

Charlamagne tha God and Killer Mike Call for Lawful Black Gun Ownership

In March, Princess Pope was forced to close her business – Guns and Roses Boutique, located in Dallas – because of the coronavirus. Then things got worse.

Shortly after she was allowed to reopen, Pope's store was vandalized and looted during the protests and riots that erupted following the death of George Floyd.

"I can't believe it," Pope told [KXAS-TV](#). "I opened this business in 2014 and [it's] the only black-owned business on the street. I have worked so hard and have poured so much into this community for it to be done like this."

Pope's story is not unique. Hundreds of business owners – both [black](#) and [white](#) – have seen their property destroyed at the hands of vandals and their lives put at risk by mob violence in recent weeks. It's a tragic irony that there are [seemingly endless reports](#) of minority-owned businesses destroyed in the name of racial justice.

It doesn't have to be this way, however.

Americans have the right to protect themselves and their property from violence, and some African-Americans are saying it's past time that people of color embraced their constitutional right to arm themselves against threats.

Rapper Michael Render (better known by his stage name "[Killer Mike](#)") recently [challenged the black community](#) to reject the stigmatization of legal gun ownership and to find fresh solutions to preventing violence.

"The last thing that any of us need is more laws that will

criminalize us,” Render wrote on the web site *ColorLines*.

Render says it’s a myth that all civil rights advocates were anti-gun, pointing to [Charles E. Cobb’s](#) 2014 book [This Nonviolent Stuff’ll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible](#), which traces the role armed self-defense played in the civil rights movement and the liberation of black communities. (According to the book, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Montgomery, Alabama home looked like “an arsenal,” according to visitors.)

Importantly, Render distinguishes arming oneself for the purposes of self-defense from aggressive violence, a distinction that can be found in common law, the jurisprudence of William Blackstone, and Supreme Court rulings and one defended by thinkers from [Thomas Hobbes](#) to [Frédéric Bastiat](#) and beyond.

“I am not suggesting that we become violent, but I am suggesting that there is a long precedent for considering arming ourselves,” writes Render. “My main point here is that the notion of gun ownership among blacks as ‘radical’ is one that is advanced by people divorced from history and by people who benefit from Black people’s refusal to embrace all of our rights.”

As Render points out, there is nothing “radical” about possessing a firearm. Used properly, they are simply an (often essential) means of protection *against* violence, and there is a long tradition of using them as such in both white and black communities.

Nor is Render alone.

Appearing on MSNBC in May following the death of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed 25-year-old black man fatally shot in Georgia, Charlamagne tha God said owning a firearm was a reasonable means of self-defense for African Americans.

“I wish that brother (Arbery) had a gun on him while he was jogging so he could have defended himself,” said Charlamagne, a radio presenter, TV personality, and author. “They hunted him down like he was a deer...And I would also tell all my brothers and sisters out there to go buy yourself a legal firearm and learn how to use it so you can protect yourself and your family.”

Charlamagne Tha God urges people of color to empower themselves by legally purchasing firearms to protect themselves.

“The Constitution does apply to all of us, right?” he recently asked MSNBC host Alex Witt. [#cthagod](https://twitter.com/cthagod) [#2Amendment](https://twitter.com/cthagod) pic.twitter.com/bKLhJy7twC

– Jon Miltimore (@miltimore79) [June 24, 2020](https://twitter.com/miltimore79/status/1272844444444444444)

TV journalist Alex Witt appeared shocked by Charlamagne’s suggestion that black Americans should arm themselves. She offered Charlamagne an opportunity to revise his response, suggesting that seeking reforms in the legal system was a better path than “attacking” people.

Charlamagne disagreed. He pointed out that he was encouraging black Americans to purchase legal arms to *defend* themselves and their families, not attack others, adding that he had little faith in America’s legal system.

“As far as the justice system, I don’t have any faith in the justice system,” Charlamagne said. “Since I don’t have any faith in the legal system, that’s why I’m telling all my brothers and sisters out there to go buy yourself a legal firearm and learn how to use it so you can protect yourself against these kinds of threats.”

Americans would do well to remember there is nothing wrong with self-defense. If recent events have taught us anything,

it's that Americans cannot count on police to protect them or their property from violence.

As Aaron Tau [recently pointed out](#) in these pages, we live in a world of scarcity, and that applies to police, too. There simply are not enough police officers to protect everyone even when they are inclined to do so. (Too often, [they are not.](#))

Render makes a similar observation.

“I put this statement out because the police cannot always get to you on time, and the world is not a just place,” he writes.


Since police cannot be everywhere, firearms are the most practical and effective way for individuals to protect their life, liberty, and property. They empower individuals and make reliance on authorities far less necessary.

There's no question that some will see the suggestion that Americans – particularly black Americans, perhaps – should arm themselves as dangerous. Fortunately, opponents of firearms have little say in the matter.

“The Second Amendment. The Constitution does apply to all of us, right?” Charlamagne asked Witt on MSNBC.

“One hundred percent,” she responded.

–

This article was originally published on FEE.org. Read the [original article](#). 

[Image Credit: Flickr-Treefort Music Fest, [CC BY 2.0](#)]

Image Credit:

[Image Credit: Flickr-Treefort Music Fest, [CC BY 2.0](#)]