

# “It’s time to stop the war on police”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Jacob Blake September 16, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the Jacob Blake shooting* 

*selections from Paul Muschick, “Lancaster shooting riot and LA deputies ambush: Stop war on police.” Morning Call, September 14, 2020.*

A man with a knife charged at a cop in Lancaster on Sunday and the officer shot and killed him. Within hours, rioters hurled bottles and bricks at officers and damaged the police station.

Two sheriff’s deputies were shot in the head in an ambush in Los Angeles on Saturday. Protesters gathered outside the hospital where they were being treated, with at least one yelling, “I hope they ... die.”

It’s time to stop the war on police.

The police aren’t wrong every time they kill or injure someone. Sometimes, their use of force is justified.

Whether it was justified in the Lancaster shooting will be determined by the district attorney. It’s already clear from the officer’s body camera video, though, that the confrontation differed vastly from others where unarmed Black men were killed by police.

This man, Ricardo Munoz, was armed and was charging at the officer. And the officer was alone at the time, as others hadn’t yet arrived at the home where a woman called for help, saying her brother was reportedly becoming aggressive with his mother and attempting to break into her house.

Critics may question why the officer didn’t wait for backup.

What if he had waited to approach the home and Munoz had stabbed someone inside? Then the officer would be criticized for not doing his job and protecting the public.

What if the officer stumbled and fell as Munoz chased him? Then he might have been killed or injured.

If cities defund their police, as many protesters are demanding, that could make this scenario more common as there may not be backup, or it may not arrive as swiftly. That makes it dangerous for everyone involved in a situation such as this.

In Los Angeles, the sheriff's department said some protesters blocked entrances and exits at the hospital, though the Los Angeles Times reported that could not be independently verified.

Why were they even protesting there? The deputies didn't do anything to anyone there. They were in surgery, fighting for their lives after being shot in the head while sitting in their vehicle.

Protesting at the hospital is an endorsement of the shooting. There's no other way to look at it. If the protest was about the need to reform policing procedures, then it could have been held at the police station or City Hall.

For full disclosure, and as I've mentioned in previous columns, I'm the son of a retired police officer. I respect the job they do. It's difficult, and the vast majority of them do it well.

They don't deserve to have targets on their backs just because they're wearing the uniform. They also shouldn't expect their uniform to shield them when they do something wrong.

Lancaster's mayor appealed for calm after Sunday's late-afternoon shooting, but it didn't work.

But if you want to express your displeasure about how officers have acted, pick better opportunities. The LA protest and Lancaster riot — when you throw bottles and other things at police and break windows, that's a riot, not a protest — are just undermining the cause.