

How NPR Taught Me to Worry About the Police and Trust the Jab

I am a social scientist who has written a little bit on media over the years, so sometimes, in the spirit of research, when I have a few extra minutes in the car, I put on the radio.

In just 15 minutes or so this morning I gathered the following information.

I heard [this segment on the serious blood clots that some vaccinated](#) with the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine have suffered. Note how *NPR* interviewer, Steve Inskeep, works so assiduously to insinuate it is absolutely insane that anyone would be worried about the chances of an adverse reaction to the vaccine. After all, it was, he says, “literally a one-in-a-million event.” How can we help benighted people understand how utterly unreasonable it is to be concerned about such odds?

One-in-a-million *is* a long shot, that much is true.

But does Inskeep know what, say, the odds of an unarmed black person being shot and killed by police are? Considerably lower than the risk of a serious blood clot after taking the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, as it turns out. But [somehow Steve Inskeep and his fellow reporters at NPR cover these two risks in entirely different manners](#).

Do the math for yourself if, like many in this country, you have been so effectively bamboozled by the mass media that you think police killings of unarmed blacks are happening at a terrifyingly high frequency. [In 2019, 14 unarmed blacks](#) were shot and killed by police. The black population in the [U.S. in 2019 was approximately 47 million](#) people. That means that an

unarmed black person's risk of being shot by police is around 1 in 3 ½ million. That means a black person is nearly four times more likely to develop serious blood clots from receiving one of the COVID vaccines this year than they are of being shot and killed by police. The risk level is infinitesimally small. And, if you remove from the risk equation those unarmed blacks killed by police who physically fought with cops or otherwise resisted arrest, the risk of an unarmed black person being shot by police falls to near zero.

Inskeep has given us the “woke” view on how to think about risk. In this view, only crazy people could possibly be concerned about the blood clot vaccination risk, and we don't really need to do anything to assuage their fears other than tell them how irrational they are. Meanwhile, black people who are terrified about the objectively much lower risk that they will be killed by police—a risk they almost completely control through their own actions—are entirely reasonable, and we must overhaul the entire American social system to accommodate their fears.

I was also introduced to a musician named Kishi Bashi, [who was asked by NPR to write a song “about the COVID era” as part of a series](#) they are doing. He regaled the audience with on-the-verge-of-tears tales of how dreadfully, terribly awful it is to be Asian in America in 2021. A Japanese-American, he described, to the breathless and conscientiously rapt attention of interviewer Rachel Martin, his eagerness to teach his daughter about the horrors of Japanese internment during World War II—which no one in his family ever faced since his parents arrived here as immigrants after the war's conclusion.

He also related the unconscionable reality that he, as an oppressed Asian, is unable to go into a bar full of drunk people without risk of something unpleasant happening to him. We all know, of course, that there is no danger in being surrounded by large groups of inebriated people if you happen to be of the same racial group as them. Right?

Finally, just to elevate the gloomy mood a bit, Mr. Bashi informed us that

[I]t's like, '50 percent of all school age children are people of color now.' That means that the society of the future will be very, very different than what we see now. So, I try to remind that to [sic] people, especially, like, younger people who are really, really distraught – who think, like, the world is ending. It's not. It's kind of just beginning.

Oh, happy day! Old America is ending, and the Brave New World is on its way! And no, dear reader, Bashi is absolutely *not* peddling the totally bogus and racist 'replacement theory' that evil white supremacists expound in dark places on the Internet. Bashi is certainly not a white supremacist, but a victimized racial minority. When *he* talks about the demographic transformation of the country, it's a happy and encouraging truth, and definitely not a delusional and racist conspiracy theory that would justly get any white person saying the exact same thing immediately canceled.

Just so you know.

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