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Hands Up, Don't Execute

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Lavoy executed



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by Dan Sanchez

Many liberals passed sentence on the Citizens for Constitutional Freedom (CCF) weeks ago. The cowboys occupying the Malheur Wildlife Refuge headquarters in Oregon were criminals. Even worse, they were culturally unsympathetic criminals. “Y’all Qaeda,” was the taunt of choice for the smart set, which rocked with laughter when enterprising wags delivered sex toys to the squares.

Yet when they put joking aside, many progressives called for these “militants” to be dealt with as “the terrorists they were”: lethally and with extreme prejudice. Besides, many said, the right-wing nuts were probably a bunch of Islamophobic racists.

The law-and-order left got what they wanted on Tuesday of last week, when several CCF members were ambushed on the road by the FBI and Oregon State Police. CCF spokesman LeVoy Finicum was shot and killed, and the rest were arrested (some after also being shot). The killing was met mostly with approval or shrugs from progressives on social media.

One notable exception was Anonymous, which released a video declaring that:

“...Finicum was killed in cold blood, as his hands were in the air. Just as Anonymous called for justice in the killing of Michael Brown we call for justice now.”

Indeed, it was the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson that first popularized the protest slogan, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot,” which has been chanted by many of the same liberals now justifying Finicum being shot with his empty hands in the air.

During the Ferguson unrest however, the law-and-order right would have none of it. To them, Michael Brown was just a “thug,” a known criminal who had recently shaken down a store. If he didn’t want to get shot, he shouldn’t have resisted a cop, thought many of the same conservatives now outraged over the bloody government response to CCF’s armed defiance.

Both sides reduce all questions of justice to identity politics, and effectively treat rights as a sympathy-based concept.

For the left, Michael Brown was a sympathetic figure (an underserved youth of color), so he had Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights which were violated by Officer Darren Wilson. On the other hand, LaVoy Finicum was an unsympathetic figure (a right-wing, gun-owning good 'ol boy), and a potential threat, so he was fair game to be gunned down in the snow.

For the right, LaVoy Finicum was a sympathetic figure (a God-fearing family man), so he had Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights which were violated by the FBI. On the other hand, Michael Brown was an unsympathetic figure (a young, black “thug”), and a potential threat, so he was fair game to be gunned down in the street.

Both are blinded by their respective bigotries to the truth that rights are inherent to the individual, and are not based on group identity or cultural affinity.

Nobody should be gunned down in the road like a rabid dog, regardless of whether the individual is a pillar of his community or a hardened criminal, a philanthropic saint or an incorrigible misanthrope. Every individual has an inalienable right to life: a right not to be killed unless that individual is presenting an imminent threat to the life of someone else.

And violence is only self-defense, if such an imminent threat is real. There are no “oopsies” allowed: not for cops, for Feds, or for anybody else. Killing someone is not “self-defense” just because you “thought” a threat existed.

And it doesn't matter how paranoid their officer training has made them. It doesn't matter how many times they've practiced with “No More Hesitation” targets with pictures of children, pregnant women, and elderly folk pointing guns at them. Murder is murder.

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