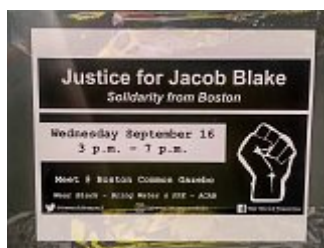


United States: Rittenhouse verdict gives vigilantes green light to kill

Thursday 25 November 2021, by [MIAH Malik](#) (Date first published: 22 November 2021).

It was expected. The judge was clearly on the side of teenager Kyle Rittenhouse, the white vigilante from Illinois.



Kyle Rittenhouse shot his victims while they protested for justice for Jacob Blake, who was paralysed from the waist down by a police shooting. Image: Wikimedia Commons

The 12 jurors found Rittenhouse not guilty for the deaths of Joseph Rosenbaum, 36, and Anthony Huber, 26, and for wounding Gaige Grosskreutz, now 27. Rittenhouse shot them with an AR-15 rifle during a Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on August 25 last year.

The BLM protest wasn't held following the police shooting of Jacob Blake. The young Black man was shot seven times in the back by a white police officer. The cop, claiming a threat to his life and "self defence", was never prosecuted.

Defence lawyers said Rittenhouse, then 17, was also acting in self-defence [1].

Rosenbaum was unarmed and Rittenhouse said he knew that. Huber was on a skateboard and confronted the armed teenager.

The judge, an elected official, refused to allow the dead men murdered by Rittenhouse to be called "victims", but allowed the defence to refer to them as "rioters" as they protested the shooting of Blake.

The jury also found Rittenhouse, now 18, not guilty of two felony charges of recklessly endangering safety.

The white supremacist called his murderous action "self-defence", even though he crossed state lines to oppose the protesters and support the cops.

White supremacists can now claim self-defence whenever they infiltrate protests and provoke a situation. It is a green light for white terrorism.

President Joe Biden saw it otherwise, praising the legal system that let Rittenhouse off. "We must

acknowledge the jury has spoken.”

Blake’s shooting and Rittenhouse’s actions were not mentioned by Biden. Blake was paralysed from the waist down in the shooting that led to days of, at times, violent protests in Kenosha and across the country.

Every Black person knows the true history of US racial injustice, from slavery to de facto and de jure segregation. Both were legal. Black protests, on the other hand, are seen as illegal by the far right.

Some say there are two different legal systems. In fact, there is only one legal system — Black people are presumed guilty, and whites are presumed innocent, and thus free to murder Black people and white allies who protest the racist system.

Huber’s parents, Karen Bloom and John Huber, said they are “heartbroken and angry” over Rittenhouse’s acquittal.

“Today’s verdict means there is no accountability for the person who murdered our son,” they said. “It sends the unacceptable message that armed civilians can show up in any town, incite violence, and then use the danger they have created to justify shooting people in the street.”

There is no justice. It is likely there will be civil suits against Rittenhouse and other vigilantes. The Department of Justice is unlikely to do anything, just as it failed to file federal charges when Blake was shot.

The lesson is clear: under the US Constitution, the First Amendment supports the right to protest and freedom of speech, and the Second Amendment allows the formation of state militias and to bear arms; but the Rittenhouse verdict means white male vigilantes can use the Second Amendment to trump the First.

If Rittenhouse had been an African-American teenager, he would probably have been shot rather than arrested, and definitely convicted.

The two white men Rittenhouse gunned down are considered traitors to the white race, in the eyes of white vigilantes and supremacists. Since the days of white abolitionist John Brown, it is considered a crime to be a friend of Black freedom.

“Not guilty” is not the same as being “innocent”. The fight for justice will continue.

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P.S.

• Green Left Weekly. Issue 1327 November 22, 2021:
<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/united-states-rittenhouse-verdict-gives-vigilantes-green-light-kill>

Footnotes

[1] <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/10/27/us/kyle-rittenhouse-trial-victim-terminology/index.html>