

# Rioting is Wrong Way to Protest

There's a correct way to protest injustice and there's a wrong way.

You may have recently noticed people in several big cities doing it the wrong way. Although, perhaps people pretending to side with the protesters were intentionally making the protesters look bad — it's hard to know which.

I've been writing about, and opposing, police brutality for years. It's an important topic. When someone commits wrong while using the defense "I was just doing my job," I'm among the first to reject the excuse.

Don't hide your contempt for human life behind your job. A badge can't grant extra rights and shouldn't shield bad guys from consequences.

Fighting against a wrongful kidnapping — whether by a freelance kidnapper or by someone committing the ritual euphemistically called an "arrest" — is not a legitimate reason to be killed. Any protest triggered by such a death is justified.

However, if your protest targets the wrong people by violating the life, liberty, and property of people who weren't the problem, you are behaving no differently than those you protest.

Rioting is the wrong way to protest. Looting, arson, and vandalism are even worse. Blocking traffic will also turn opinion against you. At that point, you're no longer on the side of justice and I want nothing to do with you. I might agree with every point you are protesting, but I will stand against any rioting or looting. You'll lose your chance to have another person on your side.

Multiply this effect by thousands and you might see why it's a bad idea to treat everyone as your enemy.

Don't harm your own cause. Don't drive people away if you want them to agree with you.

You'll also risk wasting your life by forcing people to defend themselves and their property from you.

Your life matters. Act like it matters to you. To be treated as though your life doesn't matter is wrong, whether or not your treatment is recognized as a crime.

Other people's lives matter, too. For someone to take a life when the death wasn't necessary to defend the life, liberty, or property of innocent victims is wrong even if your job allows it or you believe your cause justifies it.

I have no love for police, but they are no worse than the rioters, vandals, and looters. I won't choose sides in that battle but will stand with those who refuse to violate other people in any way. It's the right thing to do.