-mongering about violent crime threatening law-abiding citizens. It was a disconnect that was pretty well summed up by NBA coach, Doc Rivers in an emotional post-game press conference on Tuesday.

**DOC RIVERS:** What stands out to me is, um, just, just watching the Republican revenge convention and this they're spewing this fear, right? Like, Oh, you hear Donald Trump, and all of them talking about fear. We're the ones getting killed. We're the ones getting shot. We're the ones that were denied to live in certain communities. Um, we've been hung. We've been

shot... and [long pause] all you do is keep hearing of fear. It's... it's amazing why we keep loving this country and this country does not love us back.

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Yeah, exactly. It's all exhaustingly depressing. Although in a week of incredible darkness, there was actually a bright spot, because shortly after Doc Rivers spoke there, something genuinely extraordinary started to happen in his sport. The Milwaukee Bucks had a playoff game, but didn't take the court with rumors started to fly around that they were about to refuse to play. Then, WNBA players who, incidentally, have led from the start on the Black Lives Matter movement, also refused to play after arriving at a scheduled game with shirts with seven bullet holes drawn on their back. And eventually wildcat strikes spread throughout both leagues in an unprecedented and genuinely inspiring show of collective action.

And they did this without union approval. So they were putting a lot on the line here, their income, and maybe even their careers, which is what makes it so infuriating that when Jared Kushner was asked for his response to the strike, this is what fell out of his mouth.

**JARED KUSHNER:** Look, I think the NBA players are very fortunate that they have the financial position where they're able to take a night off from work without having to, to have the consequences to themselves financially. So they have that luxury, which is great.

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Okay. First get fucked, Jared, you Welcome to Marwen reject. 'Cause for a start, they're not taking a night off from work. The emotional toll of being Black in America, combined with the pressure to perform at an elite level during a global pandemic, is, I'm guessing, pretty taxing.

So by not playing, they're not exactly taking a spa day. And if NBA players are too rich to take meaningful action, then who exactly is in the right tax bracket to have their protest approved for America's most laminated prince? Because we've seen time and time again, that wealth and fame absolutely do not protect you as a black athlete. It didn't protect Sterling Brown from getting tased by the police, after being stopped for a parking violation in Milwaukee. And it didn't protect Thabo Sefolosha from having his leg broken by NYPD officers in an incident that forced him to miss the 2015 playoffs and put his whole career in jeopardy. And you might want to strap in Jared. Because there's probably isn't the last disruptive action like this, that we're going to see going forward. Nor should it be. 'Cause people are sick of waiting. Just listen to Jacob Blake's sister, Letetra Widman, making that very clear.

**LETETRA WIDMAN, JACOB BLAKE'S SISTER:** I'm not sad. I'm not sorry. I'm angry. And I'm tired. I haven't cried one time. I stopped crying years ago. I am numb. I have been watching police murder people that look like me for years. I'm not sad. I don't want your pity. I want change.

**JOHN OLIVER - HOST, LAST WEEK TONIGHT:** Right. This can't be about pity. It can't be about sympathy. That is why there is no section in greeting card stores labeled, "centuries of oppression." This isn't about what white people feel or say. This has to be about creating real change in a system that has been built to be non-responsive because history has repeatedly shown us the system does not respond until it is forced to. So it's easy for RNC speakers to insist that the only appropriate action is peaceful and unobtrusive. But the fact is that's just not how it works. Thousands of people marched in the wake of George Floyd's death and have continued marching, even as media coverage has steadily drifted away.

Meanwhile, the NBA has made a lot of symbolic gestures of support for the movement like painting Black Lives Matter on the court and allowing players to wear a social justice message on their jerseys selected, by the way, from a list of 29 agreed-upon options.

But to underscore just how limiting that kind of preapproved protest can be, "Say Her Name" was on the list, but Brianna Taylor was not. And I guess the only positive thing there is that if players wanted to protest that particular restriction, the NBA had a Jersey ready-made for them. The problem with purely symbolic protest is that it's far too easy to co-opt. And there might actually be no more visceral example of that than the fact that that Kenosha sheriff and human warehousing innovator got positive attention earlier this year, when he kneeled for nine minutes in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. So, is it any wonder the basketball players felt they had to escalate their protest by not just wearing a Jersey, but by striking and in doing so, putting team owners' money at jeopardy because real discomfort is the only thing that's going to bring about real change here.

And it's worth noting that already the strike has had some effect. Not only did it spread to other sports and other athletes. But the NBA players now have a promise from owners to convert as many of their arenas as possible into polling places this November, which is great. Although it also brings us to the fact the simply voting this November is clearly not going to be nearly enough. Because as much as I or the RNC would like to believe that Joe Biden will be an agent of radical change, there's just no reason to believe that.

To the extent that real change is possible through the ballot box this year, it will only be if Biden is elected alongside progressive candidates all the way down the ballot from the Senate to state legislatures, to city councils, to sheriffs. And even that will be very much a beginning and not an end.

## **Trump Attacks Anti-Fascists But Is Silent on Boogaloo & Far-Right Groups Engaged in Deadly Violence - Democracy Now! - Air Date 6-23-20**

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** I want to bring in Cassie Miller, senior research analyst at the Southern Poverty Law Center, to talk about this other arrest that recently took place. Again, Trump has not tweeted about any of these, and this is about another active member of the military, arrested last week for killing two law enforcement officials in California, with ties to the far-right Boogaloo movement. Can you talk about who you understand Staff Sergeant Steven Carrillo is, what happened in Santa Cruz and Oakland, and what is Boogaloo?

**CASSIE MILLER:** Sure. We know that he is a staff Sergeant in the military, and that this was one, of, sort of just one violent plot that we've seen from the Boogaloo movement.

Carrillo went to a federal courthouse and opened fire on two security officers, killing one of them. And then when law enforcement tracked a van used in that attack to his residence, he ambushed those law enforcement officers and killed another. What we know is that he is connected to the Boogaloo movement from his online footprint and from things that were found on the crime scene, like a Boogaloo patch that was found in his van.



The Boogaloo as a term is used to describe an upcoming civil war. Or in more extreme circles, it's used to refer explicitly to a race war. So, the Boogaloo movement doesn't have really a singular ideology. It kind of runs the gamut of the far right. So the people who associate with it are everything from libertarians to people who are overtly racist. What we know is that all of them are united in this belief that the United States is tyrannical and that it needs to be overthrown in a second civil war. And that's something that they are actively preparing for and that many believe are inevitable. And we have seen people like Carrillo, who are going out and trying to commit acts of violence alongside these protests to try and increase civil unrest with the goal of pushing towards the second civil war.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** Cassie, could you talk about the fact that President Trump spends — has repeatedly denounced protesters at the anti-police-abuse rallies as terrorists and troublemakers, while at the same time, ignoring these Boogaloo folks who appear armed in his own rallies and have repeatedly looked like they're seeking trouble at some of the Black Lives Matters protests?

**CASSIE MILLER:** Right. I mean, we've seen President Trump completely ignore the violence on the far right. And that's something that we've seen for a long time, starting with the Charlottesville rally in 2017. What we're seeing is not terribly surprising. The far right has been attempting to demonize Antifa and paint them as inherently violent for years now.

And we know that that is simply not true. Antifa is a community-based movement that is fighting for a more just and equitable society and fighting against fascism. And we know that in this country the far right holds a monopoly on political violence and that since September 11 far-right extremists have killed far more people than members of any other ideology. So it's not surprising to see it ignored by the President or to see that these violent attacks have taken place. We have been raising the alarm about the far right and the Boogaloo movement for months, as have several of our partner organizations. But we haven't seen a lot of movement from places like Facebook, where they're congregating,

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** I want to ask you about how they organize on Facebook. But first, this is not the first Boogaloo arrest in the midst of the Black Lives Matter protests. Earlier this month, federal prosecutors in Las Vegas charged three men connected to the Boogaloo movement, and have military experience, with inciting violence during the protests there over the killing of George Floyd, and also with conspiracy to commit terrorism. Andrew Lynam is an Army reservist; Stephen Parshall, formerly enlisted in the Navy; and William Loomis, formerly enlisted in the Air Force. Each currently faces two federal charges: conspiracy to damage and destroy by fire and explosives, and possession of unregistered firearms. In state court, they've been accused of felony conspiracy terrorism and explosives possession. So, that was in Nevada. Again, Trump has not tweeted about any of this or talked about the people who have been charged with, not only conspiracy, but, in the case of Carrillo, murdering two law enforcement folks.

**CASSIE MILLER:** Yeah. we haven't seen any movement from that. Trump has repeatedly ignored the monopoly on violence on the far right and has instead used Antifa as a distraction.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** And Facebook organizing, how do they do it?

**CASSIE MILLER:** Yeah. On Facebook, we have seen the Boogaloo movement, congregating on Facebook for several months now. And we know that they've been organized really since the outbreak of the coronavirus because this is a moment of kind of uncertainty and unrest and for the members of this movement, they think this could be kind of the moment to spark civil unrest and this civil war. And we know that there are more than a hundred different Facebook groups that are actually dedicated to the Boogaloo, some with thousands of members, and a lot of the rhetoric on there violates Facebook's own terms of service. So people actively advocating for killing law enforcement, talking about building weapons, talking about building bombs. But Facebook hasn't done really anything about it. We have repeatedly warned them. Other researchers and journalists have repeatedly warned them. But there has been no movement, which is, frankly, sort of shocking at this point, now that we know this has been linked to real-world violence and murders.

## **Trump Cheers On Violent Terror - The Young Turks - Air Date 9-1-20**

**ANA KASPERIAN - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS:** Through both his actions and his words, Donald Trump empowers right-wing terrorists in the country. And that allows them to carry out acts of violence. In fact, he's been making excuses for the armed militia member who gunned down two protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Watch.

**REPORTER:** T . . . then the actions of vigilantes, like Kyle Rittenhouse . . .

**PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP:** We're looking at all of it. That was an interesting situation. You saw the same tape as I saw. And, uh, he was trying to get away from them, I guess, it looks like, and he fell, and then they very violently attacked him. And it was something that we're looking at right now, and it's under investigation, but, I guess he was in very big trouble. He would have been, he probably would have been killed, but it's under, it's under investigation.

**ANA KASPERIAN - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS:** So Trump, of course, is leaving out incredibly important details, including the fact that Rittenhouse shot one demonstrator in the head very far away from any business. So his whole reason for being there -- and remember he's from Illinois, not from Wisconsin -- was to protect businesses from looting. Well, he wasn't near a business, and he shot someone in the head, and as other demonstrators were trying to disarm him, he shot more people, killing an additional protestor and wounding one other.

So those are important details, and look, regardless of what Trump genuinely thinks happened, and I don't think Trump thinks genuinely about anything other than himself and what he can do for his own political gain, he shouldn't be commenting on it in a way that promotes violence on either side. And that's exactly what he's doing there.

And he also minimized what Kyle Rittenhouse did and what other rightwingers do when they show up armed. As you guys know, Patriot Prayer showed up to a protest as well in Portland, and that unfortunately escalated to violence to the point where someone on the left did shoot someone on the right. And there was a victim there. Someone did die and that should be condemned, but Donald Trump wanted to completely minimize the actions of the right wingers who show up to these events, including members of the Patriot Prayer who showed up with knives and with paintball guns. Let's take a look.

**REPORTER:** But I noticed that you did not mention that your supporters were also in Portland this weekend firing paintball guns at people and some form of pepper spray. So do you want to also take this chance to condemn what your supporters did?

**PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP:** I understand they had large numbers of people that were supporters, but that was a peaceful protest. And paint is not -- paint is a defensive mechanism. Paint is not bullets, Your supporters, your supporters, and they are your supporters, indeed, shot a young gentlemen who, and killed him, not with paint, but with a bullet. And I think it's disgraceful. These people, they protested peacefully. They went in very peacefully and I'll tell you what they're protesting. They're protesting when they turn on television or read whatever they may be reading, and they see a city like Chicago where 78 people were shot and 13 died, or a city like New York where the crime rate has gone through the roof, or a city like Portland where the entire city is ablazed all the time. And the mayor says we don't want any help from the federal government. When these people turn that on and they see that, they say, this is not our country. This is not our country. That was a peaceful protest. Totally.

**CENK UYGUR - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS:** The way that Trump categorized what happened with Rittenhouse made it seem like they're investigating the people who were killed as opposed to the person who did the killing. And he's, like, Oh, we're going to look into it. Okay. Explain to me what you're looking into because here is Chad Wolf, the acting head of Department Homeland Security, said the Attorney General Bill Barr is looking into arresting organizers of protests of Black Lives Matter and ANTIFA. They said nothing about looking into the organizers that put Kyle Rittenhouse there. I mean, there was a militia; they worked with the cops. Are they investigating the cops in Kenosha that encouraged the militia, gave them water? Rittenhouse strolls over to the cops -- after killing two people -- walks up to their cop car with a giant weapon on him. The cops don't stop him. They don't care about his weapon. He's White. It's okay. He's a rightwinger it's okay. So he will stroll up to the cops. He just murdered two people and then he strolls out. He leaves.

So are they investigating the cops who organized Kyle Rittenhouse' murder of two people? No, of course not. Are they looking at the militia who organized it? Of course not. They're looking at the people he killed because that's who Donald Trump and his Administration is.

And then he talks about sending in these vigilantes to all these different towns. Now there's vigilantes in California, there's vigilantes everywhere, and they fly their Trump flag proudly, and they go around and try to intimidate people and they come with weapons and they think, we can kill anybody, and Tucker Carlson and Donald Trump will defend us. And we'll say it was self-defense. We'll put a weapon right to your goddamn head, and if you don't bow down, we'll murder you. And Fox News will call it self-defense, and Donald Trump will very likely pardon us. And that's how fascists use vigilantes to create terrorism to target the rest of us so they quiet opposition. If you don't vote this election, you're an idiot and you've lost -- like you don't get that we're going to lose democracy. You don't get it. You don't get it. And if you're gonna vote for Trump, I want nothing to do with you. Nothing. If you're in my personal life, and you were stupid or monstrous enough to vote for Donald Trump, I'm done with you forever and ever and ever. I don't want to know or associate with any fascists.

# Voting is Not Enough: Become a Poll Worker - Best of the Left

**AMANDA HOFFMAN - ACTIVISM, BEST OF THE LEFT:** You've reached the activism portion of today's show. Now that you're angry, here's what you can do about it. Today's activism, voting is not enough; become a poll worker and save polling places. Election day is Tuesday, November 3rd. That's just two months away, 60 days to be exact. We don't need to tell you that everything is riding on this election, but we will anyway, it can't be said enough. Everything is riding on this election, everything.

To help make sure every one of the next 60 days count, today we're launching our 2020 election action guide, which we're calling *Voting is Not Enough*, because it's just not. From now until election day every episode of the show will highlight a different way you can be spending time and or money to support free and fair election as well as Democrats down the ballot, all the way up to the Biden/Harris ticket. All of this information can be accessed from the Voting is Not Enough tab at [bestoftheleft.com](https://bestoftheleft.com) or directly [bestoftheleft.com/2020action](https://bestoftheleft.com/2020action). So, let's dive in.

This past Tuesday was National Poll Worker Recruitment Day. Due To the pandemic, the country is facing a record shortage of poll workers, which already devastated primaries in certain States. Why? Well as with a lot of stuff, jobs, poll workers tend to be older Americans making them high risk if they contract COVID-19. To put it in perspective, in 2018, 58% of poll workers were aged 61 or older. As these older poll workers bow out to protect their health thanks to Trump's negligence, thousands are needed to take their place. If you're younger and not have existing health issues that make you high risk for COVID-19, consider signing up to be a poll worker.

If you're employed with benefits, this does mean sacrificing some of your precious few vacation hours, but saving democracy is worth it. If you're unemployed, this is a great way to take part in civic action and likely be paid for your time. Keep in mind, there will be trainings and they may need you for early voting too, so it can be more than just a one day job. When it comes to pay and shift organizing and minimum age cutoffs, every state is different. The best way to find out how your state is organized and where to apply is to visit [werkelections.com](https://werkelections.com). There you'll find an accessible, centralized information hub where you can simply enter your state and be led to the specific websites and information you need.

Typically local election officials don't have the resources to do wide recruitment efforts. So they rely on their existing volunteer rosters. This year, multiple independent campaigns are now underway to reach younger multi-lingual computer proficient candidates, such as Power the Polls, the Poll Workers Project, and the Poll Hero Project.

The stakes are extremely high. Even when there are enough off poll workers, Republicans try to suppress the vote by shutting down polling places in Black and Brown and immigrant neighborhoods. When there aren't enough workers, the first polling places to get shut down in those neighborhoods. To counter this, More Than a Vote, the organization launched this month by a group of Black athletes and artists led by LeBron James, is working with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to specifically recruit poll workers in heavily Black districts across

the country. If these recruitment campaigns are successful, their work in 2020 will positively impact elections for years to come.

The segment notes include all the links to this information as well as resources, and once again, the segment is available under the Voting is Not Enough tab at [bestoftheleft.com](http://bestoftheleft.com). So if ensuring we have enough poll workers for the most important election of our lifetime is important to you, be sure to spread the word about becoming a poll worker to save polling places via social media so that others in your network can spread the word too.

## **Trump Caravans and the Threat of Sectarian Violence - The Muckrake Podcast - Air Date 9-1-20**

**JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** We're gonna talk today about some really disturbing developments. We're watching right now, something that unfortunately we have been talking about on this podcast for a while, we have felt coming and we've... predicted isn't necessarily the right word; it's not like we were trying to tell you what the future is going to be like--but we've been telling you that this stuff was a possibility, which is something that we have to remember and something we have to be on guard towards.

Of course we have had the shooting in Kenosha, Wisconsin, which was tragic enough. And now of course, over the weekend, we saw a new development, a new piece of escalation in rising fascism and Trumpism sort of reaching its new level of evolution. We have now seen the development of Trump caravans.

And for those of you who haven't seen it by now, these are parades of Trump supporters decked out in Trump iconography, fascistic iconography, Blue Lives Matter iconography, all these fascistic stuff that we've talked about. And they're going into Democratic-controlled cities, including Portland and Los Angeles. And they're going through they're brutalizing people. They're hitting people with their trucks. They're shooting them with paintballs. They're hitting them with pepper spray and shooting them with mace, throwing objects at them. We've had one person die already as a consequence of this thing.

And unfortunately it is, evidence of growing sectarian violence and something that unfortunately we need to be aware of and we need to be really cautious about, cause this is, uh, this is bad news all the way around.

**NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** I agree. 'Cause you know, here's the thing you could argue that these are the agitators that Trump keeps talking about. The only problem with that is, and my wife had brought this up as a, is a good point--hi honey--that, if we are going to hold them to task for to say the Trump people are the agitators and that's what's stirring all this up, then in theory, Charlottesville, the people who were protesting the protestors of the right wing protestors, then they would be on the same role there. Right. And that sparked all the other issues as well. So I'm kind of conflicted in a way about trying to characterize this. 'Cause again, it's messy, it's hard to get a handle on what we're supposed to feel with all this stuff.

Because again, if we are true patriots, we should be able to say, no, they're allowed to protest just like the people in Portland are protesting. Right?

**JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** No they are. And that's the thing about it. If people want to go into--if people want to go and they want to express their political beliefs, that's one thing.

These people are like outfitting their trucks with weaponized mace and pepper spray. You know what I mean? These people are going into cities and by the way, the groups that are doing this are groups that very recently have been caught lurking on top of buildings with a long guns, with sniper rifles. They've been going into BLM protests carrying guns, explosives. They've been creating artificial chaos. They've been destroying buildings. They of course have been partnering with local police being old buddy buddy with these people.

The problem here, it isn't necessarily that they're protesting, which is one thing; drive around town with your Trump flag. Oh, you won. That's fine. Just do that. Engage in your freedom of speech, whatever. These people are looking for violence. And the problem here, and this is something I think Americans really need to wrap their heads around, is that we've seen this around the world, like in states that are having trouble, where there are growing divisions between people. There's like an "us" group and a "them" group, particularly when it comes to a hierarchial power structure.

There are all kinds of these men who go out in their trucks, into villages and cities and areas. And they go out as a sort of flash mob. Right? And they go out and often they'll murder hundreds, if not thousands, if not millions of people. And this is how it always takes place. They grab an identity, they have a conspiracy theory--in this case, it's Trumpism, QAnon, New World Order, deep state, whatever you want to pick--and then they believe that they have to go out and dole out violence. Particularly if a leader tells them to, right? You'll have an authoritarian leader who will call to them, whether it's on the radio or the internet or on TV, and say, go out and do this.

And Trump's doing that. Trump has told them now. He has called them "Great Patriots." He's lended his support to it. And now not only do they have his support, they have his blessing, they have his energy, and it's the beginning of a movement here. And we're going to start seeing more and more sectarian violence.

**NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** And I think also the notion of protesting generally is like a community; it's based on a community from where you are and you go out locally and you do your protesting. So I think it's safe to say that most of the protesters in Portland for instance, are in Portland, right there. That's where they're from.

And that's why they're upset about what's happening with the police department there and what they want to get done. I think it's also safe to say you did a lot of these, the Trump caravan things, are from out of town. And they're being signaled, you know, by Trump and everything. And they feel like this is what their version of pride in our country is, and patriotism is, yes, we are going to have to stand up to these people because they also feel like ,based on what Trump keeps saying, is that the cops can't do anything, won't do anything. So they feel like they suddenly need to be some sort of version of a police: untrained, completely biased on their side.

That's really where it gets dangerous. Let me ask you this, Derek: we don't often have protests and then anti-protests clash as much I feel like on a grand scale. I mean, when I think about that, I think about the Edmund Pettus bridge. In Alabama, I think of the really

horrible stuff that we we'd studied, you know, during the civil rights movement, where you have these clashes. Generally what you have when you have protests, are everyone agrees on what the protest is.

And so you don't need to necessarily have that kind of violence. I might be wrong on that one. I don't know if you want to check me on that, but, I do feel like when you, especially, if you're going to instigate that and invite these anti-protests of the protest, all you're doing is guaranteeing violence.

**JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** We have a history of it, but not in recent history. That's the whole thing about this, right? Is that enough time passes in America and actually, American history is very, very short when compared to other countries, like, you know it's a couple of centuries old. And in recent history, if you go back to the turn of the century, we used to have armed conflict between unions and organizations and like Pinkertons-- hired mercenaries that were hired out by your Vanderbilts and, all of these people, the Carnegie's or whatever. So you would have basically these Pinkertons and mercenaries alongside the national guard or the army, or local police that would go out and have a warfare.

And you would have entire cities basically destroyed within a couple of days. Like they were like private little wars. Then later on, particularly after World War One, you had all the unions and organizations and progressive units out there protesting, and you would have a lot of right wing hardliners who would meet them and they would beat them. And they would beat them because it was the first red scare. They believed that they were terrorist in league with the communists. Well, guess what? That also happened in the 1950s and the 1960s and the 1970s. We haven't seen it for a few decades. But we've often had a lot of these right wing vigilantes.

And by the way, let's go ahead and throw it in there. Lynchings, mobs, all these people, these are in the same group. The thing that is changing here is it's a little bit different and I think you put your finger on it, which is, it's the difference between the city slash urbanscape, and the people outside, the suburban people or middle Americans, if you will. And anybody who's grown up in middle America or the suburbs, they know that there's a tension between the city and the people outside of the city. The people outside the city kind of resent the people in the city. They think they take all their money. They think they take all of the focus and all the energy. And they've spoken about them in conspiratorial terms for years and years and years. So I'm from Indiana. I have to tell you, the people in Indiana don't care for Indianapolis too much. You know what I mean? There's like a natural,

**NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** but that's where all the sitting is taking place.

**JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** Exactly. Or in Michigan, by the way, any of our listeners from Michigan you'll know that if people start talking about Detroit, they're not talking about Detroit. They're talking about race. They're talking about white supremacy, and white paranoia. What we're seeing here is red America and blue America. This sort of fiction that's been created, particularly by people like Sarah Palin, which they were talking about "real America" versus unreal America.

We now have two identities. We have red America and blue America, and red America considers itself the only true Americans. And as a result, they're trying to fight a war. They're trying to fight off that terroristic menace that they believe in, whether or not it's Antifa or the liberal QAnon, whatever you want to call it.

They believe that they are going to war against people. And this is what always happens for sectarian violence. Every time you see in another country, there's one group going in and carrying on ethnic cleansing or genocide or sectarian violence, they do it because they believe a conspiracy theory about the other group and they believe that they are dangerous and that they require preemptive violence to keep their violence from attacking them.

**NICK HAUSELMAN - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** By the way, the flags, you also mentioned around the world how this can incite violence and kill a hundred thousand people. It looks a lot, like what we see with ISIS. I mean, on Twitter, they're now showing side-by-side, these are the same pickup trucks and the same flags flying.

And, you know, it's sort of, just by looks, you're looking at it that way. But I can't help but think that this is just like what you see in Mogadishu when militia start pulling through and kidnapping people.

**JARED YATES SEXTON - HOST, THE MUCKRAKE PODCAST:** So here is one of the hard truths that we have to talk about, which is what you're describing right now, this relationship between Trumpism and an ISIS or Al Qaeda, we're talking about fundamentalism is what we're talking about. We're talking about a group that says, through this conservative ideology or mythos, the idea that we need to go back into the past and we've somehow or another gone wrong.

It is an apocalyptic conspiracy theory, which is what ISIS is all about. It's like, no, we have to go back into this place of caliphate. And we have to raze statues and you either have to conform or you die or you're put into slavery or whatever. These are like brethren. They're not going around killing people left and right the way that an ISIS or Al Qaeda had done. But that doesn't mean that they don't share a relationship in the way that they view the world. They do not see a pluralistic society. That's the whole point of what I've been warning about. These are not people who are like, Oh, we really want to have a good showing at the next election.

That's not what they're worried about because they're losing elections. They do not have the numbers to win in elections. And when an institution realizes that it cannot win elections anymore, it throws out democracy. It throws out the concept of pluralism. They want to go in and take this over. They want to go in and intimidate people. They want to go out and strike violence against them. You said yourself, they're going into these cities. And right now it's paintballs. Like right now with paint balls. But in other places, in places like Ferguson, in places like Minneapolis, we saw people going in, in Kenosha, we saw people going in with actual weapons. I mean, one of these people who was loosely affiliated with them, was caught on a rooftop sniping people. Wasn't actually shooting, but was thinking about shooting, was ready to shoot.

The difference between a brutal counter-protest, if we want to call it that, and blood in the streets, is just a couple of seconds, you know what I mean? Everything is primed. And if you think that there weren't people who went into Portland or who went into Los Angeles and



wherever these people are going to go, if you think that there weren't people in these quote, unquote counter-protests and caravans who didn't go into this thing with the mindset of, I might have to hurt somebody today. I might have to kill somebody today. They think that. That's the mindset because they believe that they're righteous. They believe that they have the universe and patriotism or whatever they want to claim today. There were people in this protest who were ready to carry out and mete out that kind of final violence. And we need to understand that the line between potential violence and violence is so thin it can break at any given moment.

## **America's Brutal Police State Expands Its Reach In Portland - The Real News Network - Air Date 7-29-20**

**JACQUELINE LUQMAN - HOST, THE REAL NEWS, :** People think they understand the law by citing that deploying the US military against US citizens is illegal under the 1878 federal law known as the Posse Comitatus Act, which generally bars the use of the active-duty U.S. military — the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines — from carrying out domestic law enforcement activities. But this law does not apply to state National Guard units, which are state militias, basically. And the 1807 Insurrection Act is the exception to the Posse Comitatus Act that allows a president to deploy federal troops and militia anywhere in the country to put down what they consider to be an insurrection. The Insurrection Act has been used by several presidents to deploy the National Guard to break strikes in the 1800s and 1900s, often resulting in atrocities such as the Great Railroad Strike Massacre in 1877, the Ludlow Massacre in 1914, the Bay View Massacre in 1886, and several others. And remember that the National Guard was deployed to the Greenwood District in Tulsa, OK in 1921 where over 6,000 targets of the worst racist massacre in the history of this country were held by the National Guard without due process for up to eight days in the destruction and massacre of Black Wall Street.

In more recent history, in May of 1970, Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes ordered the National Guard to the Kent State University campus to quell protests against the Vietnam War, where the National Guard opened fire with live ammunition and murdered four students and injured nine others. Police and the militia assaulted students protesting the Vietnam War across the country during that time, as police wounded a dozen protesters at the State University of New York at Buffalo with shotgun fire. National Guard troops attached bayonets to their rifles before charging demonstrators in both Albuquerque, New Mexico and Carbondale, Illinois. In Madison, Wisconsin, guardsmen indiscriminately fired tear gas into student housing blocks.

Just a few days after the Kent State massacre, Mississippi state police opened fire into Alexander Hall on the campus of all-Black Jackson State College. But this wasn't about anti-war protests. Students at Jackson State had protested years of racist harassment from White residents in neighboring Fayette. Cops alleged that a dump truck had been set on fire on campus and they called that a riot, although no students were in the street at the time of the fire. But Mississippi highway patrolmen carried state-issued shotguns and double-aught buckshot, personal weapons, and even "two 9mm submachine guns" to the campus anyway and fired on the students who were in the dormitory. Two students were killed and 12 injured.

And that happened after the earlier racist killing of Ben Brown near the Jackson State campus in 1967, the State Patrol's murder of three Black students and wounding of 28 others at South Carolina State College at Orangeburg in 1968, the assassination of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in 1969, and the police's fatal shooting of six young Black men—all shot in the back—during a moment of civil unrest in Augusta, Georgia, just a few days earlier.

The National Guard was also deployed during the racial unrest that was already fueled by decades of racist police violence and social oppression across the country in the late 1960s and 70s, and they abused and killed citizens then, too. Incidents that were the straw that pushed poor, Black residents over the edge included a Black cab driver being brutally beaten by police in Newark, New Jersey; a 16-year-old unarmed Black kid shot to death by a White cop in San Francisco; the mass arrest of 82 partygoers who were assembled to celebrate the return of GIs from Vietnam in an unlicensed after-hours club that existed because there were nowhere else for Black Detroit residents to socialize. The images and accounts of the cops and the National Guard's brutality toward citizens has been documented in books and dramatized in movies from that period of time. Our own Eddie Conway recounts his own experience seeing National Guard troops on the streets of Newark, NJ, with a 50-calibre machine gun pointed at women protesting on a street corner, and that caused him to refuse to go to Vietnam.

And it was just 2016 that heavily armed, private security forces, local and state police, and who knows who else, violently assaulted water and land protectors at Standing Rock. Few know, however, that The Emergency Management Assistance Compact [EMAC] that was signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1996 in response to Hurricane Andrew to facilitate interstate cooperation between agencies, was used by Jack Dalrymple, then the governor of North Dakota, to convene a multi-state, multi agency force that was unleashed against protesters trying to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline from being built on sacred Indigenous land. And it needs to be noted that this same law was used by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan a year earlier in 2015 to summon police forces from neighboring jurisdictions in Philadelphia and New Jersey to repel protesters in Baltimore after the death of Freddie Gray in police custody.

So why is America suddenly absolutely shocked and outraged at what is honestly just the natural progression of authoritarian police abuse and the deployment of the military or federal agents against US citizens going on in Portland right now? Let's be honest here: it is because of who it is being done to this time around. The man in the viral video is a Navy veteran who had never been to a protest in his life, but had heard about the abuses by law enforcement against the protesters, and said that he went down there to see for himself what was going on. Christopher David went down to the federal courthouse to see women—a lot of them pregnant, he saw—linking arms in protest against police brutality and he went to ask the armed agents why they were ignoring their oath to uphold the Constitution. The women were there, they said, to demand that federal agents stop targeting and abusing and literally kidnapping Portland kids in these protests. What David and the other mostly white women experienced in Portland, instead of what they were sure was their right to peacefully protest, and to have that right protected—they were sure that it was going to be—what they experienced instead was what we Black, Latino, and Native American citizens have experienced in the entirety of our “relationship” with agents of the state in this country when we stand up for our rights—indiscriminate, violent, terroristic abuse; violations of our rights; violence against our bodies committed against us, by the agents of the state. The

women were teargassed and knocked to the ground, and David, as we saw in the video, was beaten with batons by the camouflaged thugs, to the point that his hand was broken in two places.

I hate to say it, friends, but what you're seeing in Portland has been done to other people in this country who don't look like Christopher David and the moms he saw being assaulted. As I watched this unfold, I couldn't help but think of that famous poem by MARTIN NIEMÖLLER, German Lutheran minister and public critic of Adolf Hitler, who said: "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me —and there was no one left to speak for me."

## Summary

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with Counterspin's, Speaking with Marjorie Cohn about the legal and constitutional elements of the fight for our right to protest. Last Week Tonight detailed the violence and fallout of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Democracy Now explored the Boogaloo movement and Trump's tacit embrace of it. The Young Turks discussed Trump promoting violence and pushing us toward authoritarian rule. The Muckrake Podcast explained the phenomenon of the roving bands of MAGA supporters driving into cities and doing out violence. And finally, we just heard the Real News Network discuss the expansion of the police state in response to the protests in Portland.

Members will be hearing a little bit more about the legal nuances of driving into a city with a giant gun, shooting some people, and then driving away. To hear that and all of our bonus content, sign up as a patron at [patreon.com/bestoftheleft](https://patreon.com/bestoftheleft). And now, we'll hear from you.

## Rewriting the American myth - Erin from Philadelphia

**CALLER: ERIN FROM PHILLY:** Hi, Jay it's Erin from Philly back after a long voicemail hiatus. To be honest, I had to just take a break from listening to podcasts altogether back when things really kicked off in March, it was just too much, you know. The news was too much, even the stuff I usually listen to to distract myself, just felt like a bit too much, and I was just enjoying some quiet, but I'm back. I'm pretty much caught up with the show, and, you know, I wanted to share a thought that was really brought into focus by a recent episode of *Radio Lab*. The episode is titled *Uncounted* and there's a segment where they interview Eleanor Holmes Norton, who is the non-voting delegate to Congress for Washington DC. And I think she said a lot more powerfully than I could put together what I've been thinking and what this conversation I had with a friend and got some pushback about was and I started thinking about this when you retold the Jay! Ruins Thanksgiving story a month or two ago, whenever that was on the podcast like I said, I've kind of been just catching up on recent months in the last couple of weeks. And it made me think about how, what seems to be happening here, now, in this moment in the U.S. between the COVID pandemic just laying bare all of the iniquities of our society, and with the taking down of Confederate monuments and now moving on to Columbus monuments. In Philly, there was famously a statue of Frank Rizzo who used to be the mayor and before that was the police chief and was just known as an

outright fascist, I mean he was one of the early adopters of the unleashed police on black neighborhoods, beat them all and let God sort them out, and he had a large and prominent statue right across the street from city hall here, which had been the target of a lot of activism and putting on clown costumes and things like that, and they finally took that down early, in the protests around, George Floyd's murder, back in June.

And what ties this all together, finally getting to my point, is it feels like we are at a moment where we're having to reckon with the mythology of the United States and where the myth of the U.S. that we've had is just transparently not working anymore. The shining city on the hill myth that Reagan was famous for, that's fallen apart. Things you talked about in the podcast recently, like the Doctrine of Christian Discovery and Manifest Destiny, those myths don't hold up anymore because Native people are finding ways to have their voices heard by White America in ways that were silenced for several centuries. As the U.S. moves towards being a demographically majorityless nation, or a majority minority nation as you sometimes hear it called, those stories, those myths don't work anymore. And the thing that I got push back about was to say that I think that part of the work that needs to be done right now is building a new myth of America, new myth of the United States that includes everybody, but, and this was the part that I think came across as a bit controversial, that also gives White people a place, but isn't necessarily the place of the hero of the story. The friend I was talking about this with really just didn't like the idea she says we shouldn't be making White people feel good about themselves, which isn't what I'm trying to say. It's that, all societies have a myth that explains who they are and how they got there. And that's, I think normal and it's fine, I mean, it's what Greek mythology is about, it's what, for people who don't believe it literally, it's what the Bible tells us about the history of the Jewish people. Every culture has it, Chinese legends and foundation myths in different cultures, and the U.S. despite the fact that all of this is in documented history has its own foundation myths, and I think things like the 1619 Project have really started to chip away at the myth that we've been telling ourselves, that we have in the history books that I grew up with, that was sort of the, the history of the great White people who conquered this uncharted land, which obviously we know is just wrong and was even starting to be challenged back when my parents were kids. That was when Wounded Knee protests happened and so on, and Alcatraz was occupied as Indian land and things like that. So, like I said, I think the big challenge of our time is to rewrite that mythology so that everybody is included and nobody is pushed down as a part of that story, but that everybody is given a place to bring that myth and that story forward into the next era of U.S. American life. I would also say go check out the segment of Radiolab, because the thing that, Eleanor Holmes Norton talks about is the idea that despite everything that we've knocked down, the basic myths of America is the Constitution and what it means about who we are as a country and how even when we haven't lived up to the ideals, which has been forever since 1789 when it was finally ratified, that Black people have always been the biggest believers in that myth, because they've always been the ones trying to advance that equality and advance that story so that the document would actually reflect reality.

That's a project I think I can get behind, and if we have to get rid of a few holidays along the way, I think they should be replaced with something. If nothing else, I will always enjoy a reason to set aside a day once a year to, get the day off work, go be with my family, and eat more Turkey and pumpkin pie than is probably good for me, but we definitely shouldn't do that on the backs of a myth that erases native genocide. So, we'll find something I'm sure.

Like I said, complicated thoughts, recommend that Radiolab segment, just really thinking about what the new American myth needs to be from 2020 and moving forward.

So, thanks for hanging tough through everything. I know you've had a lot of adjustments to make and I know this is difficult and new and challenging for everybody. So, thanks for keeping your voice out there and thanks for staying awesome.

## **Final comments asking for your thoughts on our national myths and origin stories or about the stories that other cultures tell themselves**

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks for listening everyone. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work on the show. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets and activism segments, and thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line. If you'd like to leave a comment, or question of your own to be played on the show, you can send us a voice memo by email or simply record a message at 202-999-3991.

And today I just to reiterate that call because I would love to hear what you guys think of Erin's message that we just heard. I have some thoughts and even a story or so, maybe a story and a half in response, but I just don't have time for it today, but I would love to have a little bit of a conversation if you have something to throw into the mix. If you are a member of the general dominant American culture and have thoughts on it I'd love to hear from you. If you are not from the general dominant culture in America, but have thoughts about the dominant culture in America and the cultural myths we tell ourselves and our origin stories and all of that. I'd love to hear that. Or, if you have thoughts on different origin stories that other people have or anything along those lines. I think it's a fascinating conversation, and I think Erin has really put her finger on something that needs to be addressed more explicitly and openly, so I would love to hear from anyone who has thoughts.

And so with that, I'll just say once again, keep the comments coming in at 202-999-3991. That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or making donations of any signs at [patreon.com/BestOfTheLeft](https://patreon.com/BestOfTheLeft). That is absolutely how the program survives. Of course, everyone can support the show just by telling everyone you know about it and leaving us glowing reviews on Apple podcasts and Facebook to help others find the show. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on the blog and likely right on the device you're using to listen.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington DC., my name is Jay!, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [BestoftheLeft.com](https://BestoftheLeft.com)