



Written by [Larry Elder](#) on February 2, 2023

Racializing the Death of a Black Man by the Police, Part I

It became national, indeed, international news that five Memphis police officers grabbed, punched, beat, pepper-sprayed and stun-gunned a black suspect, named Tyre Nichols, who later died at the hospital. A picture of him in his hospital bed showing his swollen, battered and bloodied face went viral on social media.

The city police chief, a black female, said she was disgusted: “In my 36 years ... I would have to say I don’t think I’ve ever been more horrified and disgusted, sad ... and, to some degree, confused.” The cops were fired; all face second-degree murder charges.



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The body cam video, as well as video from an outdoor camera, was released. No video exists of what first caused the police to begin Nichol’s traffic stop.

Nichols’ mother, at a press conference arranged by her attorney, said, “I hate the fact that us as black people, we out here killing each other. I don’t know why?” That’s right, the five officers facing charges of second-degree murder are *all* black.

But not to worry, it did not take long for Democrats and the Democratic media to *still* racialize the issue. Few things are more creative than a Democrat playing the race card. Barack and Michelle Obama called this a “painful reminder” of America’s cop problem.

The new mayor of Los Angeles, a black female, said in an interview, “Even with the black officers, I wonder how they would have reacted if it was a young white person?” The white male reporter did not push back, raised no objections. This makes him and his media colleagues part of the problem by allowing such incendiary statements to go unchecked.

Playing from the same sheet music, the Rev. Al Sharpton said, “(Tyre Nichols’ death) is an outrage and race is still involved.” CNN’s Van Jones said that even though the cops were black, “they might still have been driven by racism.”

Here are the facts. It is rare for cops to kill anybody — an average of about 1,000 people annually over the last eight years, 82% of them armed (most with guns), out of a population of more than 334 million, with over 61.5 million civilians having at least one police contact in 2018, and almost 54 million having contact with police in 2020, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Odds are much less for an unarmed black person to be killed.

A former Thompson Reuters data scientist — more on him later — wrote in 2021: “Over the past five years, police have killed 39% more unarmed whites than unarmed blacks.... The raw statistics suggest that there is actually a slight *anti-white bias* (emphasis added) in police applications of lethal force.” In 2020, according to the Washington Post database, cops shot and killed 459 whites, 26 unarmed, and they shot and killed 242 blacks, 18 unarmed. In 2021, police killed 446 whites, 8 unarmed, and 233



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blacks, 11 unarmed. In 2022: 389 whites, 9 unarmed; 225 blacks, 7 unarmed. In 2019, police killed 12 unarmed black men. But according to a poll in Policemag.com, among those who self-described as “very liberal” over 50% thought the police killed 1,000 or more unarmed black men in 2019. Thirty-nine percent of self-described “liberals” also estimated the number at 1,000.

Criminal behavior is unevenly distributed among the population. Heather Mac Donald, author of “War On Cops” says, “In the 75 largest counties, which is where most of the population resides, blacks constitute around 60 percent of all robbery and murders defendants, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.” She notes: “African Americans between the ages of 10 and 34 die from homicide at 13 times the rate of white Americans, according to researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Justice Department.” Almost always the young black male’s murderer is a young black male. This explains the “disproportionate” police interaction with blacks. Last weekend in Chicago alone, 30 people were shot, seven fatally. Baltimore and St. Louis have homicide rates three times greater than that of Chicago.

Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk-show host. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an “Elderado,” visit www.LarryElder.com. Follow Larry on Twitter @larryelder. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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