



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on June 24, 2019

Buttigieg's Handling of Police Shooting Threatens His Campaign

South Bend's Mayor Pete Buttigieg has so far been a media darling, riding the media's good will because of his marriage to another man. Identity politics of this sort plays such an important part of the Left that white, male Democrats such as former Vice President Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Beto O'Rourke — and Buttigieg — are now facing a Democratic primary in which their white skin and maleness is actually considered a negative.



Buttigieg, however, had his status as a gay man going for him, at least until now.

As the old Chinese proverb says, "A man can foolishly seek power by riding the back of a tiger, until he winds up inside. Playing the identity card on race and sex has now come back to damage the mayor's campaign."

Many in the black community of South Bend, Indiana — home to Notre Dame — are outraged over the shooting by a white police officer of a black man, who was killed. What has made matters worse for Buttigieg is that he fired a black American police chief early in his time as mayor, then replaced him with a white police chief, then another.

After the shooting early Sunday morning, Buttigieg, 37, left active campaigning to return to South Bend, where he spoke at a town hall meeting filled with angry residents, where he was heckled and booed. Many of the residents faulted Buttigieg for failure to make the city's police force more diverse — specifically to add more black officers. Buttigieg told the group, "I take responsibility for that [not making the police department more diverse]."

Predictably, Buttigieg promised an outside investigation, even promising to ask for the U.S. Department of Justice to come into the case. "This is the beginning of the conversation, not the end," he promised the crowd.

As to the shooting, Sergeant Ryan O'Neill responded to a dispatch around 3:30 a.m. Sunday, which said that a man was going through cars. When O'Neill arrived, he saw a man — Eric Jack Logan — leaning inside a car. As O'Neill confronted the man, he said that Logan began coming toward him with a six- to eight-inch long knife, raised over his head. O'Neill fired twice, with one shot hitting the door of the vehicle, and a second shot striking the man in the stomach, killing him.

O'Neill failed to record the incident with his body cam, leaving the officer open to accusations that the shooting was unjustified.

African-Americans are a critical constituency in the Democratic Party, particularly in the presidential nominating process. Their heavy support for Hillary Clinton in 2016 tilted the nominating process in her favor, over Sanders.



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Buttigieg's efforts to attract black support in the nominating process was already going to be difficult, as blacks tend to be more opposed to same-sex "marriage" than white voters. Combined with this incident, there is little doubt that Buttigieg's efforts to attract more African-American support will be even more challenging.

In addition to Buttigieg's problems with black Democrats over this incident, one has to wonder how serious other voters are going to take a mayor of a city of only 100,000. After all, mayors who have made presidential bids in the past, even from America's largest city — New York City — have not done well, including John Lindsey and Rudi Giuliani. Other than his being able to tap into one of the Democratic Party's core constituencies — the so-called LGBTQ community — can a small-town mayor really expect to be taken seriously on the national stage? The problems of a city of 100,000 are hardly comparable to those faced by the president of a country of more than 300 million.

The incident could also interject the issue of crime and support for local police into the campaign. Regardless of the merits of the case, it is unlikely that the majority of Americans are going to be sympathetic to an accused car burglar getting shot after a police officer stated the man was charging him with a knife. And those who tend to be less sympathetic to the police are going to be even less likely to support a mayor of a city in which a police officer shot and killed a man — especially after firing a black police chief back in 2012.

Buttigieg's first instinct to call in the *federal* government to investigate a local shooting incident indicates that he has little respect for the concept of local control and responsibility. He even passed over calling in officials from the Indiana state government to investigate the incident.

It appears that Buttigieg, who has gambled heavily on identity politics advancing his presidential campaign, may have just wound up inside the identity-politics tiger.

Photo of Pete Buttigieg: [Official South Bend Mayoral Photo](#)

Steve Byas is a college history instructor, and has written the book History's Greatest Libels.



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