

Police respond to demonstrations across the US with vicious assaults on protesters and journalists

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Protests fueled by the state cover-up of the police murder of 26-year-old emergency medical technician Breonna Taylor continued throughout the weekend in multiple US cities and towns, despite far-right assaults and provocations, abetted by thuggish police departments.

Protests in Portland, Oregon and Louisville, Kentucky have been continuing for more than 120 days, while in cities such as Albuquerque, New Mexico; Los Angeles, California; and New York City, local instances of police brutality coupled with the decision by Republican Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron not to bring charges against either of the Louisville police officers responsible for Taylor's murder have reignited protests.

Demonstrations were held in Louisville throughout the weekend. Similar to Thursday and Friday nights' protests, on Saturday a multiracial group of youth and workers again fled to a nearby church to escape riot police once an "unlawful assembly" was declared prior to the 9 p.m. curfew. As with the previous nights, heavily armed militia members with the Oath Keepers were allowed to remain out past curfew. As of this writing, at least 28 protesters have been arrested in Louisville.

There is no sign that the protests in the city are subsiding, especially given the many questions still surrounding special prosecutor Cameron's decision not to bring charges against Louisville Metro Police Department cops, Myles Cosgrove and Jon Mattingly, who combined fired 32 shots into Taylor's apartment, killing her. On Sunday, the Kentucky State Police (KSP) released a ballistic report that does not support Cameron's assertion that Taylor's boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, actually shot Mattingly, who was struck in the thigh with a 9 millimeter round.

In Cameron's press conference last Wednesday, he said that Brett Hankison could not have shot Mattingly

because the three cops all carried .40 caliber handguns. Steven Romines, an attorney for Walker, revealed on CNN that he had acquired an LMPD record that showed Hankison had been issued a 9 mm pistol as well. The KSP report notes that "due to limited markings of comparative value" they were unable to identify nor eliminate the possibility that it was fired from Walker's weapon.

Since nationwide protests began following the May 25 murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, US President Donald Trump has consistently vilified the overwhelming peaceful protests, populated with workers and youth of every race and ethnicity as "riots" directed by "antifa," "anarchists," and "radical leftists."

Trump has sought to tie the protests, as well as calls by certain layers within the protests to "defund the police" to the Democratic Party and their nominee Joe Biden, who has in fact pledged to increase federal funding for police budgets should he come to power. This has not deterred Trump; who again, during a Sunday evening press conference stated that the Democratic Party had been taken over by "socialists" and "communists."

Within the last week, the US Attorney General William Barr and the Department of Justice (DOJ) released a statement identifying the cities of New York, Portland, and Seattle as "Jurisdictions Permitting Violence And Destruction Of Property," threatening to revoke federal funding. In a statement released by the DOJ, each of the three cities was cited specifically for refusing to accept the intervention of federal troops to quell protests.

Trump first threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act and send federal troops into Democratic-controlled cities and states during his fascistic June 1 Rose Garden speech outside the White House. Since then, Democratic governors have responded by calling up thousands of National Guard troops and state police to crush the

demonstrations, beginning with Minnesota governor Tim Waltz, who in June activated over 10,000 National Guard soldiers to terrorize and assist police in subduing protests.

This was repeated in August when Wisconsin Democratic Governor Tony Evers responded to protests in Kenosha, following the shooting of Jacob Blake in the back seven times, with the deployment of over 1,000 National Guard troops. In addition to soldiers from Wisconsin, Evers requested hundreds of National Guard infantry from neighboring states and flooded the county with hundreds of militarized police.

It is under these conditions that the Proud Boys, a self-described, “Western chauvinist” fascist group, held a rally on Saturday at Delta Park in North Portland. The rally drew less than 800 people, well below organizers’ previous estimates of 10,000 expected attendees. Approximately three miles away at Peninsula Park, a counter-rally was held attracting over 1,000 people. The two groups remained separated by police throughout the day.

Ahead of the rally, Democratic governor of Oregon, Kate Brown, issued a State of Emergency, mobilizing hundreds of Oregon state police who remained in the city well after the rally ended, which only lasted 90 minutes. Despite video evidence of heavily armed Proud Boy members assaulting journalists and bystanders, the event was allowed to proceed without any interference from the police, who reportedly only arrested two Proud Boys on weapons charges, while a third was cited for failing to display a rear license plate.

At the park, the Proud Boys were protected on all sides by the police. Prior to the event, members of the group shared “memes” that included an “antifa hunting permit.” At the park various vendors sold shirts and stickers that proclaimed, “Kyle did nothing wrong,” a reference to 17-year-old militia member Kyle Rittenhouse, who remains jailed in Illinois for his role in killing two protesters and gravely injuring a third during demonstration in Kenosha at the end of August. A delay in his extradition hearing was granted by the judge last week, postponing it until October 9. Rittenhouse’s mother, Wendy, was warmly received with a standing ovation during a Waukesha County Republican event on September 24.

In Portland, as night fell Saturday, protesters assembled outside the Federal Courthouse, where they were met with hundreds of riot police. After a protester burned a US flag, a constitutionally protected right, police declared an “unlawful assembly” and began to assault and arrest

anyone they could. Over a dozen were arrested while several journalists were beaten and shoved to ground by riot police, including 73-year-old John Rudoff.

In Orange County, California, at least two pro-Trump supporters were injured after a vehicle was driven through a crowd. The pro-Trump, pro-police “back the blue” demonstration turned violent when the Trump group crossed the six-lane Imperial Highway to assault counter-protesters. As the groups converged, police declared an unlawful assembly and ordered everyone to disperse.

Unlike recent incidents in which antiracist protesters were injured in two separate vehicle assaults, which sent one person to the hospital, the police in Orange County quickly detained and charged 40-year-old Tatian Turner with attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon. Turner is currently being held on a one million dollar bond.

Conversely, it took nearly 24 hours for Albuquerque police to release a statement that they would begin investigating an attempted hit-and-run that occurred during a Friday night protest. In a brief statement, Albuquerque Police Department Chief Harold Medina, said the department would be following “solid leads” but chastised protesters for not coordinating with the department and warned against blocking “roads with their own vehicles.”

In Mansfield, Massachusetts, roughly 40 miles south of Boston, members of the neo-Nazi group NSC-131 joined Trump supporters in another “back the blue” rally. The neo-Nazis mingled with the rest of the Trump supporters while counter-protesters remained on the other side of the street. Local press neglected to report the presence of Nazis at the event who were giving “Heil Hitler” salutes to passing motorists.



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