

Justice Denied: The Government Is Not Going to Save Us



rutherford.org/publications_resources/john_whiteheads_commentary/justice_denied_the_government_is_not_going_to_save_us

By John W. Whitehead

January 08, 2018

“The warlords of history are still kicking our heads in, and no one, not our fathers, not our Gods, is coming to save us.”— Journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled: it will not hear the case of *Young v. Borders*.

Despite the fact that a 26-year-old man was gunned down by police who banged on the wrong door at 1:30 am, failed to identify themselves as police, and then repeatedly shot and killed the innocent homeowner who answered the door while holding a gun in self-defense, the justices of the high court refused to intervene to address police misconduct.

Although 26-year-old Andrew Scott committed no crime and never fired a single bullet or lifted his firearm against police, only to be gunned down by police who were investigating a speeding incident by engaging in a middle-of-the-night “knock and talk” in Scott’s apartment complex, the Supreme Court refused to balance the scales between justice and injustice.

Despite the fact that police shot and killed nearly 1,000 people nationwide for the third year in a row (many of whom were unarmed, mentally ill, minors or were shot merely because militarized police who were armed to the hilt “feared” for their safety), the Supreme Court will not act to right the wrongs being meted out by the American police state.

Although “knock-and-talk” policing has become a thinly veiled, warrantless—lethal—exercise by which citizens are coerced and intimidated into “talking” with heavily armed police who “knock” on their doors in the middle of the night, the Supreme Court will not make the government play by the rules of the Constitution.

The lesson to be learned: the U.S. Supreme Court will not save us.

No one is coming to save us: not the courts, not the legislatures, and not the president.

According to journalist Michael Harriot:

More people died from police violence in 2017 than the total number of U.S. soldiers killed in action around the globe (21). More people died at the hands of police in 2017 than the number of black people who were lynched in the worst year of Jim Crow (161 in 1892). Cops killed more Americans in 2017 than terrorists did (four). They killed more citizens than airplanes (13 deaths worldwide), mass shooters (428 deaths) and Chicago’s “top gang thugs” (675 Chicago homicides).

Americans are dying at the hands of the police, and the U.S. government doesn't care.

In Kansas, a prank caller placed a fake 911 call (the tactic is referred to as "swatting") that prompted a SWAT team to open fire on a 28-year-old unarmed man who had been spending a quiet evening at home with his family. The man was shot dead within moments of appearing outside his home, clearly confused to find his home surrounded by police on all sides, guns pointed in his direction, and orders being shouted at him. Thus far, all the blame has rested with the prank caller and little with the cops who shot first and asked questions later.

In New York, a 68-year-old former Marine was shot and killed by police who did a welfare check on him after he accidentally set off his emergency medical alert device. Although Kenneth Chamberlain insisted he was fine, police refused to leave, eventually kicked open the door, zapping Chamberlain with a stun gun, shooting him with beanbag ammunition and then killing him with a pistol shot. The cops were not charged.

In Arizona, a police officer was acquitted after he shot an unarmed man outside his hotel room while the man cried, begged and pleaded for his life. As the Associated Press reports:

"The shooting occurred in the Phoenix suburb of Mesa after officers ordered Shaver to exit his hotel room, lie face-down in a hallway and refrain from making sudden movements — or risk being shot. Shaver, 26, sobbed as he begged police not to shoot and was ordered to crawl toward officers. As he inched forward, he reached toward the waistband of his shorts. Brailsford said he fired his rifle because he believed Shaver was grabbing a handgun in his waistband. While no gun was found on Shaver's body...the detective investigating the shooting had agreed Shaver's movement was similar to reaching for a pistol, but has said it also looked as though Shaver was pulling up his loose-fitting basketball shorts that had fallen down as he was ordered to crawl toward officers."

It gets worse.

You see, it's not just that the U.S. government appears unconcerned about the fact that Americans are dying at the hands of the police.

Right now, the U.S. government is actively doing everything in its power to ensure that the killing spree continues.

Take Jeff Sessions, for example.

While the president's conveniently-timed tweets distract the public and dominate the headlines, his attorney general continues to bulldoze over the Constitution, knocking down what scant protections remain between the citizenry and the hydra-headed police state.

Within his first year as attorney general, Jeff Sessions has made a concerted effort to expand the police state's power to search, strip, seize, raid, steal from, arrest and jail Americans for any infraction, no matter how insignificant.

What this means is more militarized police, more asset forfeiture, more private prisons, more SWAT team raids, more police shootings of unarmed citizens, and more wars waged by the government against the American people.

And while the crime rate may be falling, the death toll—casualties of the government’s war on the American people—is growing.

The body count will continue to mount as long as the courts continue to march in lockstep with the police state, as long as police unions continue to strong-arm politicians into letting police agencies get away with murder, as long as legislators continue to care more about getting re-elected than about protecting the rights of the citizenry, as long as police continue to treat their fellow citizens as enemy combatants on a battlefield, as long as the media continues to focus the spotlight on circus politics, and as long as the citizenry fail to be alarmed and outraged every time the police state shoots another hole in the Constitution.

Even so, it’s not just the police shootings that are cause for concern.

We are inching ever closer to a constitutional crisis the likes of which we have never seen before, and “we the people” are woefully unprepared and ill-equipped to deal with a government that is corrupt, topsy turvy, unjust, immoral, illegal, brutal, violent, war-hungry, greedy, biased, imbalanced, unaccountable, non-transparent, fascist and as illegitimate as they come.

Where do we go from here?

We’ve been through troubled times before.

In fact, it was 50 years ago this year, in 1968, when the country was buffeted by assassinations, riots and protests: “The assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. The riots that shook Washington, Chicago, Baltimore and other U.S. cities. Campus protests. Civil rights protests. Vietnam War protests. The Tet Offensive. The My Lai massacre. The rise of Richard Nixon and the retreat of Lyndon Johnson.”

Fifty years later, we’re no better off.

The nation is still being buffeted by economic instability, racial inequality, injustice, police brutality, government misconduct and a rising discontent on the part of the populace.

I can’t help but wonder what Martin Luther King Jr. would have to say to about his dream today.

Certainly, the reality we must contend with is far different from King’s dream of a world without racism, militarism and materialism: America has become a ticking time bomb of racial unrest and injustice, police militarization, surveillance, government corruption and ineptitude, the blowback from a battlefield mindset and endless wars abroad, and a growing economic inequality between the haves and have nots.

King himself—in life, a hard-talking, charismatic leader, voice of authority, and militant,

nonviolent activist minister/peace warrior who staged sit-ins, boycotts and marches and lived through police attack dogs, water cannons and jail cells—has been so watered down in death that younger generations recognize his face but know very little about his message.

Yet King had a lot to say that remains relevant to our day and age.

“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.”

“Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time — the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.”

“The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

“We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation.”

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood — it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, ‘Too late.’”

We cannot afford to wait until it is “too late.”

This is no time to stand silently on the sidelines. It’s a time for anger and reform. Most importantly, it’s a time for making ourselves heard. And there is no better time to act than the present.

As Robert F. Kennedy reminded his listeners in a speech delivered at the University of Cape Town in 1966, “Hand in hand with freedom of speech goes the power to be heard, to share in the decisions of government which shape men’s lives. Everything that makes man’s life worthwhile—family, work, education, a place to rear one’s children and a place to rest one’s head—all this depends on decisions of government; all can be swept away by a government which does not heed the demands of its people.”

What can ordinary citizens do?

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, instead of sitting around and waiting for someone else to change things, take charge. Never discount the part that everyday citizens play in our nation’s future. You can change things, but there can be no action without education. Get educated about your rights and exercise them. Start by reading the Bill of Rights. You can do so online at www.rutherford.org. Or, if you want a copy to keep with you, email me at staff@rutherford.org and I’ll send you a free one.

Most important of all, just get out there and do your part to make sure that your government officials hear you. The best way to ensure that happens is by never giving up, never backing down, and never remaining silent. To quote Dr. King, "If you can't fly, run; if you can't run, walk; if you can't walk, crawl, but by all means keep moving."

It doesn't matter whether you're protesting the economy, the war, the environment or something else altogether. What matters is that you do your part. As that great revolutionary firebrand Samuel Adams pointed out, "It does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen to set brushfires in people's minds."

Take some time right now and start your own brushfire for freedom. Learn about the issues and then take a stand: attend local government meetings, contact your representatives, raise awareness within your community, and generally make your voice heard.

It's midnight in America right now. But the real question is, will there be a dawn?

That's up to you and me. The future is in our hands.

WC: 1958

20 7
