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A white supremacist slew a man in Manhattan. Why is the president silent?

Trump's refusal to condemn the attack against a black man – believed to be 'practice' for a killing spree – allows hate and violence to breed

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Last week, a 28-year-old white man by the name of James Jackson traveled from Baltimore to New York City, reportedly to kill as many black men as he could, according to prosecutors. In his possession were two knives and a sword with an 18-inch blade. Upon arriving in New York, Jackson quietly checked in to a hotel near Times Square. Then he began his hunt.

According to the authorities, Jackson stalked several potential victims before narrowing his sights on Timothy Caughman, a 66-year-old man who happened to be on Ninth Avenue searching for cans and bottles to recycle, a favorite activity of Caughman's.

Around 11.15 pm on 20 March, Jackson spotted the unsuspecting Caughman. Silently withdrawing his sword, he plunged his large knife into the innocent man, the blade slicing right through Caughman's body. A witness to the murder stated that Caughman asked Jackson "What are you doing?" Jackson then stood up and walked off, his chest covered in Caughman's blood. Caughman dragged his own dying body to a nearby police precinct and was later pronounced dead at Bellevue hospital.

Jackson, who turned himself in to the police after surveillance photos of him were released, reportedly told detectives that he was "angered by black men mixing with white women" and that he killed Caughman as "practice" for a killing spree that he was set to unleash in Times Square on other black men.

He had specifically chosen New York for his murderous plans as a way to maximize media attention, according to the Manhattan district attorney. Jackson had also composed a manifesto about his beliefs that he was set to deliver to the New York Times, news reports indicate.

Attention to this monstrous crime has been slow coming and sadly predictable. The race-baiting New York Post described the white Jackson as a "sharp-dressed suspect" while raising Caughman's arrest record, as if either had anything at all to do with Caughman's murder.

Caughman was also initially and incorrectly identified by the New York Times as homeless. And Jackson's crime will no doubt be framed through the lens of psychological problems, because white people's violent crimes are almost always seen as enigmas born of a tortured soul rather than expressions of noxious political beliefs.

But Jackson's gruesome crime bears all the hallmarks of the violence of our age. His was a politically motivated act performed to advertise an ideology, through both the media and a manifesto, and to send a message of terror, this time through the black community.

Imagine how different the reaction would be if James Jackson had been a Muslim killing other Americans. All we need to do is compare the coverage and reaction of last week's Westminster attack to Jackson's to see the difference.

Few people have heard of James Jackson, but the global news media have endlessly replayed every second of Khalid Masood's movements. World leaders were quick to condemn Masood's act, and Donald Trump tweeted his condolences to the family of Kurt Cochran, an American who was tragically killed in the Westminster attack.

Why he wouldn't also send condolences to the families of Keith Palmer, Aysha Frade, and Leslie Rhodes, the non-American victims of the attack, speaks volumes about Trump. Don't hold your breath for Trump's condolence tweet to the friends and family of African American Timothy Caughman.

We need to make this comparison not to deflect attention away from the crimes of Khalid Masood but to draw attention to how we talk about violence. At a time when hate-filled and politically inspired violence is rising, we should expect leadership from our president as a way to quell future conflict. Instead, the Trump administration traffics freely in a narrow, dubious and dangerous idea of how to secure the nation from threats.

In Trump's vision, violence is something that outsiders do. Why else establish the ridiculously named Victims of Immigration Crime Enforcement (VOICE) office, when studies repeatedly show that immigrants commit far fewer crimes than native-born Americans?

Just this week, two new studies from opposite sides of the political spectrum – from the Sentencing Project and the Cato Institute – reached that same conclusion. But our president's words and actions disregard honest inquiry and mobilize even more hostility against immigrants.

The Trump administration has also recently rolled out a further limitation on entry to the country, while again claiming a dire national security need. Now, if you don't come from a country on the visa-waiver list (mostly European countries), you can expect that coming to the US will become nearly impossible. There is nothing inherently wrong with screening people before they arrive in the country, but this program is set up to fail applicants.

Consular officials will now be expected to interview up to 120 people a day, which amounts to about five minutes a person. As the American Immigration Lawyers Association's Greg Chen told the New York Times: "It's highly unlikely [officials] could obtain information that demonstrates whether someone is a national security threat in such a brief interview process."

Officials will now ask applicants about their travel histories, addresses and work histories over the past 15 years, and applicants must provide all phone numbers, email accounts and social media handles when applying.

Screening will affect all non-visa waiver countries but is also specifically mandated for applicants from Iran, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and Libya. Again, Muslims are presumed to be terrorists first. This time, the burden falls on them to prove otherwise in a system that gives them no meaningful opportunity to do so.

What we have here is Muslim ban 3.0, this time a Muslim ban not by law but by bureaucracy.

And most recently, we've now learned that the US may have killed as many as 200 civilians during airstrikes on Mosul in the past few days. This carnage follows other recent bombing runs that also probably killed scores of civilians in Syria. Iraqi officers are complaining that US rules of engagement have been significantly relaxed since Trump took office, leading inevitably to more civilian deaths.

Imagine your son or daughter is killed by an American bomb dropping from the sky. Would you consider the US liberators? With every reckless civilian death caused by the US grows the possibility of more retributive violence.

It's very clear what this all adds up to. Donald Trump wants you to believe that he is working hard to fortify our national security and keep the country safe. But by ignoring some forms of politically motivated violence, namely by white supremacists, and casting blanket suspicion on entire groups of others, namely Muslims and immigrants, Trump is neither eliminating nor reducing political violence in our society. He is exploiting it. And he is encouraging it.