

Teaching About Riots and Democracy

[The setting: a classroom on a liberal arts campus somewhere in the American northeast. A young, very enlightened professor addresses students in her course "Getting Woke, Bashing the Fash: Intro to Critical Studies" following a screening of the 13-minute video of the Jan. 6 Capitol riot shown at the opening of the latest impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump.]

Enlightened Professor: OK, class, so now you understand why those involved in these events, and all who inspired them, especially the individual I refer to as "The Orange Atrocity Who Cannot Be Named," must be arrested, tried, convicted, and summarily erased from American society. Any questions before we move on?

[Students look at one another nervously]

Enlightened Professor: No? OK, good, let's move on to...

Benighted Student [meekly]: Uh, Professor, I have a question or two.

Enlightened Professor: [sighing] You again? OK. What is it?

Benighted Student [hesitatingly]: Um, well...so, I thought it did look chaotic and a little unsettling.

Professor [brightening up]: That's right! You're coming around! Trump's mob was bent on destroying our system of government. Those violent fascist terrorists were going to kill all of Congress!

Student: Uh, but...I don't think there's any evidence in that video to justify those claims. The only gun used was that of the police officer who fatally shot an unarmed female Air

Force veteran.

Professor [*glowering*]: Didn't you do the assigned emotional response essay on AOC's Instagram livestream when she talked about how much she feared for her life?

Student: Yeah, I did. But...uh, do you really think those people wanted to kill everyone in Congress? They claimed to be there because they thought the election was stolen and the people who govern the country have lost touch with the population. When left-wing protestors break into the chambers of elected assemblies to do the same thing, like ten years ago in Wisconsin, politicians and the media don't talk about them like they were all murderous monsters. [Nancy Pelosi called it "an impressive show of democracy."](#)

Professor [*exasperated*]: That was different! The level of human suffering and material destruction from Jan. 6 was unprecedented! More than 140 police were wounded, one was killed, and the Capitol was ransacked.

Student: Yes, that's not good. But watching the video, I couldn't help noticing it was much less violent than a lot of videos I've seen of BLM riots. It's mostly people yelling things at police, some pushing at metal crowd guards and doors, and a few broken windows. The most violent action in the video by far is the fatal shooting of an unarmed woman.

And speaking of police injuries, I did a little research...

Professor [*growing angry*]: Didn't I tell you not to look at sources other than the ones I give you?

Student: Yeah, I know. But in early June the Justice Department found that [more than 700 police were injured](#) in just the first weeks of the George Floyd riots. The Major Cities Chiefs Association found that [more than 2,000 police were injured in BLM riots](#) between late May and late July.

Professor [*slowly, with gritted teeth*]: We've been over this. Those weren't riots. They were...

Student: Mostly peaceful protests. Yeah, well I couldn't help but notice that many of the same people outraged at 140 injured police now weren't concerned by many more injured officers earlier. Kamala Harris and other leading Democrats even encouraged people to donate to bail funds for people who injured police and burned down buildings during BLM "protests."

Professor [*standing up abruptly*]: Those protestors had a noble cause! The ideas behind the Capitol riot were racist and authoritarian! Trump is a fascist and he was trying to steal our democracy!

Student: I bet the people who were at the Capitol that day would disagree.

Professor [*wild-eyed*]: Well, of course! Fascists lie!

Student: But why does the media always ask BLM protestors what they want and what's driving them, and assume they're telling the truth? There are conservatives who say the same things about BLM's ideas that you said about the ideas of the people who were at the Capitol.

Professor [*furiously*]: Well, what about Officer Brian Sicknick? Don't you care at all about this man who was murdered by Trump's mob?

Student: It's terrible that he died. But we don't know that he was murdered yet. That's a label that can only be applied accurately after a trial. The autopsy information has not been released, and there's [some speculation](#) that federal authorities have been very frustrated in their efforts to find evidence to support a murder charge.

We don't know how he died, but the media spends a lot of time

talking about him in the same charged language you're using. Meanwhile, there was never any doubt who killed Captain David Dorn during a BLM riot in St. Louis, but the media had a different position on his death and what it said about the people who killed him.

Same thing with Ashli Babbitt. There's video showing she wasn't posing an immediate threat to anyone when she was shot. But there's no sympathy in the media for the idea that she may have been unjustly shot. Meanwhile, coverage of the shooting of Jacob Blake was overwhelmingly sympathetic, despite the fact that he was shot [after fighting with police, resisting arrest, shrugging off a couple of tasers, and wielding a knife](#). You called him an innocent victim of police brutality.

Professor: That's what he is! Besides, Jan. 6 was a new Pearl Harbor! A new 9/11! This blatant attack on America's most sacred principles and symbols is something we'll never get over. [*lowers eyes reverently*]

Student: But, Professor, just last week you said Antifa burning American flags was good because those "symbols of nationalism" aren't as important as the freedom to protest. You've never seemed interested in the sacredness of national symbols before now. It seems... kind of suspicious.

Professor [*sputtering*]: Well, it's obvious! The sacred flag trampled on and burned at a BLM protest is speaking truth to power! But going to the Capitol with the sacred flag for a MAGA protest is fascist! Is...that...clear? [*menacingly*]

Student: Uh, not really. I...

Professor: OK. Discussion over. I look forward to grading your paper. [*smiles in a sinister manner*]

Student [*sighing*]: Speaking truth to power. Right. Of course. Sorry.

Editor's Note: The 26th paragraph has been updated to state that Jacob Blake was injured in a police shooting. Previously it stated he had died of his injuries.

—

Dear Readers,

Big Tech is suppressing our reach, refusing to let us advertise and squelching our ability to serve up a steady diet of truth and ideas. Help us fight back by [becoming a member](#) for just \$5 a month and then join the discussion on Parler [@CharlemagneInstitute](#) and Gab [@CharlemagneInstitute](#)!

Image Credit:

Flickr-Queen's University, (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)