

11/21/21 Daily Meditation Transcript

Some Questions Raised by the Rittenhouse Decision

Good morning.

We're meditating further this morning on the sad story of Kyle Rittenhouse and what's transpired in his story.

Remember that it was on August 25th that he appeared at the demonstrations in Kenosha. And it was May 25th, 2020 that George Floyd was murdered by a policeman, exactly four months before. And it's in this bigger context that Ben Jealous, from the People for the American Way, makes his point about yesterday's trial conclusion.

He says:

"Here are the facts. Kyle Rittenhouse crossed state lines and used an illegally purchased assault rifle to confront racial justice protesters, who had been demonized and made out to be a threat by far right politicians, commentators, and media outlets."

And the protest, of course, was about the killing of Jacob Blake--or not the killing, but the shooting multiple times of Jacob Blake--a black man, four times shot in the back, who is now a paraplegic--probably for the rest of his life.

And many of the vigilantes, the white vigilantes on the streets of Kenosha, were satiated with the militia movement. And who they were against were those speaking out against structural white supremacy and disregard for black lives.

And so he concludes, Ben Jealous, that "the verdict in this case further enables that white supremacy, and will be seen as tacit encouragement by our criminal justice system for racially inspired white mob violence, unless we do something about it."

And that's really the key here. It's not Kyle Rittenhouse as an individual, but it is the militias and the right wing movements in our time, so enabled by the spirit of our times and a previous president. This is what's lighting a fire in many people's consciousness.

And, of course, you want to cool down that fire, and, at the same time, not be silent about what's going on. And not hide any more than we want our representatives in Congress to hide when a congressperson

is threatening online, and with videos, to murder one of his colleagues, who is a woman, and may disagree with him in terms of our political values.

So, once again, we have to go deeper than the immediate news to do something to heal the media news.

And the calls for another trial are real, and the Justice Department may well get involved. But what's also real is this conflict at the surface of things between those who recognize that we have to undo centuries of racism and injustice; and to come up with other expressions of living together, even amidst disagreement and conflict.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.