

# Louisville Grand Jury decides Black Lives do not Matter

Dave Stockton Fri, 25/09/2020 - 13:10

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Once again, protests against police racism have erupted across the nation. This time it is against the United States' INjustice system, following the announcement that a grand jury had refused to bring charges against three plain clothes police officers for shooting and killing Breonna Taylor, a twenty-six-year-old African American medical technician, in her own home.

After bursting into her apartment, without warning, in Louisville, Kentucky in the small hours of the morning on March 13, the officers fired more than twenty rounds, seven of which hit Taylor, one injuring her fatally. Only one of the officers has been charged, with "first degree wanton endangerment", for recklessly firing shots into the apartment that penetrated neighbouring apartments. Even this charge was not made until four months after the killing, plainly just as cover to avoid charging the officers with homicide.

Taylor was in bed with her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, when, without warning, the police broke down the door into her apartment. Walker opened fire on the intruders with his legally held firearm, lightly wounding one of the assailants. Walker, who was himself wounded in the fusillade, was immediately charged and has been in detention since the incident. The police officers were only reassigned duties. In a disgusting attempt to smear the victim, police tried unsuccessfully to associate Breonna with the drug-pushing of a former boyfriend. No drugs were found in the apartment

Once again, we have a brazen example of the total impunity of police officers when it comes to killing black people "in the line of duty?". It seems that no sooner has one police killing been absorbed than another takes place. No wonder they act like an occupying army, one of those involved had even tweeted to his fellow officers that they were "warriors?". Many commentators have pointed out that this "warrior mentality" has become even more prevalent since the Iraq war. Since then, many police departments have been purchasing heavily armoured vehicles and other items of military surplus.

The wanton killing of Breonna Taylor, followed by that of George Floyd, caught on video, unleashed a wave of demonstrations that spread worldwide. Louisville itself has witnessed 119 days of protests since Breonna's slaying. Increasingly, police have fired tear gas and pepper balls at these crowds.

On the day of the grand jury's refusal to indict, riot police waded into the crowd of peaceful protesters, eventually provoking what they could then call a riot. Over night, two police received gunshot wounds and, even before the verdict, the Kentucky Governor, Andy Beshear, a Democrat, proclaimed a state of emergency in Louisville. On the day itself, he mobilised the state's National Guard.

Donald Trump has repeatedly praised police for the violence they unleashed on peaceful protesters whom he has called "domestic terrorists?". He has incited his far-right followers against protesters and in Denver, Colorado, one drove a car through a demonstration protesting against the grand jury decision.

The police have regularly allowed heavily armed right wing militia groups to patrol the streets during protests and even fraternised with them. When, on August 25, two unarmed demonstrators were killed by such a right-wing militia member in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Trump excused the perpetrator as just defending himself. This is clearly part of his strategy to hold the November 3 poll in an atmosphere of high social tension, including physical conflict, hoping his Law and Order ticket will cover up the miserable failures of his presidency.

The actions of Democrats, even where they are in office, as they are in Louisville, show how little use this second party of the capitalists is as a protection for people of colour, the huge number of antiracists or for the working class. That is why there should be no holding back in the belief that this will help Biden win.

No holding back on the demonstrations or on workers' struggles for jobs and justice in the coronavirus crisis. No holding back on calls to get the killer cops out of the communities, to get police unions out of labour federations and certainly no holding back on organising self defence. Any sign of the weakening of mass resistance will just encourage Trump's ultra reactionary movement and its fascist fringes, not to speak of the police sections, many of which already sympathise with them.

Trump has virtually threatened that he will not accept the verdict of the voters if it goes against him. He has incited his white supremacist supporters to fight back if he loses. This may just be Trump bluster but, if the results can be challenged or obstructed by Republicans in the red states or the Supreme Court, then anything is possible. The surest, indeed the only, way to prevent this scenario is to strengthen the mass movement so that it can take direct action stop him in his tracks and boot him out if he tries to hang on.

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