

# Questions raised about police role in violent KKK rally in California

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Serious questions are being raised as to whether the Anaheim Police Department (APD) intentionally allowed violence to break out at an abortive Ku Klux Klan (KKK) rally last Saturday.

The local chapter of the “Loyal White Knights” of the KKK was planning to carry out a “White Lives Matter” demonstration at Pearson Park, which is located about three miles from Disneyland.

Apparently, the site was chosen because it was the site of a 20,000-strong Klan rally held in July 1924. The KKK held a majority of seats on the Anaheim City Council in the 1920s.

According to local leader Will Quigg, the KKK asked the APD to provide security but the police refused. When Quigg proposed that the KKK hire an outside security company to protect the demonstration, the APD denied that request as well. Nevertheless the APD announced the rally on its public Facebook page.

Hours before any Klansmen showed up, dozens of visibly agitated counter-demonstrators assembled, many carrying sticks and other potential weapons. Despite the impending threat of violence, there was not a single APD officer in sight.

Around 1:30 p.m., a black SUV pulled up, and a handful of Klansmen wearing baseball caps and black clothes emblazoned with the Confederate battle flag, the KKK insignia, and patches designating their respective “ranks” disembarked. One carried a Confederate Battle flag, another the American flag, and others crude signs, such as “Save Our Land, Join the Klan.”

Some counter-demonstrators attacked immediately. In the ensuing melee, part of which was caught on video, various Klansmen, including one whose shirt read “Grand Dragon,” were punched and kicked, while three counter-demonstrators were stabbed, one

apparently by a shank attached to the end of a flagpole.

Several Klansmen jumped back into the SUV and sped off, leaving their companions in the street. At this point the APD finally appeared, broke up the fighting, called for medical attention, and began arresting people.

Five Klansmen were arrested along with seven counter-demonstrators. An eighth counter-demonstrator was arrested later, bringing the total number arrested to 13.

Despite stabbing the counter-demonstrators, all five Klansmen were released without charges after a day in jail. “It was pretty convincing that the KKK members were attacked violently,” APD spokesperson Sgt. Daron Wyatt stated, concluding, “We had to do the right thing.” Counter-demonstrators remained jailed for several days.

It is noteworthy that Wyatt has his own history of violence. During a narcotics investigation in September 2009, he hopped into a van stopped by the APD at a gas station and shot the driver, Adolph Anthony Sanchez Gonzalez, in the head as the van rolled slowly forward. An opinion by an eleven-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit called Wyatt’s description of the shooting to prevent his own kidnapping “physically impossible” and ordered a trial on Gonzalez’s daughter’s claim of excessive force. That case remains pending in Los Angeles federal court.

The last counter-demonstrators were not released until Tuesday night. One of the eight arrested, Guy Harris, 19, remains in jail, but on an unrelated matter.

The APD submitted “a comprehensive and detailed investigation, which includes a significant amount of evidence in the form of videos and still photographs from multiple sources, in addition to numerous

statements from witnesses, victims, and suspects,” according to Roxi Fyad, a spokesperson for the Orange County District Attorney’s Office. According to Wyatt, charges may yet be filed and counter-demonstrators rearrested.

The Klansmen responsible for the Anaheim provocation profess to be followers of David Duke, who only two days earlier endorsed Donald Trump for president. On a CNN Sunday news show the day following the rally the Republican frontrunner refused to condemn Duke or the KKK.

The public emergence of backward racist organizations like the KKK, and their cozy relationship with the Republican Party and local police agencies, provide a stark warning to the working class.



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