



## Exercising the Right

### Tell Us How You Really Feel

Sometimes an anti-gun leftist will say something so outrageous that the comment itself becomes newsworthy. Mark Finkelstein, writing at [Newsbusters.org](#) on November 6, reported about an incident in which a far-left journalist, who was a guest on MSNBC, said something completely asinine. The guest journalist was Elie Mystal, the “justice correspondent” for the magazine *The Nation*, which promotes itself as a progressive publication. Mystal was commenting on matters related to the courts when he made an odd statement that seemed to imply that the white working-class voters who support the Republican Party are actually most interested in getting away with the cold-blooded murder of black people.

The statement started with Mystal dismissing the notion that the white working class is interested in “kitchen-table issues, like infrastructure and pipes and how many gallons of milk you can put on the table.” Mystal said that the real major issue for the “white non-college-educated voter” is the ability to shoot black people and get away with it. “I contend that what [the white working class] care about is using their guns on black people and getting away with it. That’s what they want. That’s what they actually are in it for.”

What Mystal omitted from his analysis was the desire of the white working class to be armed to defend themselves from criminals. If what Mystal actually meant was that working-class whites are very much interested in being able to engage in justified self-defense and not be prosecuted for doing so, then most gun owners would agree. But it seems as if Mystal believes white gun owners want to kill black people even if said black people are not committing violent felonies. Anyone familiar with American gun owners knows that is definitely not the case. Mystal might be surprised to learn that gun owners are not all white people. The National African American Gun Association (NAAGA), which was founded only six years ago, now has 75 active chapters and 30,000 members. A firearm trade association reported that the 2020 surge in gun sales included the largest firearm sales increase among “Black men and women, who show a 58.2 percent increase in purchases during the first six months of 2020” over the prior year.

Mystal might just be letting his politics cloud his judgment, which may be why he’s assigning some bad intentions to people who vote overwhelmingly for his political opposition. As Finkelstein wrote, “White non-college-educated voters’ [are] the demographic that liberals love to hate. They were Obama’s ‘bitter clingers,’ who in Hillary’s iteration became the ‘deplorables.’ And now, Mystal takes it a grotesque step further, depicting them as nothing less than bloodthirsty, racist killers. Of course, the real crime of these people — in the eyes of liberals — is their tendency to vote Republican.”

### Know the Difference Between Self-defense and Thuggery

Sometimes the people who position themselves as proponents of the Second Amendment rush to comment on current events and end up putting their feet in their mouths. A perfect example came in the aftermath of the Kyle Rittenhouse verdict, when conservative influencers on Twitter tried to draw similarities to a trial involving a black defendant involved in a shooting who was also found not guilty. The reason these e-celebs and online pundits rushed to promote the ruling was because so many leftists had claimed that Rittenhouse was only acquitted due to him being white, but the other case showed a



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black man being found not guilty on account of him engaging in self-defense.

Rob Smith tweeted on November 19, “Black man acquitted in self-defense ruling after firing back in unannounced SWAT raid that killed his girlfriend. The Second Amendment is for all,” and linked to an article on Andrew Coffee, IV. While Smith seems to mean well, and most of his Twitter timeline is full of solid commentary on current events, the details of the Coffee shooting definitely do not align with a citizen exercising his Second Amendment-protected rights. Coffee’s ordeal involved a police raid on his house, where his father was the subject of an arrest warrant related to drugs. Contrary to Smith’s tweet about the raid being “unannounced,” the SWAT raid was not a “no-knock warrant” situation. A police investigation revealed that the officers did announce their presence when they entered the house and took the elder Coffee into custody. The younger Coffee was in a bedroom and fired at the cops as they tried entering his room. The police returned fire, and Coffee’s girlfriend was killed in the ensuing shootout.

The high-profile incident received a great deal of scrutiny from the media, but the police involved were cleared of any criminal charges after a grand jury investigation and a sheriff’s office internal investigation found that the involved officers did not violate any policies or procedures.

After the shootout, when Coffee was arrested, investigators did find “marijuana cigarettes, crack cocaine, 10 Hydromorphone pills, and one oxycodone pill” among Coffee’s belongings. Coffee was eventually charged with felony murder for the death of his girlfriend, attempted murder of a law-enforcement officer, and illegally possessing a firearm as a convicted felon.

Conservative Twitter influencer Smith left out in his tweet that Coffee had previously been convicted four times, and one of those convictions involved the battery of a law-enforcement officer. Even though Coffee was acquitted of the charges of felony murder and the attempted murder of police, he was found guilty of illegally possessing a gun as a felon, and the prosecutors are requesting that he be given the maximum sentence of 30 years.

All of this is just to say that Coffee is not the poster child for justified armed self-defense, despite what some conservative Twitter influencers might want you to believe. The Second Amendment may be “for all,” as Smith wrote, but it’s definitely not for career criminals engaged in illegal activity.



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