

Black Author's Message to BLM Movement: 'The Facts Matter'

The Black Lives Matter riots in Kenosha, Wisconsin erupted because race has become the driving force in our nation. If the headline states, "White Officer Shoots Black Man," that seems to be all it takes to spark the rage bubbling just below the surface before we even look at the facts.

Framing an incident based on skin color has become the new normal. But a new picture has emerged as "woke" whites now threaten and shake their fist at other whites in the name of "social justice" demanding they bow to their "white privilege" and the Black man.

As a Black woman who lived through the Jim Crow Laws, I experienced racism firsthand. Yet I rose above the injustice to become the first Black school psychologist in Charlottesville, Virginia. That opportunity is available to all willing to work for it in America.

However, what I see happening with the riots and violence mirrors the same injustice I experienced during those early years. Only the perpetrators now are not the Ku Klux Klan but go by the name Black Lives Matter. They both operate out of prejudice of skin color and murderous rage, and it is frightening to watch.

The newest of these incidents occurred this past weekend after 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse killed two white men at the Black Lives Matter riots in a frightening exchange of violence.

The biggest question is why was a 17-year old carrying a rifle? Did Rittenhouse have a constitutional right to be in Wisconsin? He was violating a curfew. But so were numerous other protesters—including the two men he shot.

Why was Kyle Rittenhouse even there? Was he looking for trouble?

Moments before the incident, Rittenhouse was interviewed and asked that very question. He was standing in front of a business that had been set on fire the previous night. It was part of the reason he was there. "People are getting injured, and our job is to protect this business. Part of my job is also to help people. If somebody is hurt, I'm running into harm's way. That's why I have my rifle; I have to protect myself, obviously."

Rittenhouse was carrying an AR-15 as well as a medical kit when danger and volatility exploded. Just minutes after the interview, Rittenhouse shot and killed protester Joseph Rosenbaum, followed by Anthony Huber. A news report by *The Guardian* stated, "The two men [were] shot dead when white armed extremists disrupted a Black Lives Matter protest, and at least one agitator opened fire on a group of protesters in Kenosha." It paints a picture with Rittenhouse labeled as the "aggressor."

According to Wisconsin law, the initial aggressor of a situation can only use deadly force if they believe all effort to avoid great bodily harm has been exhausted. Phone video of the two shootings first shows Rosenbaum chasing and throwing an object at Rittenhouse as he runs away. Moments later, an eyewitness saw Rosenbaum corner Rittenhouse and grab for his gun. That's when Rittenhouse shot him. When the mob sees Rosenbaum is down, they can be heard yelling, "Get him!" Rittenhouse can be seen again running away from with the angry mob, mostly white, in pursuit.

Facts change the situation, don't they? The video tells the story, not the headlines. The protesters were clearly the aggressors as Kyle tried to evade their attack.

As a result of what unfolded, Rittenhouse is facing a

misdemeanor charge for possession of a dangerous weapon by a minor. More seriously, he is also facing felony charges, including first-degree intentional homicide, first-degree reckless homicide and one count of attempted homicide.

As a professional clinical therapist and director at a licensed psychiatric hospital, I have seen this same emotionalism become the driving force that pushes people to react versus respond rationally.

In the video, the emotionalism of the mob is the immediate disparity of force pursuing Rittenhouse. Emotionalism causes us to jump to conclusions prematurely. Yet facts matter.

Emotionalism is defined as “a tendency to display or respond with undue emotion; especially morbid emotion.”

A “morbid expression of emotion” is when people are unaware of the abnormality of their expressed emotions even though it is apparent to observers. We see this manifestation in the rioters who set businesses on fire, physically beat others who disagree with them and in the case of Rittenhouse, reacted in rage as they yelled, “Let’s get him,” even though they probably didn’t know what happened.

I pray none of us ever finds ourselves in that situation, but what if we did and were pursued by a mob? Was Rittenhouse unreasonable in exercising his right of self-defense? Was his use of deadly force justified? Will he be convicted and serve time for murder?

The jury is still out. But may justice prevail.

“Lord, I pray that the ugly racial division that has been stirred in our land would be healed. I pray that we would love our neighbor as ourselves, not based on skin color, but based on the heart. Lord, help us to see others as You see them. Help us not to jump to conclusions or judge others but to pray first and weigh the facts. Lord, we ask for an outpouring of

Your Spirit to change hearts and bring revival to America.”
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Janice L. Ponds grew up in the South during the 1960s and 1970s. She experienced racism firsthand yet rose above the injustice to become the first Black school psychologist. Her training and experience as a psychiatric counselor, clinical director, teacher and substance abuse treatment program director have given her insight into practical ways to effectively help individuals from all walks of life. She is the author of *The Scapegoat: Finding the Truth Beyond Political Affiliations*. For additional information, go to: .