



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 28, 2015

“Ferguson Effect” Blamed for Increase in Violent Crime

In late October FBI Director James Comey [said in a speech](#): “Most of America’s 50 largest cities have seen an increase in homicides and shootings this year, and many of them have seen a huge increase.”

Speaking at the University of Chicago Law School, Comey posed a couple of rhetorical questions for his audience:

In today’s YouTube world, are officers reluctant to get out of their cars and do the work that controls violent crime? Are officers answering 911 calls ... avoiding the informal contact that keeps bad guys from standing around, especially with guns?



He answered his own questions:

I don’t know whether this explains it entirely, but I do have a strong sense that some part of the explanation is a chill wind blowing through American law enforcement over the last year. And that wind is surely changing behavior.

Weeks later Chuck Rosenberg, acting chief of the Drug Enforcement Administration, backed up Comey:

I rely on the chiefs and sheriffs who are saying that they have seen or heard of behavioral changes among the men and women of their forces. The manifestation of it may be a reluctance to engage [with criminal suspects].

This, not unexpectedly, led to pushback from the White House. On October 27, in a speech to a gathering of police chiefs in Chicago, President Obama accused Comey of “cherry-picking data” to make his case in pursuit of a “political agenda.” When Rosenberg followed on in support of Comey’s assertions, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said that Rosenberg had “no evidence” for his assertions, while Attorney General Loretta Lynch told a House committee that although “there might be anecdotal evidence there, as we all have noted, there’s no data to support it.”

There is such data, however. And the national media’s attempt to cover it up is, thanks to Heather Mac Donald of the Manhattan Institute, being successfully exposed.

Back in May Mac Donald published a piece in the *Wall Street Journal* which revealed the unnerving impact that the “depolicing” by the police — which St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson called the “Ferguson Effect” — is having on violent crime in America’s largest cities. After decades of declines in violent crime, large cities such as Baltimore, Detroit, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and St. Louis are experiencing alarming increases in such crime.

Dotson said in November 2014 that police officers are disengaging from discretionary enforcement activity and that, as a result, the “criminal element is feeling empowered.” Prior to the shooting of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri, police officer Darren Wilson in August 2014, arrests in St. Louis



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city and county had been steadily moving downward. But by November, homicides in the city had surged by 47 percent, while robberies in the county were up 82 percent.

When the leftist Brennan Center for Justice published its “Crime in 2015: A Preliminary Analysis” in November, it showed the inexorable and predictable increase in violent crime as well, though the acquiescent mainstream media tried to downplay it. Heather Mac Donald was given an opportunity to expose the media’s willingness to neutralize it in another article in the *Wall Street Journal* published on Christmas Day.

According to the Brennan study, “Murder rates have dropped significantly over time [but the] average increase in murder in large urban cities [is] about 11 percent in 2015 compared to 2014.”

Mac Donald responded: “An 11 percent one-year increase in any crime category is massive; an equivalent decrease in homicides would be greeted with high-fives by politicians and police chiefs. Yet the media have tried to repackage that 11 percent homicide increase as trivial.”

One way the media is treating the bad news from Brennan is “to hide the actual figure” which Mac Donald proved with examples from an article in *The Atlantic* magazine, the website *Vox*, and *Crime & Justice News* (published by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice). Another way is to refer back to how far violent crime has come down over the past 25 years and then publish a graph to show the increase as just a modest uptick. This from the Brennan study proves Mac Donald’s point:

Today’s murder rates are still at all-time historic lows. In 1990 there were 29.3 murders per 100,000 residents in these cities. In 2000, there were 13.8 murders per 100,000. Now, there are 9.9 murders per 100,000 residents.

Averaged across the cities, we find that while Americans in urban areas have experienced more murders this year than last year, they are safer than they were five years ago and much safer than they were 25 years ago.

This of course is small comfort to families of those being murdered thanks to “recalcitrant” police who are increasingly afraid of YouTube videos showing protests “on demand” with resultant lawsuits threatening their careers. In Baltimore, for example, the per-capita homicide rate is the highest in its history, with 54 homicides per 100,000 residents. Shootings in Cincinnati, lethal or not, were up 30 percent through mid-September compared to a year ago. Homicides in St. Louis were up 60 percent by the end of August this year compared to last year. In Los Angeles, violent crime has increased 20 percent while shooting “incidents” in Chicago are up 17 percent through the middle of December and headed for a “record” year.

In her otherwise excellent rebuttal to the media’s weak-kneed response to the obvious increase in violent crime, Mac Donald asked but failed to answer the most important question: Is this an intended result of policies installed deliberately to neutralize and create trepidation among police officers just trying to do their job? She expresses her concern this way:

The media and many politicians decry as racist law-enforcement tools like pedestrian stops and broken-windows policing — the proven method of stopping major crimes by going after minor ones.

Under such conditions, it isn’t just understandable that the police would back off; it is presumably what the activists and the media critics would want. The puzzle is why these progressives are so intent on denying that such depolicing is occurring and that it is affecting public safety?

It’s possible that Mac Donald was hemmed in by space limitations before she was able to answer that



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question. Or perhaps she didn't know what former Salt Lake City Police Chief Cleon Skousen discovered years ago that explains the attack on local police. In his book *The Communist Attack on U. S. Police*, Skousen reviewed a communist manual captured by the CIA which provided instructions for scientific mob-making. This manual had been distributed to Soviet agents and Communist Party activists throughout the United States and the rest of the free world. From the summary of Skousen's book, one reads regarding the manual:

This captured manual outlined in detail the procedure to be followed in leading a mob against the police. Numerous charts demonstrated how a police blockade could be smashed, how a milling crowd of unorganized marchers or protestors could be mobilized into an overwhelming force of organized violence, how the thin line of police protection in any given area could be overrun or out-manuevered by a few well-trained agitators directing the movements of a crowd.

Is it too much of a stretch that the founders of BlackLivesMatter — one an avowed Marxist and the others sympathetic to the cause — might just have one of these manuals in their library? Is it too much to suggest that their intimate familiarity with one of the declared goals of Communism — as published in the *Congressional Record* in 1963: "Support any socialist movement to give centralized control over any part of the culture: education, social agencies, welfare programs, mental health clinics, etc." — would lead them to include local police departments?

If it isn't, then the "Ferguson Effect" makes perfect sense: Intimidate local law enforcement through organized protests and threats; use the resulting spike in crime to build the case for a national police force; and replace local police with a national or federal police department to be run by unaccountable bureaucrats from Washington to enforce national policies dictated from on high.

In January 1933, Hermann Göring, Adolph Hitler's number-two man in the Nazi Party, was appointed head of the Prussian police and began filling the political and intelligence units with Nazi Party members. On April 26, 1933, he reorganized the department, calling it the Gestapo.

Once again, isn't Mac Donald's question worth answering? "Why [are] these progressives ... so intent on denying that such depolicing is occurring and that it is affecting public safety?"



A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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