

# The Washington Post

## More on the time Rudy Giuliani helped incite a riot of racist cops

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November 16, 2016

On Monday, I posted about Rudy Giuliani's long history of vindictiveness and authoritarianism. At the time, he was reportedly under consideration to be Donald Trump's attorney general. The latest reports have Giuliani being considered for the State Department. I've also seen multiple reports that he basically has his pick of high-ranking posts in the Trump administration.

In part of my post yesterday, I noted that during his first successful campaign for electoral office, Giuliani helped incite a riot involving thousands of mostly white, mostly drunk police officers. On Twitter, Aaron Stewart-Ahn sent along this local news account of the incident:

It's worth noting that this report came shortly after the riots. They were actually quite a bit worse than described. Again, here's longtime New Yorker and civil libertarian Nat Hentoff recounting them in a recent piece published at the Cato Institute:

It was one of the biggest riots in New York City history.

As many as 10,000 demonstrators blocked traffic in downtown Manhattan on Sept. 16, 1992. Reporters and innocent bystanders were violently assaulted by the mob as thousands of dollars in private property was destroyed in multiple acts of vandalism. The protesters stormed up the steps of City Hall, occupying the building. They then streamed onto the Brooklyn Bridge, where they blocked traffic in both directions, jumping on the cars of trapped, terrified motorists. Many of the protesters were carrying guns and openly drinking alcohol.

Yet the uniformed police present did little to stop them. Why? Because the rioters were nearly all white, off-duty NYPD officers. They were participating in a Patrolmen's Benevolent Association demonstration against Mayor David Dinkins' call for a Civilian Complaint Review Board and his creation earlier that year of the Mollen Commission, formed to investigate widespread allegations of misconduct within the NYPD.

In the center of the mayhem, standing on top of a car while cursing Mayor Dinkins through a bullhorn, was mayoral candidate Rudy Giuliani.

"Beer cans and broken beer bottles littered the streets as Mr. Giuliani led the crowd in chants," *The New York Times* reported . . .

*Newsday* columnist Jimmy Breslin described the racist conduct in chilling detail:

“The cops held up several of the most crude drawings of Dinkins, black, performing perverted sex acts,” he wrote. “And then, here was one of them calling across the top of his beer can held to his mouth, ‘How did you like the n\*\*\*\*\*s beating you up in Crown Heights?’”

The off-duty cops were referring to a severe beating Breslin suffered while covering the 1991 Crown Heights riots in Brooklyn.

Breslin continued: “Now others began screaming ... ‘How do you like what the n\*\*\*\*\*s did to you in Crown Heights?’

“ ‘Now you got a n\*\*\*\*\*r right inside City Hall. How do you like that? A n\*\*\*\*\*r mayor.’

“And they put it right out in the sun yesterday in front of City Hall,” Breslin wrote. “We have a police force that is openly racist ...”

One black member of the city council was physically blocked from crossing the street by a drunk cop. Another was trapped in her car as cops rocked it back and forth. Both were bombarded with racist epithets.

Giuliani never condemned the riots, the signs or the racist cops. He rode the wave of support from police and law-and-order voters into the mayor’s mansion. When his own campaign produced a report criticizing him for egging on the cops and then acquiescing to them after the fact, he ordered the report destroyed.

Yes, the riots happened more than 20 years ago. And perhaps they could be overlooked if it weren’t for the fact that today, Giuliani is reliably among the first public figures to condemn the activists who protest police brutality. He has practically made a second career of it.

Giuliani has said that the very name “Black Lives Matter” is “inherently racist.” The hypocrisy is only uglier when you consider what the two protests were about. Black Lives Matter and other racial justice groups are protesting police violence against black people. You can disagree with their methods. You can disagree with the cases they choose to highlight. You can even disagree with the general assumptions behind their protest — that police departments and the criminal-justice system are plagued by systemic racism. But it’s hard to object to their ultimate aim — they want equal treatment under the law.

The cops that Giuliani egged on were protesting something much different. They were protesting the suggestion that they should be held accountable to the people they serve. (If we’re honest, many of them appeared to have been protesting the very idea of reporting to a black mayor.) *That* is why they rioted. They didn’t want to be held accountable to the people of New York.

As Hentoff points out, not only did Giuliani never condemn the riots, but after the death of Eric Garner he assailed New York Mayor Bill de Blasio for daring even to acknowledge that the NYPD has a history of racism. Giuliani knew full well that this was true — he benefited from it politically.

That Giuliani could launch his electoral career on the riots, go on to a long career in politics, emerge as both a prominent and consistent critic of anti-police-brutality protesters, and now be under consideration to become the *chief diplomat* for the most powerful country in the world — all without ever condemning or distancing himself from even the most vile, racist, and violent of the rioting cops — is all pretty good evidence that Black Lives Matter has a point.