

2 black men found hanging from trees

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Millions of people around the world, caught up in the tragedy of black Americans killed by police and white vigilantes, have taken to the streets in recent weeks to march for justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others. At the same time there have been counter demonstrations, generally much smaller, by racist groups including remnant groups of the Ku Klux Klan, and unrelated protests against coronavirus lockdowns by largely white, conservative, armed mobs.

It is hard not to notice that the police have treated the two kinds of protests very differently.

In February, police escorted more than 100 masked members of a white nationalist group on a march through Washington's National Mall. Patriot Front members shouted, "Reclaim America!" and "Life, liberty, victory!" as officers protected them against possible attacks.

In April, hundreds of protestors, many armed, entered the Michigan Capitol building and crowded halls and staircases demanding that the state legislature not extend Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's coronavirus stay-at-home order. One of the protesters carried a doll dangling from a noose. Police stood by placidly as demonstrators jeered and shouted from much less than six feet away. In contrast, there have been a significant number of reports, many caught on video, of law enforcement instigating violence or mistreating law-abiding citizens during peaceful protests, most famously when law enforcement and National Guard personnel cleared demonstrators outside the White House for President Trump's photo op at an Episcopal church two weeks ago. After first denying it, the Secret Service admitted last week that pepper spray had been used on the crowd.

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