

Of MAGA Street Art and Spit-Laden Coffee

The large “Black Lives Matter” slogan painted on the street of the courthouse square in Redwood City, California lasted roughly two weeks before city officials changed course and had the painting removed.

[The Washington Post reports](#) that unlike other street paintings featuring Black Lives Matter messaging, this particular item was not afflicted by vandalism. Instead, Redwood City, despite granting permission and providing the paint for the project, made a quick about-face with city spokeswoman Jennifer Yamaguma explaining that street murals could present “public safety issues... which could result in driver confusion and traffic accidents.”

What brought about this change of heart? What could have possibly de-woked the city officials who approved the project in the first place, ignoring the obvious until the mural had been up for two weeks?

The answer is simple. Local attorney Maria Rutenburg asked city officials if she could paint “MAGA 2020” on a neighboring section of street. She argued that as soon as “Black Lives Matter” was painted on the street it became a “public forum.”

“Everybody has a chance of saying whatever they feel like,” Rutenburg told the *Post*. “My speech is just as important as BLM.”

This was apparently too much to bear for the city officials who rejected her request, calling it a “traffic hazard.” That’s when the Black Lives Matter slogan came off the street. Heaven forefend that a conservative or Republican slogan be tolerated on the streets of Redwood City, or any other urban locality in America. Streets are reserved for bicycles and

Marxist slogans! Keep your SUVs, traditional values, and support for the president away from our nice clean pavement, thank you very much! This standard applies until the fear of a lawsuit enters the minds of city officials, but even then they will not be tolerate your speech.

Incidents like this not only send a signal to ordinary citizens, they also teach police that the city officials who employ them are now very far from having their backs. Defund the police movements are [gaining steam across the country](#), and the law enforcement profession is getting quite the public relations beatdown in mainstream media outlets.

At least police officers can take solace in a donut and a cup of coffee... or so one would hope.

Over in Park Ridge, New Jersey, however, a now former Starbucks employee was arrested after allegedly spitting in law enforcement officers' drinks. [NJ.com reports](#) that 21-year-old Kevin A. Trejo has been charged with "subjecting a law enforcement officer to contact with a bodily fluid, tampering with a cup of coffee knowing it was ordered by an officer and creating a hazardous condition." What was already gross and potentially disease-spreading is cast in a far more treacherous light with the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the charges against Trejo are oddly phrased, the first does have [a specific statute reference in New Jersey law](#). Regarding law enforcement officers, a person who "subjects such employee to contact with a bodily fluid commits an aggravated assault." If the officer suffers an injury it is a third degree aggravated assault, otherwise it is a fourth degree aggravated assault. This lesser charge alone could amount to up to [18 months in prison or up to \\$10,000](#) in fines for Trejo, who was "arrogant enough to be bragging" about spitting in police officers' coffee, Park Ridge Police Chief Joseph Madden [told NJ.com](#).

Starbucks spokeswoman Sara Autio told NJ.com that Trejo has been fired, saying, "This individual's behavior was reprehensible and not at all a reflection of how our employees treat our customers on a daily basis. We want everyone who comes into our stores to receive a positive experience."

Given Starbucks' willingness to insert politics into their store, previously via [conversations about race](#) and now via [Black Lives Matter shirts and pins](#), the claim that Starbucks wants everyone in their stores to have a "positive experience" rings a bit hollow.

Cops put up with a lot. From the dehumanizing "pigs" insult, to the stereotyping of all cops based on the actions of some criminal actors in their ranks, police have to deal with an increasingly hostile and disrespectful public for whom they put their lives on the line.

When city officials stop supporting police officers and support anti-police demonstrations and fund Black Lives Matter groups and demonstrations, officers will lose trust in their employers. When the simple pleasure of a cup of coffee becomes a fraught hazard in the midst of a pandemic because of the uniform they wear, is it any wonder that cops are [leaving law enforcement at record rates](#)?

The Minneapolis police force, [as a local attorney has warned](#), may fall by 200 or more officers in the near future. Thus, we may end up seeing the results of the defund the police movement without a single legislative action having taken effect. It will have all been accomplished by our culture's new disdain for the men and women who keep our street safe, the same streets now bearing the slogans of a group led by [self-described "trained Marxists."](#)

Being a police officer is a profession, not a race, and as such, the people being demonized and spat upon are free to change their careers to avoid the abuse leveled against them.

Can we blame them?

The longer this all goes on, the fewer law enforcement officers will be left to protect law abiding citizens. When that happens, the real demons of our society will be emboldened, and we will not like what we see from them in a police-less society.

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