

THREE THINGS: A FOR “ANTIFA”, B FOR BRUTALITY, C FOR COMMIT (MURDER)

Messy title, sorry – couldn’t think of something snappy and I’m even struggling with a lead in. Let’s just get to it.

~ 3 ~

A/B switch: “Antifa”

A little article about a tiny town caught my eye this weekend. Some racist gits in a rural area of Washington state played cat-and-mouse with a multi-racial family trying to camp in the area while driving a bus-turned-camper.

Local racists harassed them, accusing them of being members of “Antifa” – the made-up bugbear conjured from anti-fascist philosophy by Trump’s brain trust, hereinafter referred to with appropriate scare quotes. Even the local paper reports “Antifa” exists as an organization when there isn’t one.

What struck me as odd is how intensely a local gun shop owner and at least a dozen local residents believe there is an effort by “Antifa” to bus in their anarchist members to make trouble.

Right...busloads into a town with an estimated population of 6,600.

How did this notion about bogeyman “Antifa” become so quickly and deeply embedded in a remote area of the U.S.? Especially where the possibility of any anarchists making a big splash let alone filling a bus is utterly ridiculous.

It’s not just this one small town, either. It’s much of the Pacific Northwest and beyond – so many people looking like doofuses, claiming

victory over non-existent anarchist hordes.

New from me and @oneunderscore__

From Oregon to Florida, we've been tracking viral social media rumors that buses of "antifa" were coming to small towns to wreak havoc. Here's the story of Klamath Falls.

<https://t.co/xF4TGKvr96>

– Brandy Zadrozny (@BrandyZadrozny) June 6, 2020

This mythology has even eaten the already-compromised brains of candidates like this one:

"I have a message for antifa terrorists," Greene says before appearing to load the gun. "Stay the hell out of Northwest Georgia."

<https://t.co/cGfB1cEc9u>

– Times Free Press (@TimesFreePress)
June 5, 2020

She's threatening people with an automatic weapon in a campaign ad and then complains because Facebook took down her advertisement. Greene is simply unfit to hold office if she can't understand threats of violence are simple violations of Terms of Service.

Now it's true that figureheads in the GOP have been willing to push the vaporous entity "Antifa" using their bully pulpit – like Sen. Ted Cruz droning on last summer about a non-binding Senate resolution, S.Res. 279, submitted by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) declaring "Antifa" a terrorist organization while pointing to a Pacific Northwest group which may or may not have truly existed and whose domain address has been defunct for three years.

But most right-wing voters don't run around saying, "But Ted Cruz said..." about any topic. If they did he might have had a chance at winning

the primary in 2016, but he's just a placeholder.

Same for Bill Cassidy – he's just another empty suit in a GOP seat.

Some organized effort has been put into building and consolidating pro-fascist sentiment among people willing to arm themselves, take to the streets, and cut down trees in the woods, and openly harass persons of color.

Here's my theory: "Antifa" isn't just a bogeyman. It's a test, like an A/B switch. The folks who adopt this concept so deeply they are willing to take action outside the norm can also be persuaded to take other action.

QAnon likely serves a similar purpose, providing a centralized mythology for persons identified as too weak to reason out of a wet paper bag but willing to invest some degree of effort for their new "faith" system.

What can't be seen apart from idiots like this gun shop owner and his compadres is how this uptake is being tested online. This small town gun shop owner didn't pull the idea of bus-packing "Antifa" terrorists out of thin air; he must have gotten through broadcast media and social media, of which only social media would allow a two-way push-pull of content.

Who or what is at the other end of whatever pushed this "Antifa"-on-buses meme to this tiny town in northwestern Washington? Is it just Facebook content and Fox, or is something more in play?

Is it like the Russian influence operations which were able to convince people to organize Trump rallies via Facebook in 2016?

Or is it something more simple – a convenient distraction from the continuing mass death event we know as COVID-19?

~ 2 ~

B for Brutality

Greg Doucette has been collecting and curating cases of police brutality and abuse from across the country since protests began after George Floyd's murder-by-racist-cop.

300800400 Seattle, WA: Army National Guard getting in on the habit of refusing to wear name patches to identify themselves

Your Government wants to abuse you – anonymously

Lawlessness <https://t.co/7fovTVbc4M>

– T. Greg “Bouquet of F*ckery” Doucette (@greg_doucette) June 7, 2020

As of this afternoon Doucette has collected at least 384 independent cases, nearly all captured on camera.

This many cases over the last week's time suggests there are not merely a few bad apples, but that the entire barrel has now gone rotten.

Re: that awful video. Buffalo PD officially said that the man tripped & fell. If we didn't have video there would have been no accountability. Why? Because one “bad apple” pushed him down but 20 “good apples” would have let him get away with it. It's systemic.

– Kumail Nanjiani (@kumailn) June 5, 2020

Brutality is normalized from top to bottom of law enforcement, deeply embedded into policing.

These persons employed by our tax dollars are not protecting anyone. It's not clear who they are serving apart from property owners; they are not serving the greater public interest.

Most telling: in cities where curfews were not enforced or were lifted, there was no violence.

Detroit lifted curfew last night in the face of protests. No arrests. No violence. Protests today went off without violence as well. The police are the violence.<https://t.co/2xL77PHr9f>

– Smiley Smile (@F00L1SH) June 5, 2020

The police have been the source of violence – many of nearly 400 cases itemized so far provide ample evidence of this fact.

It's time to look for better models to serve the public's needs. We are paying too much for services which do not work. We need to do more than reform policing. It should be torn down, plowed into the ground, and something better built from scratch.

Look at the City of Los Angeles' projected budget allocation:



New York City's budget is similarly distributed with a massive skew toward policing.

What this currently pays for is abusive police who assault the public, escalate tensions, after failing to make a good faith effort to de-escalate and mediate community conflict.

SHOCKING VIDEO: LAPD officers seen striking protesters with batons in Fairfax district confrontation
<https://t.co/gWbBswwzvs>
[pic.twitter.com/HscxXj4sKN](https://t.co/gWbBswwzvs)

– ABC7 Eyewitness News (@ABC7) June 4, 2020

The money is there; priorities need to change. Tax dollars need to be spent more effectively on the root causes which have driven the need for policing – more money for mental health resources, community housing for the homeless,

therapy for drug addiction, child care, after-school programs, and crisis intervention instead of militarized policing which moves to violence far too eagerly, too often.

It's time to abolish police as we've known them and build something better, healthier for our society.

If you're balking at this idea, ask yourself why.

~ 1 ~

C for Committing Murder – mass murder by COVID-19

Given the large number of rallies across all 50 states protesting police brutality and racism, it's reasonable to expect an uptick in COVID-19 cases.

The police bear a substantive portion of responsibility for anticipated cases arising from the protests due to poor policing practices including imposition and enforcement of curfews. Like the nearly 400 documented cases of brutality and abuse, police kettling of protesters into tight clusters breaking social distancing appeared organized and systematic.

Like repeated use of bridge closures to limit protesters' movement even when being herded away from protest sites toward home at the end of the day.

Lanes of the Manhattan Bridge have also been closed <https://t.co/mwKJqIrBI>

– PIX11 News (@PIX11News) May 31, 2020

New York City was particularly bad; it not only shut down bridges, forcing protesters into narrow streams, but it shut down subway stations for several days, sometimes at NYPD's orders. Protesters bunched up at the subway finding themselves without transportation, hemmed in by police. Lack of alternate public transportation did not help matters.

If you're taking a 4/5/6 or 7 train from Grand Central-42 St, please enter from the northwest corner of Lexington Avenue and 42nd St. NYPD has closed the subway entrance accessible from 42nd St.

– NYCT Subway. Stay Home. Stop the Spread. (@NYCTSubway) June 4, 2020

Hello, everyone.

Many bus routes in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens are delayed and/or detoured because of protests.

Please allow additional travel time and check <https://t.co/clGkmBUF7b> or <https://t.co/FU6TRuZBYN> for your route before you go.

– NYCT Bus. Stay Home. Stop the Spread. (@NYCTBus) June 4, 2020

The situation was further aggravated by police seizure of bikes for stupid (read: no) reasons.

the @nypdnews are stealing bikes and telling protestors to get home with everything shut down
pic.twitter.com/dFEZs43aAf

– NYC-DSA ?#DefundNYPD (@nycDSA) June 4, 2020

Kettling wasn't confined to New York City. There are many tweets documenting cases in larger cities like Seattle and Chicago.

An additional risk factor for protesters is their exposure to chemical irritants like pepper spray and tear gas. This Twitter thread explains the risks irritants pose.

Tear gas is WAY more dangerous than the cops say. It can cause long-lasting harm, damages skin, seeps into

bystanders' homes and contaminates what it touches.

Calling it "nonlethal" ignores critical info. We are in the middle of a respiratory pandemic

What you need to know ?

– Lisa Song (@lisalsong) June 4, 2020

Stress caused by police abuses may make protesters more vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure.

Which may have been the point: abusive police encouraged to use bad police practices may have been engaged in passive-aggressive large scale murder by exposure to biological agents.

We can only hope that the increased use of masks by protesters discouraged coronavirus transmission and reduced injuries caused by chemical irritants.

Yes, chemical irritants, Bill Barr, you lying sluggard with zero background in science. Let an expert in chemistry tell you.

Pepper spray is comprised of a number of chemicals (including capsicum) and is a chemical agent product.

Please see National Institute's of Justice document "Oleoresin Capsicum: Pepper Spray as a Force Alternative" (March 1994) <https://t.co/GC14jonkVz>
<https://t.co/qXL7mVBdLt>

– Raychelle Burks (@DrRubidium) June 7, 2020

Barr poses a threat to the health and welfare of the American public and needs to be impeached. Even if the GOP Senate will slack off and fail to remove him, the Dem-led House should impeach Barr for his abuse of office and his lying to the public so that Congressional records tell the future Barr's bullshit was and is

unacceptable from an attorney general.

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And then the white nationalists embedded throughout police forces across the country, for which I haven't enough energy remaining though it's urgently in need of attention.

Like Salem, Oregon:

POLICE OFFICER TELLS PROUD BOYS TO HIDE
INSIDE BUILDING BECAUSE THEY'RE ABOUT TO
TEAR GAS PROTESTERS. THE OFFICER SAID HE
WAS WARNING THEM "DISCRETELY" BECAUSE HE
DIDNT WANT PROTESTERS TO SEE POLICE
"PLAY FAVORITES."#BLUEFALL
#PoliceBrutalityPandemic
#PoliceBrutality
pic.twitter.com/ri83By2EVy
— SatelliteHeart (@Satellit3Heart) June
5, 2020

And Las Vegas:

Hey look at this picture of this Vegas
cop and...
..oh pic.twitter.com/Wai6NVHcUQ
— Joe Kassabian (@jkass99) June 7, 2020

There's more of them. Trump's Department of Justice under Jeff Sessions and Bill Barr have failed to do anything effective to root them out, though a GOP-led Congress throughout Obama's administration and beyond has also played a role in suppressing oversight of white nationalist threats infiltrating law enforcement.

It looks less like neglect and more like deliberate abuse.

This is an open thread.