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Rittenhouse acquittal: a victory for the Rule of Law

By Steve Bakke  December 15, 2021



My last article dealt with three topics as blatant examples of political “spin” employed by many in the media and progressive politicians. These misleading explanations create an uninformed public, and political and policy chaos. I labeled that incomplete coverage “the missing narratives.” Here I devote my full attention to the Rittenhouse acquittal and explain why it’s a victory for the rule of law.

Kyle Rittenhouse had been declared guilty by a biased press progressive politicians months before it reached the courtroom. Immediately following the verdict, President Biden let us know it made him “angry and concerned.” Progressive media and politicians followed suit asserting “miscarriage of justice.” Very little review or analysis preceded these misleading comments and coverage.

The trial tested the limits of nuance. Many questioned Rittenhouse’s motivations and youthful judgement. Some speculated that the DA had overcharged the case. The case was characterized as being about White supremacy, ignoring the obvious.....the defendant, victims, and other participants were White.

Numerous statements from the judge seemed to indicate inappropriate “antics” by the prosecutors while some pro-conviction observers accused the judge of bias. Actions by the victims and defendant were uniformly violent. Although buried in those nuances, the case clearly came down to whether Kyle Rittenhouse acted in self-defense.

Ultimately, the verdict didn’t deliver what aggressive progressives had presumed and demanded. Rather, assisted by a massive volume of video evidence and witness testimony, the jury reached clear-headed, “rule of law” conclusions. They understood both the evidence and the applicable law.

A guilty verdict would have required ignoring the evidence or the law. Self-defense is a legitimate defense, not a license to kill as some claim. Would critics of the verdict prefer that the law be ignored? They claim Rittenhouse stormed across state lines with an illegal weapon and began his “hunt.” In fact, he spent the night in Kenosha as he often does because his father lives there, and he had often worked there. And Rittenhouse legally possessed that rifle, as ruled by the judge.

Opponents of the verdict would have us ignore the reality of 2020 America. Legitimate demonstrations deteriorated into rioting, looting and destruction. Too often, law enforcement was ordered to “stand down” by indecisive, obviously fearful, political leaders. This lasted for months and continues today in some jurisdictions. In city after city, businesses and citizens knew their best security and law enforcement alternative was to rely on themselves, their friends, and those they could recruit.

This was one of many American protests that deteriorated into violence. Protection of property is what Rittenhouse was recruited for, and what he thought he was getting into that night. His naive choices came with honorable intentions, but nevertheless was drawn into a dangerous situation. Using his legal firearm, he killed two White rioters who threatened, pursued, and attacked him. That’s what the evidence clearly showed. The jury bravely concluded it was self-defense and acquitted Rittenhouse.

To those who believe there was a faulty verdict I ask: What made this a racist “White supremacy” event as you claim? Do you view as virtuous, the violence and destruction that precipitated this event? What laws did Rittenhouse break? What facts would you have asserted as justification for a murder charge? What made the verdict unjust? Does your thirst for a murder conviction continue despite the evidence?

This wasn’t vigilantism. Rather, what happened that night resulted from confused and fearful politicians standing in the way of proactive law enforcement. We’ve experienced almost two years in which violent and destructive crime has been legitimized. Thankfully, this verdict moves us a step away from that, and it’s something we can build on.

The Rittenhouse acquittal encourages taking more steps down the pathway to renewed partnership between proactive law enforcement and the judicial process – a clear victory for the Rule of Law.