

Grasping Reality with Both Hands

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of Brad DeLong. Since 1999.
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Drake: Police & Motorcycle Jackets in Chapel Hill, NC—Noted

How to talk about Black Lives Matter to old rural white men with guns: a MasterClass from a master writer:

David Drake: *Newsletter #115* <http://david-drake.com/2020/newsletter-115/>:

‘The Chapel Hill police force doesn’t have a bad reputation for brutality (the way the Minneapolis police have since I lived in the Midwest decades ago)...

...Some years ago a fellow ran a red light and just about killed me. Instead of letting it go, I called the police from the mall where I was going to pick up a rose for my wife on our anniversary. (This was before I had a cell phone. It was a stupid over reaction on my part, but I thought of the police as my friends—and I was hot about the driver’s behavior.) Officer Steve Riddle wasn’t one of the policemen I knew personally but when he pulled up to the curb I walked over to greet him. His response was to shout, “Back up Cowboy!” and arrest and handcuff me. In the magistrate’s office Officer Riddle lied that I was carrying a concealed weapon.

(Most bike riders carry a folding knife on their belt. I instead had an AG Russell Sting with a 3” fixed blade clipped to the side pocket of my trousers.) I went a lawyer whom I knew and liked. The case was dismissed in court.

I don’t mean all Chapel Hill police would have behaved that way (in fact a couple of them looked me up to apologize for Steve Riddle’s behavior). I was wearing a motorcycle jacket rather than a business suit. But a black can’t change his skin color because he expects to come into contact with the police, and Steve Riddle isn’t unique among the police you’re going to meet. There are some who are willing to choke to death someone who committed no crime.

(George Floyd attempted to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill. There was no evidence of intent. Do you have a dud twenty in your wallet? I’m damned if I know whether all of mine are good.)

So that’s my story.

It doesn’t involve any brutality: just a policeman who jumped to conclusions and arrested a man who’d called for police help. That’s not a mistake I’ve made since. Incidentally I was very polite throughout the business. Officer Riddle had already demonstrated his willingness to lie; if he shot me in the back I was sure he could find an exculpatory lie for that also.

I am neither liberal nor PC, but I have quite a lot of sympathy for black people who live in Minneapolis. Or for that matter, in Chapel Hill, NC.

.#blm #noted #racism #2020-08-05

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