

## #1407 Taking Back the Streets (Defunding the Police and the Sarah Everard Outcry)

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left Podcast in which we shall learn about the progress being made on the effort to reform and de-fund the police in America, as well as the re-ignited campaign to make society safe for women in the wake of the Sarah Everard murder in the UK.

If you need a refresher or know someone who does, I highly recommend that you check out our episode from last year, it's number 1360 Redefine, Unburden, and #DefundThePolice to get a deep dive perspective on the defund the police movement. It's been less than a year since the concept entered mainstream consciousness, there's still plenty of misconceptions about it. So make sure that you and everyone else you know, understands what people are actually talking about, not what some scaremongers would have you believe.

And now onto the show clips today are from *In The Loop*, the *PBS NewsHour*, *MTV Impact*, the *Rational National*, *Ring of Fire Radio*, the *Telegraph*, *TyskySour*, Channel 4 News, CNN UK, the *Laura Flanders Show*, and *Into America*.

### Austin's Plan To Defund The Police - In The Loop - Air Date 2-22-21

**CHRISTIAN BRYANT - HOST, IN THE LOOP:** [00:01:11] "Defund the police" became a super controversial slogan last year when it entered the mainstream, even after it was rejected by both Joe Biden, Donald Trump, and a long list of other political leaders. But with all of the hand-ringing around the slogan itself, it's important to remember what defunding the police really means.

In most cases, it means taking some things, like dealing with nonviolent situations, out of the hands of armed police and into the hands of social workers. Newsy's Jamal Andress took an in-depth look at one city that already defunded police, and what's happened since then.

**JAMAL ANDRESS:** [00:01:46] Over the summer chants to defund the police rang out across the country. But hardly anyone cut their police budget by as much as Austin, Texas. While cities like Baltimore and Denver cut their budgets by 3% or 10%, Austin cut APDs budget by a third: \$150 million. And they've already started spending that money on other programs, buying two hotels with plans to convert them into permanent supportive housing for the homeless.

**GREG CASAR:** [00:02:12] The Black Lives Matter movement really ascending in our cities. It created an opportunity for us to move the dollars that so often are used to police homelessness, to throw people in jail for a night, and then to send them back onto the streets, to take those same dollars and use them to actually operate the hotels.

**JAMAL ANDRESS:** [00:02:30] To operate these hotels, it'll take about \$6.5 million annually. But the backlash to any reallocation of police funds in this very red state has been swift and widespread.

**STATE REP. BRISCOE CAIN:** [00:02:42] Crime is up because police funding is down. That's the wrong direction.

**GREGG SOFER:** [00:02:46] We will not stand idly by and watch as violent criminals take over the streets of our communities.

**LT GOV. DAN PATRICK:** [00:02:53] The city of Austin is a disaster if you haven't been there. Now, one of the most dangerous cities in America, and definitely in Texas.

**JAMAL ANDRESS:** [00:02:59] The Texas governor has threatened to remove Austin police from the city's control, freeze property tax revenues, and bring in federal law enforcement, all in the interest of public safety.

And while Austin isn't one of the most dangerous cities in the US or even in Texas, it has seen a rise in homicides from 36 in 2019 to 48 in 2020. Other large cities in the state experienced similar rises in homicides, including both Houston and Fort Worth, two cities that increased their police budgets this year. Austin city councilman Greg Casar, who spearheaded the police defunding effort, says housing for the homeless is exactly the kind of action that will make the city safer.

**GREG CASAR:** [00:03:40] Lying about Austin doesn't make anyone safer, but setting up homeless shelters does make people safer. These are real issues that the governor, lieutenant governor don't want to talk about. That policing doesn't solve entirely on its own, and that we are actually bringing dollars forward to help solve the issue.

**JAMAL ANDRESS:** [00:03:57] Austin's housing program, similar to one in Los Angeles that housed about 3,500 chronically homeless people. Like Los Angeles, Austin plans to offer wraparound services, meaning not only housing, but a case manager for residents and other social services.

Professor Sarah Hunter evaluated the Los Angeles housing program and saw positive impacts.

**SARAH HUNTER:** [00:04:18] Study after study shows that permanent supportive housing increases housing stability.

**JAMAL ANDRESS:** [00:04:24] It also pays for itself. According to Hunter, for every dollar the Los Angeles health department spent on this housing program, the county saved a \$1.20, dramatically reducing expensive trips to the emergency room and long-term hospital stays.

**SARAH HUNTER:** [00:04:39] What it suggests is we're already, as a society, paying a lot of money to provide services to people experiencing homelessness. The provision of permanent supportive housing may actually be a more effective use of those funds.

**JAMAL ANDRESS:** [00:04:57] Austin's reforms have extended beyond the police budget, the city adding a mental health option for 911 calls and proposing an independent office of police oversight.

**GREG CASAR:** [00:05:07] I believe lots of other cities can follow the Austin's example because unfortunately, many cities have over relied on policing and jailing as our primary response to social issues. That's something that doesn't just exist here in Austin and exists all over the country.

## **House Democrats pass sweeping elections bill and major legislation on overhauling police - PBS NewsHour - Air Date 3-4-21**

**JUDY WOODRUFF - HOST, PBS NEWSHOUR:** [00:05:22] So Lisa, as you know very well, the House also last night passed a piece of legislation on policing reform, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. This in response to the death of George Floyd at the hands of police last year in Minneapolis is something Democrats have been pushing for ever since. Tell us what's in that legislation.

**LISA DESJARDINS:** [00:05:45] This is another absolutely critical topic that this country has been talking about, having conversations about, but that lawmakers at the federal level have not acted on. This is the House passing a bill it passed again last year, hoping it has a better chance of this time.

Let's remind people what's in this George Floyd Act. Part of this bill, a big part of it would be a national registry of police misconduct. So that police who are accused or who are found guilty of misconduct through use of force, that would be known throughout the country and the public would be able to see some of that information.

It would end police immunity, also from civil lawsuits. Right now, civilians can not sue police officers if they feel their constitutional rights are violated, not as individuals. There would be a federal ban on choke hold and no knock warrants. And then this bill would also then try to incentivize local and state police forces to similarly band those choke holds and the no-knock warrants by tying federal funding to that idea.

Now that is an idea, Judy, as you heard, I think from Senator McConnell earlier in the show, that republicans rail against. They think that is overreach and the federal government trying to tell state and local powers what to do. Of course, it's a classic example of the Congress using the power of the purse as it has for many years. There are 18,000 police agencies right now, and of course many - there are also thousands of federal police officers, and this is the House trying to do something on this absolutely critical issue.

**REP. ANDY BIGGS:** [00:07:12] Any member who is opposed to defunding the police should be opposing this bill. It removes qualified immunity, which resulted in ineffectual police force and leave our communities vulnerable to crime.

**REP. KAREN BASS:** [00:07:21] If this legislation had been the law of the land several years ago, Eric Garner and George Floyd would be alive today, because the bill bans choke holds. If the bill had been law last year, Breonna Taylor would have not been shot to death in her sleep because no knock warrants for drug offenses would have been illegal.

**LISA DESJARDINS:** [00:07:39] And that of course shows you how passionate the debate was yesterday.

**JUDY WOODRUFF - HOST, PBS NEWSHOUR:** [00:07:44] And so, Lisa, what is expected next when it goes to the Senate?

**LISA DESJARDINS:** [00:07:51] Well, it looks like this bill, as it was passed the House, probably won't pass intact, but there are negotiations underway. There is some very significant bipartisan interest in this issue. Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, Republican, was the author of a different bill last year, and he is in negotiations. He says, he's interested in talking to Democrats in the House. They say they're trying to come up with something that everyone can agree on. I will tell you, I also have one of my longest conversations ever with Lisa Murkowski of Alaska about this topic. There are certainly a dozen Republicans in the Senate who want to pass something. Now, can they agree? Hard to say. But this is an issue that may have a chance in the Senate.

## **Can the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act Create a National Standard for Police Need To Know - MTV Impact - Air Date 3-4-21**

**DOMETI PONGO - HOST, MTV NEWS:** [00:08:29] The House passed the sweeping George Floyd Justice and Policing Act this week. But as long as partisan politics remains the status quo, lawmakers will continue to fail Black Americans.

Dometi Pongo. And this is MTV News Need to Know.

Yesterday the House of Representatives took up the George Floyd Justice and Policing Act, a bill that aims to protect Americans from police misconduct, choke holds and no knock raids.

As expected, the measure passed in the Democrat controlled chamber, but not without full Republican opposition. This is the second time Congress has taken up police reform in the nine months since the killing of 46-year-old George Floyd in Minnesota. The resulting racial reckoning of 2020 brought on some tangible changes, thanks to public outcry, exacerbated by the pandemic. Everything from statues of slave owners being torn down to corporate sensitivity trainings, sports teams changing racist mascots, we even renamed Aunt Jemima.

The one thing that did not happen was widespread accountability for police officers who killed Black folks for no reason. We changed the name of a goddamn syrup, before we legislated against white supremacy. And when the house took up a police reform bill in 2020, the measure stalled in the then Republican controlled Senate, where Mitch McConnell failed to even bring it to the floor.

Fast forward to this Wednesday. Eight months later, when the House voted on a revamped version of that bill. It's called the George Floyd Justice and Policing Act. MSNBC's Kyle Griffin reports the bill overhauls qualified immunity for police officers, bans choke holds at the federal level, prohibits no-knock warrants in federal drug cases, outlaws racial profiling and establishes a national registry of police misconduct to be managed by the Department of Justice.

Now one of the most important parts of this bill is addressing qualified immunity. Qualified immunity basically means that police aren't capable of being prosecuted, unless they're a) intentionally violating you, or b) unreasonably incompetent. Obviously there's lots of room for interpretation. Meaning qualified immunity is one of the loopholes that allows officers to go free.

Simply put, as Robert McNamara, senior attorney for the Institute of Justice notes, "Qualified immunity gives government officials a rubber stamp to violate your rights." This is how Brianna Taylor's murderers get away with blatant atrocities. It takes an extraordinary amount of legal argument and evidence to hold police officers accountable, even when they are entirely in the wrong. How does it feel to know the police could get away with barging into your home while you're asleep and shoot you even when you haven't done anything? And just a reminder, police aren't supposed to kill guilty people, either.

Unsurprisingly, the Republican Party of law and order has historically been against ending qualified immunity for police. They've argued that the policing business is dangerous, complex and should account for a wide range of leniency when it comes to officers making decisions about how to do their jobs. They've called this push to end qualified immunity "a poison pill." They have united to vote against the George Floyd Justice and Policing Act.

In fact, the one Republican who voted for the measure later took back his vote saying he voted for it in error, after realizing he accidentally pressed the wrong button. You really can't make this stuff up.

This week, GOP representatives have continued to rail, not only against this bill, but other social issues, like the inclusive renaming of Mr. Potato Head to just Potato Head. By focusing on this GOP leaders de-center solutions to advance equity and human rights. As Bernice King, CEO of the MLK Center tweets, "It's really sad that there are people who are outraged about Mr. Potato Head, but not about Mr. George Floyd. How telling that people who don't support a justice and policing act think they're way of life is being threatened because of actions concerning toys and children's books."

The bill will head to the Senate next, where it's destined for another stall by Republicans. Democrats have a slim majority. They need 60 votes to withstand GOP obstruction, which means 10 Republicans will have to join them and support. Not likely. Other progressive efforts are in for similar blocks by Republicans with a House-approved bill that would expand voting rights headed toward a procedural stalemate in the Senate.

This is why young people are increasingly impatient and more likely to support defunding over reforming. The slower we inch along the road to equity, the more Black bodies suffer in the wake. When it comes to matters of life and death, impatience is a virtue too. But this cycle is going to continue unless Democratic leaders can become as legislatively aggressive as their GOP counterparts.

Now America is considered a world leader. But it will be embarrassing if at the end of a national racial reckoning, all we have to show for ourselves is a few toppled monuments and a renamed bottle of syrup.

# Fight to Pass the George Floyd Act, BREATHE Act, & Take LOCAL Action!

**AMANDA HOFFMAN, ACTIVISM CZAR:** [00:13:19] You've reached the activism portion of today's show. Now that you're informed and angry, here's what you can do about it. Today's activism: Fight to Pass the George Floyd Act, BREATHE Act, and take local action.

There are a few things you need to know up front about the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act: it is not enough, it is not perfect, it will not come close to fixing everything, and it faces a steep uphill battle to getting passed by the Senate.

That said, the bill is still historic and sweeping legislation in a country that has done next to nothing legislatively to stop police brutality. The bill includes the creation of a national database of police misconduct, bans federal law enforcement from using chokeholds and from using no-knock warrants in drug cases, criminalizes officer sexual misconduct against detainees, and more.

The key clarification here is that, if passed, the bill would mostly impact federal law enforcement. We're talking about ICE, ATF, and DEA officers, U.S. Park Rangers and police officers and many, many more law enforcement officers working under the federal government. But, as we know, police abuse and brutality happen frequently in these federal ranks and so the bill's potential impact should not be understated.

Two provisions in the bill that would definitely affect local and state police forces are the end of qualified immunity - which currently protects officers from individual liability - and limiting transfer of military equipment to local police departments. It's important to remember that this bill is also still a work in progress, and proposed amendments are still being made. You can help shape this bill by calling and writing to your members of Congress.

However, without an end to the racist Senate filibuster, any legislation like this is already stalled. Sure, you can force a vote and put people on the record, but Democrats have the power to end the filibuster, and it is their duty to do so. Making sure that happens is an essential first step to any legislative fight right now.

So, should we keep fighting to improve and pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act? Yes. Should we keep fighting for the BREATHE Act from the Movement for Black Lives, which goes farther to address root causes of police brutality and its disproportionate impact on Black and Indigenous communities? Yes, and yes again.

But, remember that in this gridlocked political landscape, the local and state level fight for change is powerful and essential. You can get involved by joining a local action group or national organization local chapter fighting police brutality where you live. We've linked to a list of organizations by state in the show notes. If you want a starting point to understand the approach to fighting police abuse and brutality locally, the ACLU Fighting Police Abuse Community Action Manual is a great resource. So, from the halls of Congress to your local city hall, tap into that local people power and make the change we need.

The segment notes include all the links to this information, as well as additional resources, and as always this and every activism segment we produce is archived and organized under the activism tab at [bestoftheleft.com](http://bestoftheleft.com).

So, if upending our culture of police brutality is important to you, be sure to tell everyone you know about the Fight to Pass the George Floyd Act, BREATHE Act, & taking local action so that others in your network can spread the word, too.

## **Republicans Vote Against Protecting Women - The Rational National - Air Date 3-18-21**

**DAVID DOEL - HOST, THE RATIONAL NATIONAL:** [00:16:19] 172 Republican lawmakers voted against renewing the Violence Against Women Act and their reasoning is atrocious. So before I get to their reasoning, this was an act that was passed originally back in the 90s. It was within Joe Biden's crime bill. The crime bill itself was garbage, but this was the one piece of it that got people like Bernie Sanders on board to vote for it. And it has been renewed every five years since. So this has to be renewed every five years. Normally there isn't much of an issue, but it wasn't passed in 2019 because of the GOP controlled Senate.

So now it's up for a vote again. Passed the House, but 172 members of the GOP voting against it. Now, before I get to their reasoning, let me give you a little more information here on the act itself. So from The Hill, the legislation, which was re-introduced by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee House Judiciary Committee Chairman, Jerry Nadler, and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick, would provide grants to state and local governments for programs addressing domestic abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. It would further close a so-called boyfriend loophole to prevent dating partners convicted of domestic violence or abuse from buying or owning guns. Current law only applies the gun purchase restriction to spouses or formerly married partners convicted of abuse or under a restraining order.

Now this seems like a no brainer. Even if you are a Republican, knowing that it's going to pass a Democratically controlled House, you might as well be on the record supporting a piece of legislation that actually protects women. At least pretend to be a good person sometimes. But no, they voted against it. And you may already be able to guess, at least partly, as to why. GOP critics of the measure argue that the bill restricts gun rights by preventing people convicted of stalking or abusing dating partners from buying a gun. They also object to language that provides additional protections for transgender individuals.

So Republican lawmakers voted against this because it offers too much protection to women. They want people who have been convicted of stalking or abusing dating partners to buy a gun. They want these people to be able to own guns. And then, and of course, transgender protections. Anything would, you can give one iota of help to the trans community, GOP lawmakers against it instantly for no reason at all.

Do we really have to - who do you think is going to be on the right side of history here? You look back at civil rights, MLK who was against them back then, and now these days Republicans try to claim him. Absolutely absurd. But whether it's civil rights or gay rights, who do you think is going to be on the right side of history looking back on this in 10, 20

years? These Republicans want to go on the record as a piece of shit. They want people to know in the future that they were pieces of shit, because there is no reason at all to vote against this. It was going to pass regardless. They could have at least pretended. Let history pretend that you were a good person once, but no.

## **The Problem With the Violence Against Women Act; - Ring of Fire Radio - Air Date 3-26-21**

**EMMA VIGLAND - HOST, RING OF FIRE:** [00:19:37] You talk about in your piece George H.W. Bush's campaign and his use of the Willie Horton story. Can you expand upon that because as violence against women becomes more racialized in the discourse and also more prominent the issue politicians like Bush I using a lot of this terminology which becomes increasingly racialized in order to buttress his campaign.

**OLUFEMI TAIWO:** [00:20:03] So, Willy Horton was someone who was serving time for a previous offense, and if I recall correctly, was granted a furlough. And during that time he committed a number of offenses, including the murder of two people and the rape of a White woman. And George H.W. Bush and his campaign cooked that into an ad and essentially said this is the future Democrats want, right?

Little has changed in the intervening decades. This is the kind of thing that they do. Trump made a very similar ad a few years ago in the run-up to the, I believe, the most recent election. And now, in one sense, that's par for the course, because that is a key Republican's strategy, but a point that Donna Murch, who's a historian, that she made is that the response of Democrats is actually how we get the '94 crime bill. So, a number of Democratic insiders, including now-President Biden, including eventual president Clinton and including other elites like Chuck Schumer, decided that they needed to run to the right on criminal justice reform to avoid the kind of devastating electoral results that Michael Dukakis got running against the Willie Horton ad that President Bush had put together.

And that went as far as President Bush flying or -- sorry, put President Clinton, during the election for his first term, flying back to personally oversee an execution in order to craft this tough-on-crime message that the '94 crime bill was part and parcel of establishing for Democrats.

**EMMA VIGLAND - HOST, RING OF FIRE:** [00:21:51] So yes, we're were in the Clinton era now, and this is obviously when the crime bill and the Violence Against Women Act is birthed. And so, it wasn't just the war-on-drugs element of the crime buildup that ballooned mass incarceration. That's what is so key to your piece and what you lay out so well.

So, we're seeing the policing element of the rhetoric against violence against women expanding. As those groups were getting government funding, it becomes more meshed together, and now, in the Violence Against Women Act, there are funds, stop grants, money that is given to increase the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence, basically.

So, can you talk about what that did to advance a lot of the racial elements and the mass incarceration elements that are so under-discussed and in this part of the crime bill?

**ABIGAIL HIGGINS:** [00:22:50] Yeah. So, because of this atmosphere that Femi just described, the Violence Against Women Act was included in the crime bill in large part so that more progressive members of the Democratic party would sign on to the crime bill. But because of all of those things that Femi was just describing in both parties, it was really crucial that these still used lots of tough-on-crime language and included lots of tough-on-crime legislation.

And if you look at the debates that were occurring over the Violence Against Women Act, there was really like remarkable language that was like, we need less money for social workers and more money for jail cells, and, women are going to die if you don't vote for this bill and we don't get more money in the hands of police and open up increased death penalties. Like really remarkable language that was being used. And that language resulted in a lot of what are called mandatory arrest laws which essentially means that when a police officer is called for a domestic violence incident or a domestic disturbance, then the cop has to make an arrest when they get to the residence.

Obviously, there are a variety of incredibly complicated situations that can occur when a cop is called. And if you were leaving one individual police officer to make a decision about who is going to get arrested even if both parties end up saying we don't wanna make any arrests; we don't want to involve the police. A police officer has to make an arrest. And, one of the things that we saw from that is a dramatic increase of the arrest of women and the dramatic increase in the arrest of and the incarceration of women. We saw men's and women's incarceration increase significantly as a result of mandatory arrest laws. But, in California, the arrest of women increased by 400%.

**EMMA VIGLAND - HOST, RING OF FIRE:** [00:24:42] So, an unreal statistic that you wrote. And then, I'm sorry, just to cut you off really quickly, women recently in recent decades have been incarcerated. Their incarceration rates were increasing twice as fast as men which is just something I was completely unaware of.

Continue.

**ABIGAIL HIGGINS:** [00:24:59] Yeah, absolutely. And I think incarceration. . . It is still overwhelmingly men who are incarcerated. But yeah, women and Black women in particular, one of the fastest groups of incarcerated people in the United States, and these stop grants which the Violence Against Women Act was full of, millions and millions of dollars, I think in 1995 there were \$26 million for stop grants. And by 2010, there were \$189 million for stop grants. And stop grants are basically almost exclusively money to increase either mandatory arrests or pro-arrest policies. So, that is all money that is going to police departments and law enforcement to get people arrested and prosecuted and eventually incarcerated.

**EMMA VIGLAND - HOST, RING OF FIRE:** [00:25:46] Yeah. The mandatory arrest element, I think, you almost take it for granted when you see, say a domestic violence call in a TV show or something like that, that that's what happens, but it was not always that way. And as you guys write, it increases the adversarial relationship between the two parties involved really, and involves the police in a way that, with the Black communities, more rightly so, mistrustful of police, etc. So it's all of these complicated dynamics, but it also occurs to me to just when you talk about how this conversation became increasingly racialized in the discourse, how when you have lawmakers pounding the drum saying we have to protect women, we have to protect women, what that really meant was we have to protect White

women. And a lot of this is about controlling White women, lawmakers, White lawmakers terrified about White women versus Black men, etc., was that a lot of the dynamic there based on the Horton story that was discussed, as well?

**ABIGAIL HIGGINS:** [00:26:50] Yeah, and there was also the Minneapolis experiment, which a lot of this legislation was actually based off of, was an experiment in Minneapolis that, initially a relatively small study that basically showed that it kept women safer to make an arrest when a police officer came to after a call. And basically, massive publicity followed that study; it was covered in the *New York Times*. It was covered in a bunch of different publications. And mandatory arrest policies increased dramatically after that study. And what was found out not that long after was that study was done in a predominantly White area, and it actually showed that mandatory arrests may help some middle- and upper-class White women.

But the harms that it has for poor Black people and for poor Black women are remarkable because it doesn't take into account the harms of incarceration on poor communities in the United States. And actually, the later iterations of the study with an expanded study pool, found that having a partner arrested increased Black women's mortality by 98%.

And that wasn't, and that's, yeah, it's a crazy number. And that is not necessarily as a result of homicide. That's a result of things like heart disease and things like extraordinary levels of stress and diseases of poverty. And so, I think that's something that I think we kept coming back to is that this legislation just doesn't take into account how much poverty kills people.

Yeah.

**OLUFEMI TAIWO:** [00:28:25] Yeah. I would just add to that that I think one of the things to question in the background of how we think about this politics is what the actual considerations were in terms of what's being protected and who's being protected. Because when a group of researchers, including one of the authors of the original study, did further study and found out that the facts actually backfire for significant amounts of people and that mandatory arrest wasn't helping, there wasn't any push from police departments to roll back these flawed policies. And points that one of the Democratic supporters of the bill made, at the time in 1994, is that a quarter of the money assigned to the crime bill was for the Violence Against Women Act. And that money went disproportionately to fund law enforcement and prosecutors to fund the trainings for them, essentially. If you're following the accounting, if you're following the money, it was flowing from the coffers of the United States Congress into these institutions that have a vested interest in portraying crime in a particular way.

**EMMA VIGLAND - HOST, RING OF FIRE:** [00:29:34] Yeah. It's just the increased militarization of police, and the way they have unlimited resources to basically behave in the way that we've seen. A glaring spotlight on this, especially in recent years.

So, let's bring it back to -- and hear Joe Biden and his presidency, because he cites the violence. He just cited it in an interview with George Stephanopoulos on ABC as the crown jewel of his time in the Senate, all the deregulation of the credit card industry, anyway, the crime bill itself. But the Violence Against Women Act, he talks about with a lot of pride.

And he promised that in his first hundred days that they were going to reauthorize it. It lapsed in 2019 and it was just reauthorizing the House, but the Senate has to reauthorize it, as well. It contains gun provisions so Republicans are gonna balk at that. But obviously, given this information that you've provided, I really don't want it to be reauthorized.

So what is the path forward outside of the Violence Against Women Act, and what does this mean for Joe Biden and his kind of evolution on this front, if there is any evolution?

**OLUFEMI TAIWO:** [00:30:58] In many ways it is the question. And for reasons that have to do both with the way that we think about violence and the actual kind of institutional problems of trying to address violence at its root, it's the tough case for the increasingly mainstream conversation around prison abolitionism and police abolitionism and finding different, more restoratively rooted ways and transformatively rooted ways to address crime and violence.

And I would emphasize violence rather than crime because crime is politically constructed. But there are people doing a lot of work on more restorative approaches to addressing harm within communities. There's a peacemaking program that's being run by the Navajo nation. Mariame Kaba's new book is best-selling, and people are beginning to think in more creative ways about other ways to address harm in communities other than policing, nightsticks, incarceration, and these more violent state-run methods.

I think at a minimum, we have to reverse the kind of trajectory that got started in the '90s when they started defunding things that support people and routing that funding into police and adjacent institutions.

## **Sarah Everard vigil Telegraph columnists explain why they're going - The Telegraph - Air Date 3-12-21**

**BRYONY GORDON:** [00:32:21] I will be at that bandstand, wherever you can find me. I don't care. The more important things that statement here, I think. The systems that were put in place to protect her failed. And the people that are in charge of those systems are now telling us that we can't protest this tragedy. Frankly, that makes no sense to me.

I live in Clapham. Posters started to go up around this time last week, and my daughter was trying to ask me why there were posters for a missing woman, as opposed to say a missing cat. How do you explain that? I think seeing firsthand this week, the park where I usually take my daughter for walks or where I go running, alone often, police in forensic outfits combing your local park, it really, really brings home to you the kind of horror of this and why we need to be protesting. We need to be reclaiming the streets I guess.

**UNKNOWN POLICE OFFICER:** [00:33:27] Yesterday evening, officers arrested a serving Metropolitan Police officer at an address in Kent in connection with the disappearance of Sarah Everard.

**CLAIRE COHEN:** [00:33:37] I know Scotland Yard has gone to great lengths to say that what happened to Sarah or what we think happened to Sarah is very rare. But for me that really

ignores the fact that these things happen on a sliding scale. That's why so many women feel so deeply moved because we will have something on that same spectrum happen to us.

We've been followed home. We've been harassed. We've been groped. We've been catcalled. We've been assaulted. And that is why I was so deeply shocked because I think for anyone of us, we feel like had one element in that situation just been slightly different, if somebody hadn't come along and interrupted or whatever it might be, it could of been much more serious.

**BRYONY GORDON:** [00:34:17] When it started to be reported that she'd gone missing, I was really shocked that in quite a few courses of the internet, there were people saying, well, what was she doing walking home alone? That's the thing I think that has really ignited people's fury, is the thing that - the first reaction of the police was to say, women - to say to people in the local area, be careful, don't go out by yourself late at night.

And a friend of mine said to me, "well that's just common sense though, isn't it Bryony? You know that someone is missing." And I was like, no, this doesn't, this isn't common, this just makes no sense to me at all that I, that women should be to blame for these things happening. And I certainly don't want my daughter to grow up in a world where she thinks that women are to blame if they go missing because they were out at night by themselves.

**CAITLIN PROWL:** [00:35:12] When a case like this that's very public comes to the front of our minds, and in this case it was because up until very recently there was a very public appeal for information, and so I think that's why it's really emerged in the media. And I think when that comes up, it does force us to examine our own lives and our own experiences. And that's where you get people telling their stories.

And of course the sad truth of this is that we all have a story in some shape or form. I think I would go as far as to say every woman that I know, has some sort of story to tell and some sort of experience and that's the real tragedy of it. So I think the online response is equal parts heartbreaking and difficult, but also I do feel a sense of empowerment when I read that. I think people need to hear these stories. Without these stories we don't get anywhere, we don't make progress. Any progress that's made always has to have a human face, and I think that is what's happening.

**CLAIRE COHEN:** [00:36:04] There are people on social media today saying that the protest has been politicized and it should therefore be canceled. But in my view, it needs to be politicized. What are we doing if it's not being politicized? Unless politicians get involved and we have a specific public sexual harassment offense put in place, unless more money has given to domestic abuse refuges, unless the crown prosecution service is getting more rape convictions, what is it all for? It absolutely needs to be politicized.

**BRYONY GORDON:** [00:36:34] Living next to that common, I would tell you last summer, when we were in a lockdown that common's a huge wide open space, and it was thousands and thousands of people would congregate on it during the lockdowns. It was like living next to Glastonbury Festival at some points and the police didn't move anyone on. So, the argument that it's for our safety when we know that people are able to socially distance, the organizers themselves in all of their marketing material for the event were like, you must wear masks and be socially distanced. All the care has been taken, so I will be there.

**CLAIRE COHEN:** [00:37:15] I think it's also extraordinary that we're having a conversation about COVID safety when it comes to this vigil, this protest, and of course that's incredibly important and I will absolutely be observing social distancing myself when I'm there, but really this conversation was about women's safety, it's not about COVID safety. And the fact that that conversation has been allowed to dominate the other, I think shows exactly how seriously you take it.

And some of the lockdown policies have really affected women's safety. I heard from countless women in my role as women's editor, who haven't felt safe to walk the streets on their own when lock down was at its harshest or felt that they can't go out and exercise after dark or by themselves. And there have been increased reports of harassment under those circumstances, and that's incredibly worrying. So I think one conversation shouldn't be allowed to dominate.

## **Sarah Everard & Violence Against Women - TyskySour - Air Date 3-12-21**

**MICHAEL WALKER - HOST, NOVARA MEDIA:** [00:38:03] What I want to bring up is from NHS worker Kate Jarman. So, she wrote, "like this tweet if as a woman you've walked home with your keys in your hand in case you need to use them in self-defense, if you faked being on the phone as you walk past the man coming towards you, if you've changed your routes, if you started to run in fear, and like this tweet if that's been because of the behavior of men, whether it's men's behavior that needs to change, not women's." We also have a tweet here from our own Novara Zone Ash Sarkar who tweeted, I can't remember the first time I was targeted on the street, mostly because it started so young. And I can't think of a time when it wasn't a part of just being in public as a woman. It happened when I was in school uniform; it still happens in broad daylight as well as at night. And finally, Helen Bernard, who is director of the Joseph Roundtree Foundation, pointed out the very important point in response to the people who say you should get a cab home; don't walk home at night. She says there was actually no safe way to get home. So she tweets, get a taxi? So many nights finishing work late and getting in a taxi calling home so the driver could hear me tell someone where I was, tracking the route to judge if I was being taken the right way, wondering if I could kick open the door if needed. It's exhausting. Now, as I say, there are thousands and thousands of these tweets. Dahlia, I want your thoughts on how meaningful this moment could be. Obviously, it has a lots of resonances, I suppose, with I can't breathe, with the response to the death of George Floyd, also with the Me, too movement where one revelation about a particularly powerful man prompted many women to talk about their experiences of harassment, and we can talk about how effective or ineffective that movement was. But what do you make of this outpouring?

**DAHLIA GABRIEL:** [00:39:43] I think that it's important to make it when a voice feels collective, it can really help. I think that what struck me so much about these tweets, and all of these women talking about, like I said earlier, the strategies that they take in order to try and feel in control of what's going to happen to them is that it tells me that women turn to themselves to keep themselves safe. They don't turn -- and their communities and their friends who they call before they get into a cab or they call before they start their journey home -- that we actually don't rely on the police to keep them safe. And, it's something that

we hear a lot that it's not something that actually is what happens on the ground, and whether it's carrying hairspray around, keys between their knuckles checking with friends; I could probably put a mortgage on a house with the amount of money I get to spend on Ubers because I'm scared to walk alone at night.

So, the police don't actually make women feel safer; they're not who we turn to try and feel safe. And any woman or queer person who's actually been through the system when they've experienced harm, whether it's harassment, whether it's stalking, other gender-based violences. When women have gone to institutions that they are told are there to protect them and been like, I know that this man is going to hurt me, and any woman that's done that can tell you that police sure as hell aren't useful when that's the case. But I think also with a lot of these messages, with all of these tweets, I think it's also really careful really important to tread quite a difficult line here, which is it's very important to talk about how we do all these strategies to keep us safe, and even when you do them, we still can be subject to harassment and violence.

But I think it's really important to not center this conversation around questions of innocence. Because it implies that there are some women who can't take those strategies, whether they are sex workers, or they worked in the nighttime economy, all the women who just love to stay out late and wait, what the hell they want to wear, enjoy their night somehow didn't take the right precautionary measures that they should have taken to prevent harm. And I think especially when it comes to harm experienced by the police, and obviously, we don't know the details of this particular case, but there is a long tradition of women talking about experiencing sexual violence or experiencing harm at the hands of the police officer and not being able to actually do anything about it. It's especially important to avoid that question of innocence because it suggests that if you're not innocent, then violence or harm that you're subjected to by the police, whether it's on the street or in a cell, is somehow deserved or not concerning or par for the course. So, I think that these kinds of tweets have done a lot of work to, I think, bring realization to the kind of context that women are living in. But I think it's really important, again, to center on the systemic causes of this and the conditions that make women vulnerable rather than what behaviors women should take on in order to try and assuage their vulnerability, even though, inevitably, because you want to feel some control over your life you do them, I do them all the time. So, yeah, I think that's a kind of convoluted response, but I'm still muddling my way through trying to think about quite a difficult situation.

## **Why women feel unsafe on Britain's streets - Channel 4 News - Air Date 3-11-21**

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:42:47] I suppose the problem is when you say we should be no more frightened, or women should be no more frightened than usual, for many women, usual is pretty terrible. Sophia Moreau, can you tell me a little bit about what happened to you?

**SOPHIA MOREAU:** [00:42:58] So when I was 16 years old, I was walking in broad daylight from my sixth form at the time, and I was followed home. I realized that I was being followed and went into a shop. I waited there for about 20 minutes because I didn't want him to see where I lived, just in case. I naively actually asked him, "are you following me?" because I

was in disbelief as to what was actually happening. And he denied following me and I realized I just needed to get out of the situation, but I had, as many people do, the reaction of freezing.

I didn't report it on that day because I knew that it would not have met the threshold. So I noted down his details while I still remembered them. Then two months later, or it was about a month and a half perhaps, after I changed address for unrelated reasons, I saw him outside of my new address and this is when I realized I do need to call the police now, hopefully I will have met the threshold. Instead, when I did report it, I was talked out of taking it any further by the police officer.

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:43:58] You're 16 at that state. Describe that level of fear, and what that does to you subsequently.

**SOPHIA MOREAU:** [00:44:06] The sad thing is I was feeling fear, but it was also familiarity. I'd been sexually harassed beforehand. I'd been street harassed beforehand. It was more a matter of how do I prevent this from becoming serious?

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:44:17] Jess Phillips, she felt fear, but she felt familiarity. And that sense of familiarity is what we have heard from women all over the country over the last 24 hours.

**JESS PHILLIPS MP:** [00:44:31] Yeah. There has been a massive outpouring of expressions of the risk assessment that women have to do every single day when they're doing anything. And we do it without even realizing that it's happening. And I think it is important that the point that has been made about how we're no more in danger today than we were yesterday, in light of this case, which has been harrowing and has brought about feelings of real fear and upset. We are no more at danger as individuals, but we were already at risk.

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:45:08] Clearly, what many women are saying is that this is an issue about men. The focus is endlessly on women. How do women modify their behavior? But many women saying this is an issue for men. And Daniel Guinness, you're the director of Beyond Equality, you work with boys and young men. What are you telling them? What are you hearing from them about this issue?

**DANIEL GUINNESS:** [00:45:31] There's a lot of panic in moment like this, that we have at the moment, but there's a lot of disbelief and denial at many, many other times in the year. And we do say to young men and boys, you have a huge role to play in ending this, in actually creating a society that is safe and can be safe for everyone.

And the reason why men have such a big role to play is the other side of the stats. When you look at who's perpetrating the violence, the vast majority of violent crime is perpetrated by men, the vast majority. And we as men have such an important part in denormalizing, destabilizing, challenging, disrupting, any of those norms that say it's okay to resort to violence, it's okay to force yourself on somebody.

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:46:16] Jess Phillips.

**JESS PHILLIPS MP:** [00:46:18] Yeah. I just think that it's a really important thing to say. I don't want to pitch men versus women and say they're getting killed more than them. One thing I would say where men definitely win is the people who are perpetrating the violence against

both men and women. What I don't want this time, in light of this case, in light of the outpouring of women talking about how they feel and what they want to go forward, what I don't want is it to become men versus women. This is about how we're asking men to join us because it is men's violence and we've done everything we can.

We've walked a different way. We've locked ourselves away. We've asked our mates to follow us on a phone. We'd done it. We've done it. We've done it all and it didn't keep us safe. So we're going to hand over to the men and say, come along. What are we going to do to stop this? And we're going to, I'm going to certainly be putting that up the government's door as well, because this is a system issue, not just a men versus women issue.

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:47:19] Sophia, where do you think the change lies? How do we change this now?

**SOPHIA MOREAU:** [00:47:26] I would say that it definitely has to be a shared effort because at the heart of it, these are social issues. They can escalate to crimes, but they are at the very beginning social issues and it needs to be addressed as a behavioral level, as well as, as a process level, as well as in the terms of how authorities handle it.

**JACKIE LONG - HOST, CHANNEL 4 NEWS:** [00:47:42] And Jess Phillips there a huge question, isn't there, about how the criminal justice system is able or willing to deal with these crimes against women. And at the moment, on pretty much every measure, it's failing, isn't it?

**JESS PHILIPS MP:** [00:47:56] It's totally failing and it fails more and more, year on year, and whether that's a resources issue or a risk issue, and they're saying that we don't deal with these things because of this resource or there's a failure in evidence gather at the police end, at the crown prosecution end. It doesn't really matter. 24% fall in rape convictions on this day compared to last year. 23% reduction in domestic violence convictions.

What I'm afraid to say, and I make no bones about saying this actually, every year at the moment for about the past decade, it has basically, we're slowly but surely legalizing violence against women. We're letting people get away with it to the point that when nothing happened to that man who did that to Sophia, what message does that send? That sends the message that he can do that again, and he will, and maybe it'll escalate next time. That the government have got to look at the data in all the failures, and really insert themselves into it the way they insert themselves into terrorism, the way they insert themselves into knife crime.

## **Sarah Everard's vigil aggressively broken up by London police - CNN UK - Air Date 3-14-21**

**ROBYN CURNOW - HOST, CNN UK:** [00:49:13] We are seeing an outpouring of rage and grief in London over the murder of 33 year old Sarah Everard and the fear that women across the country live with every day. Thousands of people packed into this public square the same part of town where Everard was last seen. She disappeared while walking home at night and was later found dead.

A metropolitan police officer has been charged with her murder and kidnapping and for women in the UK and all over the world, Everard's murder is proof that the fear they live

with is real. The fear of simply walking down the street or across Clapham Common as it is here, as women knowing you're not safe.

Well earlier, Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, made a private trip to Everard's Memorial. Here she is seen in this green jacket. A source tells us she wanted to pay her respects to Sarah and her family, and that she remembers what it felt like to walk around London at night before she was married. But not long after the crowds gathered, police broke up the vigil citing coronavirus dangerous. There were clashes, as you can see here as police handcuffed and dragged mourners away. The police response is outraging government officials and civilians alike.

For women mourning a murder victim though at a vigil, being pushed around by police is a ironic reminder of the misogyny and violence they say they face every day. And here's Nina Dos Santos with that.

**NINA DOS SANTOS:** [00:50:34] They came to remember a young woman whose life was cruelly cut short only to be wrenched from their vigil by officers from the very force where her suspected killer served.

The death of 33 year old Sarah Everard while walking home one night has plunged Britain into a moment of reckoning on women's rights and safety.

**UNKNOWN PROTESTER:** [00:50:56] Essentially, women have a curfew now. As soon as it get dark out, you either have to be with someone or you have to be home.

We're fed up with having to worry all the time and not feel safe. And this is just proven our fears to be true.

**NINA DOS SANTOS:** [00:51:13] Sarah vanished on March the third was walking home from one residential part of the capital to another at around 9:00 PM. Her remains were found last week nearly 60 miles away, and a serving London Metropolitan police officer who's been charged in connection with her death. What shocked so many as both the randomness of what happened to Sarah and the relate-ability of the circumstances under which she disappeared. She was last seen walking along this busy street in South London, after having been to visit a friend who lived nearby. It wasn't particularly late, and this isn't a particularly dangerous area.

The vigil for Sarah had been organized by women in the neighborhood where she vanished, but was canceled due to COVID regulations, yet thousands still came. Their aim, to reclaim women's rights to walk where they want, when they want, without fear.

**UNKNOWN PROTESTER:** [00:52:06] While maybe abduction for runners is not as common as being said, being groped on a bus is, being yelled at is, being followed home is, and those are things that need to change because just because not all the stories end in tragedy doesn't mean they're not worth telling.

**NINA DOS SANTOS:** [00:52:23] On Twitter, women shared their stories.

I can vividly remember getting harassed by a man who tried to assault me when I was 18... On my walk home, a man in a car pulled up next to me to tell me I had... When I was 13, a man followed me and my friend down an alley and flashed us...

In parliament, one lawmaker shared the names of women who were killed in the UK this year. Among them, six who perished the same week Sarah went missing. For David Challen, who campaigned to overturn his mother's sentence for killing his abusive father, there's a lot men in Britain can do to better understand and aid women's plight.

**DAVID CHALLEN:** [00:53:04] It's time for misogyny to be recognized as a hate crime. These are offensive acts on a sliding scale that creates harm and violence and trauma for women throughout their lives. They all have it in common and then are blind to it.

**NINA DOS SANTOS:** [00:53:17] The scenes of police arresting masked women holding a vigil, despite COVID rules sparked anger nationwide, and politicians from all sides demanded an explanation. The Met said they hadn't wanted to act.

**HELEN BELL:** [00:53:31] We were placed in this position because of the overriding need to protect people's safety.

**NINA DOS SANTOS:** [00:53:36] Sarah Everard's family said their daughter was beautiful and bright, a shining example to us all. In the senseless tragedy of her death, many hope her memory may guide the way for other women towards a safer path home in the future and away from scenes like these. Nina Dos Santos, CNN, London.

**ROBYN CURNOW - HOST, CNN UK:** [00:53:58] And as Nina reported their, London Metropolitan Police are defending their actions at this vigil. Take a listen.

**HELEN BELL:** [00:54:06] Officers on the ground were faced with a very difficult decision. Hundreds of people were tightly packed together, posing a very real risk of easily transmitting COVID-19. Police must act for people's safety. This is the only responsible thing to do.

**ROBYN CURNOW - HOST, CNN UK:** [00:54:24] But London mayor, Sadiq Khan says the police response is "unacceptable", tweeting, "The police have a responsibility to enforce Covid laws, but from images I've seen it's clear the response was at times neither appropriate nor proportionate.

## **The Economics of Abolition - The Laura Flanders Show - Air Date 12-24-20**

**VIJAY PRASHAD:** [00:54:36] Abolition is a tough concept because, in a way, it's a synonym for freedom and for emancipation. In the history of the United States, it's emancipation from perhaps one of the most horrendous things human beings have done, which is to enslave other human beings. So the abolition movement was the movement of emancipation. Today, human beings face a different kind of enslavement. We are enslaved in a way, in a system that denies us freedom because we don't have money. And so the way I understand abolition and emancipation is we need to abolish the system that robs us of our dignity.

**LAURA FLANDERS - HOST, THE LAURA FLANDERS SHOW:** [00:55:18] But what system would we need to abolish to emancipate ourselves in the way that you're describing?

**VIJAY PRASHAD:** [00:55:24] If I don't name the system, everything I've said sounds logical. Everybody's should be moved by the fact that 2.5 billion people go to bed hungry at night,

and of them, most of them are children, it turns out. But if I say that what prevents the hungry from getting access to food is money, and the lack of money, the dispossession of large numbers of people is a consequence of, and here it comes, is a consequence of capitalism, and that therefore, we have to think hard about the fact that capitalism is simply not capable of feeding half the world's population, and therefore, we need to abolish capitalism.

That scares people because they think, well, what are you talking about? I mean, capitalism is what provides us with wealth. And then of course, one turns around and says, no, it's not capitalism that provides you with wealth or with the amazing things that the modern world has, it's human ingenuity. If I had started by saying abolition means the abolition of capitalism, nobody wants to watch that because that's terrifying.

But if you think deeply about it and you wonder, why are people dispossessed, why don't people have money in their pocket? It's not because they're not working or trying to find work. These two things are important. People work and are not able to cover their bills.

**LAURA FLANDERS - HOST, THE LAURA FLANDERS SHOW:** [00:56:43] You haven't mentioned race yet. If we look at our movements, our social movements today that are raising the battle cry of abolition, there are Black Lives Matter movements, are Movement for Black Lives. It's very specifically viewed through a racial lens. How do you see the racial lens and the patriarchal lens playing in all this?

**VIJAY PRASHAD:** [00:57:05] Most of the planet is not white. In the West, it's of course, people of color that are slipping at higher rates into hunger and poverty. This is the history of colonialism. It's because of enslavement that large amounts of wealth was stolen from people, taken to Britain and so on to fund the Industrial Revolution. So that's how colonialism finances capitalism and has then 300 years of impact in the history of capitalist development.

**LAURA FLANDERS - HOST, THE LAURA FLANDERS SHOW:** [00:57:34] And the relationship with racism, just to put a fine pin on it?

**VIJAY PRASHAD:** [00:57:38] When colonialism began to develop, these ideas come, which is that certain people in the world just don't deserve to live with the fruits of dignity. John Locke, who wrote these treatise on government and is seen as one of the important figures in liberalism, in the Second Treatise of Government, John Locke says that Native Americans, because they don't advance and develop God's bounty, they can be exterminated, they can be dispossessed. I mean, this is one of the people looked at as the main figures, intellectual figures of the Enlightenment and of liberalism really who saying it's okay to disrespect entirely Native Americans, dispossess them, exterminate them, et cetera. Racism is cooked in to the key ideology of capitalism, which is liberalism.

**LAURA FLANDERS - HOST, THE LAURA FLANDERS SHOW:** [00:58:27] The reason this is important to talk about this, it seems to me, is because while everything that you've said is deeply discouraging because it paints such a such a long history of a very big system. On the other side, it does at least indicate that this dispossession was a manmade kind of a thing. That it's a system that we could perhaps unravel. And I'm asking you now to think about this moment that we're in of movement and uprising. Where do you see the potential and where, perhaps, the pitfalls? And I'm thinking of the Movement for Black Lives, the

movement for defund the police, and these calls for abolition that are getting louder by the day.

**VIJAY PRASHAD:** [00:59:07] Essentially, if I could distill it in economic terms a little bit, I would say what they are saying, Laura, is they're saying the morals of the United States of America are not captured in the US Constitution. Don't keep talking about the Constitution to understand the country. The morals of the US government are captured in the annual budget. The budget is a much better reflection of a country's morality than its constitution. And if you, every single year put more money, much more money into repression, into the police, into the military, into imprisonment and so on, and so little money to taking care of human troubles... nobody's saying we're perfect, we're filled with flaws. We need help, and communities can help, families can help, the government can help. So you need money going there.

## **Into Defunding the LAPD - Into America - Air Date 6-11-20**

**MELINA ABDULLAH :** [01:00:03] I came of age in the '90s. And, you know, that's kind of the height of the crack cocaine epidemic. That's the height of the war on drugs, the harassment of, especially young black people by police, was an every day regular occurrence. I remember, like, every time I went on a date we'd get pulled over.

The question was just how far would they take the harassment. So I didn't have to become conscious through, like, some political mechanism. It was our lives as black people of my generation that there was always tension between black folks and police.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:00:51] And if you were young and black growin' up in California, or really anywhere during the early-'90s, you remember the moment in 1991 when grainy video footage captured four L.A.P.D. officers beating Rodney King during a traffic stop. [HELICOPTER]

**MELINA ABDULLAH :** [01:01:06] We understood, almost viscerally, that the police were moving on behalf of someone who wasn't us.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:01:20] That home video tape is shown around the world. And it's this moment when it's like, "Okay, the officers aren't gonna get out of it this time." We've had this experience of daily harassment and abuse, and a year later the officers are acquitted.

**ARCHIVAL RECORDING:** [01:01:37] And it's been an ugly, terrible situation all night long. Fires, looting, gunshots, random beating attacks. And now the National Guard may be ready to move in. Our chopper pilot Cliff Welsh has been over the violence all night. We're gonna go to him live.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:01:50] It's that moment of frustration that erupts because of the ways the police had not changed and it erupted in the biggest moment of unrest in American history, in terms of a single city.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:02:02] Max Felker-Kantor is an historian at Ball State University. He says in order to understand how Los Angeles got to this moment we're in now you've got to understand what the city's been through. That's a history that goes way back before King's beating.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:02:17] Los Angeles, like many cities, experiences the great migration starting in the early twentieth century, you know, with then through World War II, where the black population grows exponentially. But the things that's crucial is that Los Angeles, prior to that, had largely been an Anglo-dominated city of white migrants.

And the police force was essentially a force that represented that white, Anglo, Protestant community. As the black population grows, the police see that as bringing criminality, bringing unrest, bringing disorder. And so the police, from almost moment one, had long been antagonistic to the black community. And you have black migrants in the '50s and '60s saying things like, "Essentially the police here don't operate any differently than how we were treated in the south."

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:03:10] That's amazing. So black folks fleeing the kind of wild, explicit violence of the south arrive and see it institutionalized in a different way once they get up to the north or the west.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:03:20] There are even stories of the ways that the L.A.P.D. recruited officers from the south to bring to LA, right? And so it's even, there's that kind of reproduction of that system there of white supremacy and racial control, even just through the recruiting mechanism.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:03:37] So that friction has sparked an explosion here and there. Walk us through just the uprisings, rebellions, tension that kind of spilled over in Los Angeles.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:03:46] For this period I study it really starts with the 1965 Watts Uprising. The police, you know, pull over a black motorist. Then they handle him roughly, throw him, you know, are trying to arrest him, put him in the squad car. And a crowd comes out and says, you know, like, "You can't be treating him like this."

There's this kind of claim of brutality. The key is that that comes on a decade and a half of police brutality and harassment of residents in the black community. And so it's that moment where it's frustration and anger at the treatment by the L.A.P.D. of the black community that erupts into six days of anti-police protest and unrest.

**ARCHIVAL RECORDING:** [01:04:26] The 40th Armored Division employed nearly 8,000 officers and men to quell the riots. The riots were the single most devastating disaster to befall Los Angeles in its long history.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:04:40] After the Watts Rebellion in 1965 came the police beating of Rodney King in '91 and subsequent riots after the officers' acquittal in 1992. Five years later there was another scandal.

**ARCHIVAL RECORDING:** [01:04:51] Former L.A.P.D. officer Rafael Perez, convicted of stealing cocaine, became an informant, revealing widespread misconduct in the anti-gang unit where he worked.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:05:02] The rampart scandal, this moment where the anti-gang task force CRASH, or the Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums, CRASH [LAUGH]--

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:05:11] That sounds crazy.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:05:12] Think of those acronyms. It's exposed that officers in that rampart CRASH unit were engaged in things like stealing evidence and cocaine from evidence rooms to sell, to frame suspects. There are some that were accused of just outright murdering suspects or other black and brown residents. And that gets exposed. And it again reveals that there's this systematic kind of racist, corrupt practice within the department, that it's not just bad apples here or there.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:05:43] So there's been flash-point after flash-point. But along the way there have also been attempts at reform.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:05:49] There's a few things that also come out of the Rodney King beating, which is crucial, is that there was actual city charter reform, where they took away the chief of police, his, like, life tenure. Because prior to that, the chief of police couldn't really be fired 'cause he had civil service protection.

So there is some reform at the, like, city charter structure level. At the national level, the federal government passes legislation that enables the Department of Justice to investigate police departments for patterns and practice of civil rights abuses.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:06:20] In 2001 that law was used to put L.A.P.D. under federal oversight in an agreement between the Justice Department and the city known as a consent decree.

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:06:30] They essentially say, "There is a subculture and pattern and practice of racism and racist policing within the police department." And that, "This can't be solved by just one individual."

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:06:42] Had there actually been gains and progress during those years?

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:06:45] There's some evidence by some of the reports that come towards the end of these consent decrees in the LA case, where they're saying, "Yes, there are these changes that have been made," whether it's in kind of arrest statistics, crime going down, the sense of, like, polls, residents thinking that the L.A.P.D. are more fair and treat people better, right?

And they institute community policing. But there's a lot of evidence that's shown that coming out of that the L.A.P.D. in the past five years after the consent decree was lifted in 2013 continued to disproportionately stop black and brown residents, you know, in cars at disproportionate rates. The Metropolitan Unit, the elite Metro Unit of the L.A.P.D. continued to stop and frisk black and brown residents at increased rates. There might be a lot of people who would say, "Well, it is slightly better. It's not the 1980s." Right--

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:07:39] That's some bar, right? That's [LAUGH]--

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:07:41] Right. Right. Exactly. Some people might say, "Oh, well, we can change things if we give police body cameras." Most studies show that didn't change anything. Or, "We just need more community policing." Most studies of community policing, a lot of them show that the police officers actually go in and tell communities what they want.

They don't actually listen to community, right? And so there's all sorts of these, quote, reforms that actually don't do anything to reduce the power or authority of the police. And this is where I think we see the calls for things like defunding the police as a first step towards maybe getting policing and its racially discriminatory or racist role in containing certain communities in the present.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:08:28] Okay, hold on. Let's pause right there for a second. Here's where I wanna make it plain. Defunding does not mean eliminating the budget line or taking all money away from police departments. It means making cuts. Max puts it this way:

**MAX FELKER-KANTOR:** [01:08:41] These calls for defunding is about divesting or defunding from things like policing, which get a disproportionate share of city budgets. The idea is if you take money away from the police and, you know, invest it in communities, in things like mental health services, in schools, in employment programs.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:09:07] Right now cities across the country are calling for this step to be taken. It's a rallying cry for protesters in places like Philadelphia, where their mayor proposed a 14 million dollar increase to the police budget. A majority of the city council announced they would not support his plan.

**ARCHIVAL RECORDING:** [01:09:23] Revolution, nothing less!

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:09:24] In New York Mayor Bill de Blasio vowed to cut a portion of the N.Y.P.D.'s six billion dollar annual budget and redirect money to youth programming and social services.

In Minneapolis, where George Floyd was killed, a majority of the city council went beyond budget promises and agreed to dismantle the city's police department and develop a plan to rethink public safety. And the rallying cry to defund is what Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti responded to last week when he said he would channel up to 150 million dollars away from the L.A.P.D. budget and invest that money into communities of color. When the mayor made his announcement he did so with a nod to the city's troubled history with law enforcement.

**MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI:** [01:10:08] It is time to move our rhetoric towards actions to end racism in our society, to never forget also our city's own well-documented contributions to those ill-fated chapters.

**TRYMAINE LEE - HOST, INTO AMERICA:** [01:10:22] So after years of police reform LA is trying something new. But can it work? Can taking money from the police actually help improve public safety.

## Summary

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:10:31] We've just heard clips today starting with In the Loop, giving an update on what happened when Austin cut their police funding by one third. PBS News Hour laid out the details of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. MTV Impact explained qualified immunity and compared the progress we're able to make with what gets derailed. The Rational National highlighted the Republican rejection of the Violence Against Women Act in favor of defending abusers rights to purchase guns. Ring of Fire Radio explained the origins and downsides of the Violence Against Women Act. The Telegraph explained the vigils that broke out in response to the Sarah Everhard murder. TyskySour explained women's experiences navigating society constantly on the defense. Channel 4 News focused on the role of men in an effort to make society safe for everyone. And CNN UK reported on the unsurprising, violent police response to the Sarah Everhard protests.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips from the Laura Flanders Show, which discussed abolition in another sense, addressing a different system that fails to meet the needs of society, and Into America told the history of the LA police department and the move to begin defunding it. For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes and are part of the transcript for today's episode, so you can still find them if you want to make the effort. But to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show at [BestoftheLeft.com/support](https://BestoftheLeft.com/support) or request a financial hardship membership, because we don't make a lack of funds a barrier to hearing more information. Every request is granted. No questions asked.

And now we'll hear from you.

## **Taking kids from parents and the racism of anti-immigration - Bud from Boise**

**VOICEMAILER: BUD FROM BOISE:** [01:12:21] Hi, Jay. This is Bud from Boise. I was just listening to your, I believe it was a member's-only episode, about separating children. So, immigration was in there; that Indian boarding schools was in there. I think separating black children from their parents during the slavery days was there. And then a really good, you brought up a really good point about how our welfare system and our child protection system also separates families. Really excellent, excellent episode and really difficult problems. So, very soon after listening to that, I was listening to the David Pakman Show and a caller called in and said is it possible that being against immigration can be anything but racist, and without getting into that whole thing, it got me to thinking about our immigration system. The first thing that popped into my head was maybe we get a lot more lax about allowing people in, but we don't allow them citizenship really at all, which sounds, I think, harsher than it is. However, their children by right of being born here can be citizens. And of course the parents, if they're here working, obviously they get legal residency, green cards, whatever, but I think we're gonna need people. Our birth rates are dropping, and a lot of these people, especially from the southern countries, they just want to come here and work. And they happen to have children. They sure don't want to leave them back there. So, my thought of allowing the children to be citizens sounded very generous to me at first, but then in a way there was an echo of integrating the children into our society without integrating the adults into our society.

So, maybe I'm more racist than I thought I was. I don't know. Anyway, right now we block everybody's path to citizenship, and I thought maybe this would be one more step in the right direction, but it also maybe just an interesting place to start a discussion. Stay awesome. Bye-bye.

## Final comments on how to report the truth while lying to the high heavens

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** [01:14:27] Thanks to all of those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at (202) 999-3991 or write me a message to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com).

Thanks to Bud for the call. I wouldn't worry too much about figuring out whether you were more racist than you thought. As was clarified for me by the late Michael Brooks, be hard on systems but easy on people. And that goes for yourself, too. Go easy on yourself. Save your ire for the systems we confront.

That said, I'm about to yell at a journalist for something that he wrote last summer, but I'm going to keep in mind that the real anger should be saved for the whole system of editorial checks and balances that let this little gem slip through. So, a few weeks ago, we were playing a game about headlines and how they can be so misleading that they are both true and damn dirty lies. And I found a great one. While researching the activism for today's show, Amanda came across this article and just started cursing. So, here's the headline: this California city defunded its police: killings by officer's sword. So, that's the headline. And then the very first thing you read under that headline is this. It says clarification: an earlier version of this story did not adequately explain that when the city of Vallejo reduced police funding, it did not provide additional funding to social services agencies as many current defund the police proposals advocate. The story has been revised to add that information.

So, they didn't change the headline which obviously is the most important part of an article, but they added that clarification and added in a little bit, another paragraph to the story. Basically, this is like an article warning about the dangerous ideas that some have about conducting surgery. It would go like this: some are saying that health conditions can actually be improved by cutting into the body with a procedure called surgery. One case study should give you pause. In this situation, a vagrant got a hold of a rusty knife and began stabbing passersby. Contrary to what the surgeons would have you believe, these people having been cut open actually led to decreased health conditions. In fact, they got much worse. Forgive me for harping on this. I missed this article. It came out in June last year. So the news is old, but my anger is fresh.

So here's how the actual article reads: unable to pay its bills after the 2008 financial crisis, Vallejo filed for bankruptcy and cut its police force nearly in half to fewer than 80 officers from a pre-recession high of more than 150. At the time, the working class city of 122,000 north of San Francisco struggled with high rates of violent crime and simmering mistrust of its police department. It didn't seem like things could get much worse, and then they did. Okay, great. So it's not just a story about a police force being cut. In general, it's also being

cut during a time of heightened economic precarity in a city that was already struggling, and they didn't put anything else in place.

Great. Perfect. Perfect comparison. Continuing: far from ushering in a new era of harmony between police and the people they are sworn to protect, the budget cuts worsened tensions between the department and the community and were followed by a dramatic surge in officers' use of deadly force. Vallejo's experience offers a glimpse of how a core element of the defunding agenda, fewer officers assigned to limited duties, might play out, especially in a community with limited resources. And then, this is obviously the paragraph that was added later for clarification: those who support such an approach say that the current model of policing is irrevocably broken, and that millions or billions of dollars should be moved from police budgets to social services. That did not happen in Vallejo which departed from many current prescriptions for reform in a fundamental way. As the city went broke, there was no effort to shift money from its diminished police department to other agencies and programs which likewise faced cuts.

So, yeah, brilliantly assessed. I'm glad that clarification was added, but God! Like, back to surgery. This stabbing rampage offers a glimpse of how a core element of the surgery agenda -- cutting people open for health benefits -- might play out. We've since added this paragraph for clarification: however, those who support such an approach say that surgery should be conducted in sterile environments with special surgical tools by highly trained professionals with thousands of years of accumulated medical knowledge. That did not happen in the stabbing rampage which departed from many recommended surgery procedures in a fundamental way.

Geez. I hope that writer got out the cat o' nine tails and cut his back into ribbons in self-flagellation after that one. But our thanks goes out to him and the headline writers over at the *Washington Post* for providing such a great example of journalism that can be both true and so misleading as to be a damn dirty lie. Okay. So, just a quick side note that has absolutely nothing to do with today's topic other than the city involved. I grew up in California, so I know that all of the White people in California pronounce the city of Vallejo as "val-EH-ho," and so that's how I pronounce state, but it wasn't until today when reading this story that I realized that the anglicization of that word only went half way. I guess it's a good that it at least went halfway. But White people apparently realized that when saying a word of Spanish origin that 'j's' get turned into the 'h' sound, Valleho spelled with a J, but we can't quite go far enough as to turning the double L into the 'va-YAY-ho' that would clearly be a closer approximation to proper pronunciation. But half-credit's better than none. Okay.

Keep the comments coming in at (202) 999-3991 or by emailing me to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com). That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show. Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio Ben, Dan, and Ken for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, web mastering, and so forth. And of course, thanks to all of those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support), as that is absolutely how the program survives. And everyone can support the show and earn our special secret Best of the Left art reward just by telling everyone, about the show using our Refer-o-Matic at [bestoftheleft.com/refer](https://bestoftheleft.com/refer). Check that out for details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and

every episode, all of 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 twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [bestoftheleft.com](http://bestoftheleft.com).