

DAILY EVOLVER LIVE PODCAST, EDITED TRANSCRIPT | 4.28.2015 | Boulder Colorado | Jeff Salzman

VIOLENCE AND PROTEST IN BALTIMORE, AN INTEGRAL VIEW

Jeff Salzman: Hello everybody. It's Jeff Salzman here. Welcome to The Daily Evolver Live. It's Tuesday night, April 28, 2015 and I'm coming to you from my home here in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. I'm here tonight, as always, with our Daily Evolver producer Brett Walker. How are you doing tonight Brett?

Brett Walker: Hey, pretty good. Thanks.

Jeff: Tonight, we wanted to take a look at what is the breaking story, one that has caught the attention of all of the media at least here in the US. That is the unrest and violence in the city of Baltimore which is about 50 miles from Washington D.C. I'll get to that in a minute.

Before I do, I just want to thank you, as always, for listening and for following us to our new home here on Integral Radio which is a new feature of Integral Life, which is the leading internet hub for the worldwide Integral Community as well as the home base for Ken Wilber and his latest works.

You can also find more of my writing and blogs and podcasts and interviews on my personal website, dailyevolver.com, where I post everything that captures my and Brett's fantasy. I would also encourage those of you who are interested in the integral aspects of what we talk about tonight because that's what we're doing here is really looking at current events through the lens of integral theory and looking at integral theory through the lens of current events.

You can also check out the couple of charts that I have, first of all, under the theory tab at the top of the dailyevolver.com website but also, Brett, you're going to host those on the chat window in Integral Radio here right quick, right?

Brett: Yup. I'll do that right now.

Jeff: Cool. Also, I do love hearing comments and questions and feedback so if you're interested in that, please contact me, well first of all, on the live chat and Brett will be monitoring that through the show.

You could also e-mail me at jeff@dailyevolver.com or when you go to the site, the website, there's a little orange button on the right that you can press and leave me a voicemail. I often get back to you and if not, I sometimes play it on the show.

So let's take a look at this uprising in Baltimore. Just take a moment to feel into the situation. One of the insights of integral theory is that we are living in a soup where we have a subtle body or energetic connection to other people that is independent of space, perhaps also time, but that we can connect in our bodies with things that are happening in the world.

Just to bring you up-to-date if you're not as tuned in as you might be, this is the story of a 25-year old black man, Freddie Gray, who was arrested a couple of weeks ago. Somewhere between his arrest and his ride in the police van to what started out to be to the police station but ended up a ride to the hospital, his spinal cord was 80% severed at the neck. There were three fractured vertebrae and a ruptured larynx.

In other words, on the way to the hospital, something or someone snapped his neck. He died a week later in the hospital. There's a great reaction to this in the country. It's a cumulative reaction. In the last couple of years, we've seen a lot of this police controversy with the Michael Brown situation in Ferguson, Missouri, the Eric Garner case in New York, and Walter Scott in North Carolina. He's the man who was shot in the back as he was running away from the policeman. The policeman in that case was charged with murder.

In response, there has been at least a week of peaceful demonstrations in Baltimore that yesterday turned into violence and rioting. That lasted for about 24 hours. It seems to be under control now. We'll see how it goes tonight but the place is well fortified tonight. Last night, the criticism is that the authorities were late in responding to the situation. We'll take a look at that actually.

Just to put the riots in context, last night's riots, as I said, lasted about 24 hours. There were no fatalities on the civilians' side. There were 15 police officers hurt, one still in the hospital, 150 arrests so far and the setting of fire to about 15 buildings. We can compare this to the Baltimore riots that happened in 1968. This is after Martin Luther King was assassinated. Those riots lasted a week. There were six dead, 700 injuries, 6,000 people arrested and 300 fires set.

So last night and yesterday's violence is about roughly 10% of what it was in 1968. It's difficult to make value judgments about the quantity of violence because, of course, for the people whose businesses were burned down and looted, and the police officer who is in the hospital, that was a very, very bad night. A complete total loss for, at least, the property owners.

That's not to be minimized in any way but we do want to look at trends and contexts in these situations. Of course, the headlines last night were "Baltimore is burning." Well, 15 buildings in Baltimore, a city of many thousands of buildings, doesn't constitute the city burning. It was the same headline on Huffington Post, Fox News and CNN. CNN's version was actually "Baltimore Inflamed."

It's an interesting thing, this what we would call the sensationalism of the media. I actually think it's more than that. I think it's actually a marker for the development of the pacification of our culture. Because we see, whether it's ISIS or, in this case, the violence in Baltimore, that less violence gets more and more attention in our more and more peaceful world.

It's just a function of how we're built, particularly in the first-tier memes. By the way, when I talk about the first-tier memes (if you look at the Levels of Development chart) they are the first six stages of cultural development and consciousness development in individuals. In these structures we're tuned to danger.

We have a negativity bias, psychologists say, where we are hypervigilant for anything that might go wrong, and we whip things up with as much drama as we can. Think about the ways that we talk to each other and the way that we tell our stories. Storytelling is about drama. We want to seem important to the people we're talking to. We want them to care about us, we want them to be entertained, we want them to be stimulated, we want them to be attracted to us, we want to feel connected with them. There's nothing in the world wrong with this because it's the way that human beings communicate and feel like we're together.

Well, on the other hand, I guess you could say that one thing wrong with it is that it keeps us on edge. If you watched the coverage last night, it was all about the continual hooking of the nervous system ... playing the fires over and over again, the people looting, the shouting heads of the commentators. I got exhausted at some point.

The good thing about being on edge is that at the edge there's a lot of power. There's a lot of clarity. You get to see something that you were unable or unwilling to see previously. Drama is a great human art form and we don't want to just project it out and say, "Oh, the media is sensationalizing." We all do. The media is us in the collective domain.

Ok, so let's look at the rioters themselves. As I said, the week after Freddie Gray's death was followed by peaceful protests. People came from all over. Again, there is a story here that needs to be told: there is a systematic brutality from the police and lack of respect from the police for particularly African-American men. That is just more and more intolerable in a society that purports the base itself on freedom and equality.

Yesterday started with another day of demonstration that turned violent when they let the kids out of school. The mass transit had been shut down so these high school kids were just out in the streets. The kids had been promoting an internet meme called "the purge", which is based on this movie called *The Purge*, which is a story of a dystopian future. Of course, movies about dystopian futures are a mainstay of marketing to young adults. Is there any other kind of future that is ever seen in movies and books? I don't know.

Anyway, in this dystopian future, a totalitarian government passes the 28th amendment to the United States Constitution which mandates an annual 12 hour suspension of all police and emergency services. This is purported to be a socially helpful invitation to have a catharsis, to commit crimes and get it out to your system. But it's also secretly, to the authorities, a way of controlling the population and the criminal element, because for these 12 hours every year criminals get to kill each other.

So this was the beginning of the violence yesterday. It was interesting to watch the footage. You could see earlier in the day the packs of teenagers who were running through the streets like on a dare or a thrill ride. They were holding their hands over their heads, it had a certain festive quality to it, as these things do.

However, Integral helps us see is that in this kind of situation of de facto suspension of police or emergency services, it is an invitation for *real* Red to rush in. These are the people who are just in it for the mayhem. They just want to take what they can get, have whatever fun, they take joy in destruction. It is what we saw last night. You can see it get more and more violent. It started with the teenagers but it ended up with the real criminals. They were the ones who were out later at night, actually doing the real looting and setting fires.

This kind of meme is an example of the downside of the internet. We often talk about how the internet is such a technological evolutionary force for raising consciousness and for good, but one of the problems of the modern world is that pre-modern people can use modern technology. There's nobody more pre-modern (Red altitude) than a bunch of teenagers.

The criticism of the authorities, the mayor and the police chief is that they waited too long to come in and shut the violence down. That's possibly a legitimate criticism. The mayor of Baltimore, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, a 45-year old African-American woman. was cautious especially after what we saw in Missouri a year ago, last August, in the Ferguson case where there were similar riots.

The Ferguson police force, which was 90% white, sent out in armored cars with snipers and gasmasks and teargas, and it was really shocking to the country that we saw this military response in one of our major cities. She didn't want to do that. She also noted that the

protesters, particularly in the early stages before 8:00, we're still mostly the teenagers, mostly the kids.

This drives the conservative crazy. We heard tons of criticism on Fox News and from right-wing pundits about what was she doing. Was she deliberately letting the demonstrators set things on fire because she believes to their cause and she too wants to scare America into accepting their agenda? Was she just being too politically correct? Why would she wait till 8:00 at night to have a press conference? Why wait even later to call in the National Guard and then keep them out in the perimeter?

These are good questions ... but it's a little bit like the criticism that Obama faces when he doesn't rush in, for instance, to bring a military or response to ISIS or holds back in these conflicts in the Middle East and Syria and so forth. It literally scares people on the right. You got the troops, you got the guns, you got the force, how could you not go in and stop things?

But when I look at what happened last night where there was one cop who was hurt and no other casualties, where there were 15 fires set, and bunch of car fires ... I'm not sure it was a terrible outcome considering the possible other outcomes. I'm actually giving her a little bit of a pass.

I notice that I'm attracted to the conservative media, particularly Megyn Kelly of The Kelly Files on Fox News. She was covering Baltimore, of course, as it was basically a running story on CNN and Fox particularly, MSNBC too.

Megyn had one of her reporters, a young guy, Leland Vittert on the scene and he was talking about the devastation and senselessness and the fires and doing specific roles, media thing. She asked him, "Are you able to interact with any of these protesters? Have you actually spoken to any of them?" He answered, "We spoke into a few of them. Mostly, what comes out is a long string of words that aren't fit for television. A lot of anger. It's not exactly clear what they're angry about when they're looting stores and these kinds of things, but this is what we're seeing."

She says, "Well, who's that man in front of the camera over there? He's yelling. Can you interview him?" Leland pauses. You can tell he doesn't really want to approach this guy and interview him but he does. He goes up to the guy and he says, "Tell me why you're out here and what you're angry about?" The guy answers by saying, "The people need to be heard." Leland says, "What do they need to be heard about?" He says, "Oppression."

Leland says, "By who?" The man answers, "By the system. By everything." Then, Leland asked him, "When you see what's happening to your city, the looting, the fires, is it worth it in terms of getting the message out? Is this what the violence is all about?" The man answers (and this is one of the demonstrators, he is jumping up and down and shouting). "The violence is definitely not worth it but we want to be heard. The police don't respect us."

This is an interesting statement because respect is a really important part of the developmental schema. We see that the first stage of development, which we call archaic or infrared, is about an individual saying, "I am. I exist." Then we move into the tribal stage which is more communal. Then we move back to the red warrior stage where the message is, "I am powerful. I need to be reckoned with. I need to be seen and noticed."

A lot of black men, black people in general or actually even a bigger set, the underclass in general, needs to be seen as powerful, needs to be seen as respected and to be reckoned with. Then we move into the traditional, which is more communal, more religious and so forth. Then

we move to the orange stage which is more individual again. The slogan of the orange stage is, "I am somebody. I am special. I am unique."

I always remember, back when Jesse Jackson was running for president, God, I don't remember when it was, maybe the '80s or the '90s, when he would go around and do these big rallies for young black men. He would do the old fundamentalist Christian call and response. He would call out, "I am somebody!" They would shout back, "I am somebody!" This identity is part of moving into the orange stage of development which is arrested in a lot of young black men. It's a culmination of decades of this kind of disrespect.

It was interesting that at the end of this interview, Leland Vittert was actually convinced. He went back to Megyn Kelly and he said, "These people are angry at the police for how they've been treated for years. This is the culmination you can tell of a lot of anger, not just about this one event but about a number of events that they feel have perpetrated incredible injustices upon this community for all of these years."

I thought that was an interesting change in real time in the tone of his report. Remember, this is Fox News. This is the show that conservatives are watching all over America. I like that. I like that he got finally to fill into the cause and the motivation behind how these people are acting. That's what I like, again, about Megyn Kelly's show. She's challenging to us liberals because she has a reflexive anti-left bias and also she's mean to Obama and I don't like that, but she does keep coming back to questioning it and trying to penetrate a little deeper. I like that about her. I think she's actually moving the ball.

Also, you see something in this Baltimore situation that we seeing more and more. I think it's really, really helpful and healthy. That is you're seeing African-American conservatives. They're talking like conservatives have always talked throughout history. It's about land order. It's about being good. I think of the police commissioner last night, Anthony Batts, a black man. He was being interviewed and he said, "I am extremely disappointed in what has happened in this beautiful city tonight. I'm disappointed in the fact that the damage has been done to these communities. I'm disappointed that we cannot be more responsible and that our community is an embarrassment nationwide."

Then there's Charles Payne, who is a new commentator on Fox news, an African-American man. He was talking about how Obama gets it all wrong when he sympathizes with people who are persecuted. This is Payne is positioning himself against the black president. He says, "You've got to admonish people, period. Particularly when they look like you and they are doing something wrong. You can't always make them the victim. The looters can't always be the victim and they can't always be justified."

Then he went on with what I thought was a terrific example. This is again Charles Payne from Fox News. He said, "Look at Steve Jobs for example. He founded one of the most successful companies, the most successful company actually in the history of the world, Apple computer. And yet he was the guy with the chip on his shoulder. He had been adopted. He had been rejected. He was angry but this anger can be redirected and can be used like a nuclear reactor. You can use it for a weapon or you can use it for power. We want these young men to take the same energy that they're using out the streets and put it into becoming an engineer. Take this energy and show the world that you can start a business. Take the same anger and animosity and use it for something positive."

This is really the antidote for out of control violent red warrior energy. Red has to be civilized by amber. The warrior has to be civilized by the fundamentalist. It's no good to take them up to orange. It's no good, certainly no good, to take them up to green. We see this unholy relationship between green permissiveness and red aggressiveness. This is what the right was

accusing the mayor of doing. I'm not sure she was. She called these guys thugs and idiots. She had a good traditional streak herself.

Another thing I wanted to point out is that there is a real red underbelly to the police force in our country, I think system-wide but I think particularly in these African-American neighborhoods where there's so much crime.

We have to keep in mind that in a civilized society, the government has the monopoly on violence. That means in addition to the military, the one place where you can have socially sanctioned violence and bullying is in the police force. I've had a few interactions with the police. I'm sure many of us have, mostly being stopped for traffic violations or so forth. I have to say, I'm 60 years old and all of the interactions I've had with the police in my lifetime have been generally positive.

I will say, however, there was this one time where I was driving home from work, this is a couple of years ago, and I noticed as I was driving up by street that a police car had come up very fast behind me and was tailing me really close, really aggressively, almost bumper to bumper, three or four feet away. I was going relatively slow but I was still shocked and frightened.

I turned to my driveway and he preceded to pull up behind me and cross-blocked me with the police car. He jumped out of his car. I got out of my car and he backed me up against my door, just like a bully does. He was red-faced and staring at me in aggressive posture. He started asking me questions like, "Who do you think you are?" That's a question that's hard to answer even if you're not under pressure.

Then, where was I coming from? What was I doing? Who lives in this house with me? I was so stunned and frightened that I literally couldn't think straight. I remember, I had this calm self-observation consciousness where I was watching myself be unable to put words together and watching myself stuttering and shaking and trying to answer and trying not to fall apart.

People, do not look to me in a crisis. I am not the guy for the crisis situation.

I managed to stutter out my answers. Just as suddenly as he showed up, he turned, got to his car and drove away. No ticket, no warning, no nothing. I actually still have no idea what I did. I probably drifted to a stop sign or something but it was nothing compared to the proportion of his response.

I realized right then, "Okay, that was a very small taste of what some people experienced on a far more regular basis." But now, with these situations that we're seeing with Michael Brown, in New York, in North Carolina and Florida and here in Baltimore, that we're going to see a shift in policing. Not entirely, of course. I always think of that quote that's attributed to George Orwell where he says, "People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf." There are going to be some rough men and women in the police force.

But I do I predict that we're going to see a revolution. Our society is becoming more and more allergic to the idea that when you fall into the net of the police, that is a punishment in and of itself. That you're going to be treated disrespectfully. You're going to be put with other dangerous people. I think our prison systems, prison rapes, the safety of prisoners, these issues are all coming to the fore.

Also, something that I think is really useful here and will, I think, change things dramatically is the smartphone and video cameras. We're already seeing that with everybody having a phone

camera and taking movies of these arrests. If there had been a working camera in that police van, we wouldn't have all these questions. If the policemen themselves wore cameras, we wouldn't be having these questions.

The only people who were hurt by not having cameras are bad cops. The good cops should welcome them and I think they do. I think we're going to be seeing a continued pacification of policing by basically creating a witness situation. You do things when you don't think anybody is looking that you wouldn't do when you do think that people are looking.

I think of an experiment where they have in these lunchrooms and these businesses, they have boxes of candy and potato chips and cookies and whatever. It's an honor system. You put your money in this little cardboard box. It's not terribly secure but everybody is supposed to be honest and it works.

The experiment showed that when there was a mirror in the lunchroom by the snack box, people were more honest than when there wasn't a mirror. Even the idea of being witnessed by yourself makes us sit up a little more straight. I'm all for the cameras.

Another thing I want to point out is just how good Obama was in talking about the Baltimore situation. I know I'm always singing this guy's praises. He had his press conference yesterday. He condemned the rioters. He said, "When individuals get crowbars and open doors to loot, they're not protesting. They're not making a statement. They're stealing."

He called the rioters criminals and thugs who tore up the place. He supported the police. He said that they are the ones who have to go in and do the dirty work of containing the problems that arise. He talked about how many local police forces need to be reformed. He announced that there would be a justice department investigation into the death of Freddie Gray.

He said, "I think it's going to be important for organizations like the Fraternal Order of Police, and other police unions, to acknowledge that this is not good for the police. Just as there are corrupt politicians and businessmen, there are some police who aren't doing the right thing. That thoughtful leaders shouldn't close ranks but instead should work on constructive proposals to improve their practices."

Then, he talked about the protesters, the peaceful protesters and how sad it was that, as he said, one burning building will be looped on television over and over and over again which was true. Yet, thousands of demonstrators did it the right way. He said, "The overwhelming majority of the community in Baltimore has handled this appropriately. Expressing real concern in outrage over the possibility that our laws were not applied evenly in the case of Mr. Gray and that accountability needs to exist."

Then, he talked about the root cause. He says that everyone needs to feel that "these kids are our kids." And they're important. No kids should be living in violence or poverty. We as a country have to do some soul searching, he said. On issues at play in impoverished communities that had been stripped away of opportunity.

He pointed to drugs, a lack of fathers and a lack of economic investment. He said at the end, "If we're serious about solving the problem, further reaching reforms in education and criminal justice should be enacted." That's a pretty darn integral response. Basically, a four quadrant analysis of the situation. Again, he is my guy.

Okay, I see we have a question here ... "Baltimore's violent protesters are right. Smashing police cars is a legitimate political strategy. It's crucial to see non-violence as a tactic, not a philosophy. If it fails to win people over, it's a futile tactic."

Well, I'll tell you this. I don't know if they're right but I will say it works. There is something about a certain stage of any kind of protest where violence gets the attention of the masses of people. It's just as simple as that. That's was true in the '60s. Then we had Martin Luther King assassination, Kennedy assassination, we had the riots ... and then we had real integration in the interiors where we started affirmative action. We started seeing African-Americans in higher positions, on television, in more movies and characters with more respect. I think that we always want the violence to be as minimal as possible but it is a piece of the puzzle as things move forward.

I think, as we can see, again, that less violence gets more and more attention as we move forward. Another thing I would say about non-violent protest is that non-violent protest would work. It does work in a civilized society where it doesn't work in a police state, for instance. I've talked about this before. You would never see a non-violent protest in North Korea. They get hauled away. Or in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. A non-violent protest were working in Baltimore but let's face it, they didn't get near the attention that it did when it started going violent last night. That's when the cameras and the armies of reporters moved in.

Brett: You know the author Arundhati Roy? She's Asian Indian.

Jeff: Yes. I do. I know of her.

Brett: She's a quite a social activist too. She's talked about the complex nature of armed resistance and non-violence. She said that non-violence as a political approach is really associated with India's past, and romanticized, but it's a tactic that requires a middle class, just like you were saying. She said that non-violence on the part of the oppressed is only effective when there's a middle class to witness it, to be made aware of the injustice through its performance and lean on their own power to sway economic and social tides.

When a middle class isn't watching, is distracted or otherwise uninvested in the struggles of the poor, non-violence is useless and may actually even be deadly, so the philosophy goes...

Jeff: You have to do it in a society that has a conscience.

As we look at the nature of evolving through these stages there has to be a healthy stage established for a new stage that come on line. Particularly young African-Americans and young African-American men, again, this is not necessarily racial, it just seems to be the center of gravity of the African-American community, but it's also true of the underclass in white communities that a healthy red is had through sports, through entertainment, through rap music. That is a healthy expression of red. It's can be very violent. It can be very "look at me" which is, again, red. Red is about "notice me. Take me seriously." It's about bling. It's unfortunately about misogyny towards women often times, although it's very interesting to see women rappers using the same things.

We think of rap music and violent video games, as debasing the society, where actually, they're providing a healthy red outlet for people who are moving through that stage of development.

It's a way of getting through red without hurting anybody. We see that the more rap music and the more violent video games and violent movies and television and the coarsening of our society and all of the things that conservatives fret about ... that while all of that has increased, the amount of violence and crime has decreased.

Corey is saying rap can be red but it isn't necessarily. That's absolutely true. Corey, if you know of any integral rap, let us know. We'll take a listen. Maybe the Kendrick Lamar you are playing before we got on here.

Brett: That's possible--it definitely falls into the category of conscious hip hop.

Jeff: I know. He is ... I have to read the lyrics but even then I can't understand them. I'm trying to watch these shows on television even, like Outlander, and I can't understand the word they're saying. I have to have closed captions. Do we have closed captions for rap?

Brett: I don't think so but you can find the lyrics online. Corey says that conscious hip-hop includes Blackalicious, Kendrick Lamar, Saul Williams. I would also add Lupe Fiasco. He's very postmodern.

Jeff: Well, speaking of post-modern, how's the Occupy Naropa going?

Brett: Well, there's a bunch of people in tents on the campus. They have a list of demands. They have people designated to talk to you about their grievances because apparently, with this kind of occupation, if the people that are exposing the injustice have to consistently explain over and over again, it re-traumatizes them. They have these people appointed to tell you about it.

I haven't actually talked to them. Unfortunately I can't tell you too much about it. They just have apparently evidence that Naropa, I don't know if they've said Naropa is racist outright but at the very least, they're not doing what they can to support diversity.

Jeff: Well, yeah. Naropa is the Buddhist University here in Boulder. Boulder is one of the most exquisitely politically-correct towns in the country. Naropa is the most exquisitely sensitive universities in the world. There is an Occupy Naropa movement which is taking action against ... According to their manifesto, Brett, it is an action against white supremacy and institutionalized racism at Naropa.

They have camped out in tents on the lawn at Naropa. Their list of demands is, let me see here, includes improving Naropa's hiring practices, providing training around races. Some other issues for employees, funding student led discussions on race. Creating a visible multicultural center. Implementing ethnic studies curriculum and other things.

I would say that that is a green action. It's an extreme green action but there's a piece of the truth to it, which is that the long game of overcoming a racism isn't just a matter of how people are treated by the police or how the laws are written. Our laws are written fine at this point. The final piece happens in our hearts and minds as we really, really look into what it is to be like another person, and engage the venerable spiritual practice of exchanging oneself for other.

In the meantime, it's not so much the race that is the issue. It's the stage of development. We have people at all races who are at the red warrior stage. They are thin skinned. They are volatile. They have low impulse control. They can be dangerous. We have people at all races at every stage including integral. It's not so much race. It's the level of development that really determines how people act.

I think that ultimately what's going to overcome racism on this planet is the increased "mongrelization" of the human race. We just can't help ourselves. We just keep breeding with each other. At this point, almost everybody has every race's DNA in them. That will just continue with intermarrying and having bi- tri- and multi-racial babies. I think that is a characteristic of this sacred world to come.

I was going to get into a couple of question but I see that we're close to our end-time. Maybe we'll save them till next week, Brett.

Brett: Sounds good.

Jeff: Okay, well, let's pray for Baltimore. I love the bumper sticker on the back of my friend Jennifer's car. She has a bumper sticker that says, "God bless everyone. No exceptions." That's what I'll leave us with tonight, that little prayer. Thank you so much everybody.