



Media Blame Police for Race Riots

By Cliff Kincaid
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“The images and scenes we continue to see in Ferguson resemble war more than traditional police action,” wrote Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) in Time magazine. The allegations about the “militarization” of police were picked up by dozens of media outlets, on the left and right, and made the libertarian Republican Senator into a media darling. But they were designed to make the police look bad for protecting themselves and their community.

It turns out that the “militarization of police” is a sensational term for police officer safety in the face of drug gangs, crazy gunmen and race riots.

On CNN on Sunday, correspondent Victor Blackwell called Ferguson a “war zone” and interviewed Radley Balko, author of a Wall Street Journal article, “Rise of the Warrior Cop,” which is based on a book by the same name published by Public Affairs Press.

But in their rush to blame the police for enforcing law and order in Ferguson, Missouri and protecting business owners, our media failed to note the abundant evidence of shoddy work by Balko in the piece, which was published last year. “The correction to Balko’s reporting stands as one of the most epic reporting corrections in the annals of journalism,” the S.H.A.M.E. Media Transparency Project pointed out.

A 200-word “corrections and amplifications” at the end attempted to set the record straight about some of the article’s erroneous assertions about the “militarization” of law enforcement at various levels of government. It said:

“The Consumer Products Safety Commission does not have a SWAT team. An earlier version of this article incorrectly said that it does. Also, the U.S. Department of Education and the Fish and Wildlife Service have law-enforcement divisions, but the agencies say they don't receive tactical or military training and don't operate as SWAT teams. An earlier version of this essay incorrectly said that the agencies have SWAT teams. In addition, the earlier version incorrectly described the execution of two search warrants. In the first case, the FWS says that its officers’ weapons weren’t drawn when it searched a Gibson Guitar factory in 2009. The essay incorrectly called it an ‘assault-style raid.’ In the second case, the Department of Education says its search of the residence of alleged members of a student-loan fraud ring was successfully executed. The essay incorrectly described the search as ‘bungled’ and incorrectly implied that the home was

searched because a resident had failed to repay her student loan. Finally, Mr. Balko says that he sought comment from the U.S. government agencies mentioned in the essay while researching a book in 2012. The essay incorrectly implied that the agencies had failed to respond to recent requests for comment.”

This is quite a laundry list of distortions. Yet, Balko, a former media fellow at the Cato Institute, keeps appearing in the media as an expert.

A full-time deputy sheriff wrote an article noting that the process is not so much “militarization” as much as it is “modernization,” and that, “The military for the last 100 years or so, has been giving surplus equipment to law enforcement. Way back in the day, many agencies were the recipients of full-auto Tommy guns which they used when conducting raids.”

Nevertheless, Balko continues to write on these topics for The Washington Post, and to promote his book. Among his latest allegations is that police “tear-gassed a news crew from Al-Jazeera” in Ferguson. Balko linked to a dubious site claiming it was an example of “state security forces” attacking journalists, like Missouri is some communist or third world police state.

The claim crumbles under scrutiny.

The film footage supplied by Al Jazeera only showed one of the correspondents being “caught in the crossfire” when a tear gas canister was shown near the news crew. It was not clear where it came from or who threw it.

Milking the controversy, however, Al Jazeera highlighted the incident by claiming that its correspondent, Ash-Har Quraishi, had escaped “serious danger as police fired tear gas in his direction.” The correspondent himself was quoted as saying that “people started running toward us, saying they were being fired on with rubber bullets. Rubber bullets were fired on us, and then a canister. We had to retreat into the neighborhood.”

So the tear gas had been used to disperse agitators, not to target a news crew.

A close look at the video shows the correspondent wandering into the tear gas, not away from it. How convenient that the cameras were rolling at the time, in order to capture this for dramatic effect. It seems that a desperate Al Jazeera will do anything for ratings.

Not to be outdone, the Russia Today (RT) propaganda channel covered the incident under the sensational headline, “Press freedom? Police target media, arrest and teargas reporters at Ferguson protests.”

In Russia, journalists are murdered with real bullets and the real killers, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, are never prosecuted.

Mark Lomax, executive director of the National Tactical Officers Association in suburban Philadelphia, has previously commented on the situation faced by law

enforcement in some dangerous neighborhoods. “We didn’t create this, the bad guy did,” he said. “This is policing that has had to adapt to the crime, the criminal, and to the type of weaponry that’s out there today.”

The group points out that the use of specially selected, trained and equipped police personnel “was born out of necessity,” and that “the violent riots and disorders of the decade of the sixties, many of which involved sniper fire directed at police and civilians,” were a significant factor.

At the time, there was abundant evidence of outside agitation, sometimes by organized communist groups. The Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, which was dismantled by liberals, published a report that included testimony about an instruction manual captured from a communist group that described in detail how to manipulate mobs. The recommendations include creating confusion by starting fights in public spaces, linking arms to resist police dispersal tactics, throwing objects at police, the use of fire and explosives, and, of course, looting.

More recently, the threats posed by heavily-armed narcotics-traffickers and terrorists have justified the use of SWAT teams and special response units.

During an interview with Sean Hannity of Fox News, Chief Thomas Jackson of the Ferguson Police Department blamed “a lot of outside agitators” for the looting and other violence.

Liberal commentators have shown no interest in finding out who they are and, in fact, gripe about Jackson bringing up that subject. Instead, they want to find fault with the police for protecting themselves and the community.

The liberal media are angry that the police released videotape of the dead thug, Michael Brown, bullying and “strong arming” a much smaller convenience store manager after he was caught stealing. This was before he reportedly attacked the policeman who shot him.

On Saturday, CNN highlighted the “news” that the videotape was released over the “objections” of the Obama Justice Department, as if the truth about what preceded the “execution” or “murder” was not relevant.

I thought the media were in favor of transparency, or freedom of information.

In fact, their narrative about the case was falling apart, just as it did in the Trayvon Martin case. But the media will never admit they’re wrong. They will keep pumping out distorted coverage, using discredited sources such as Radley Balko.

Meanwhile, the question about outside agitators will remain unanswered.

It’s too bad Rand Paul rushed to judgment in the controversy. He has shown, once again, that he is not presidential material.