

The Source Code Of Modern-Day American Anarchy Was Written In Seattle



The Boulevard Montmartre at Night by Camille Pissarro, 1897

by [Matt Rosenberg](#) (February 2022)

One cannot understand the predicament of Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis or Milwaukee in early 2022 – or that of any other major American city currently under socio-political duress – without first examining the influence of what is known as the nation's Left Coast. Here I write of what Joel Garreau in *The Nine Nations Of North America*, labeled "Ecotopia." Think of California, Oregon, and Washington state.

It is from where leading technologies, taste-making trends, politicized mass entertainment, tendentious performative activism and alarmingly bad public policy have more and more emanated. Coming quickly to mind are Portland's angry Antifa mobs, and San Francisco's TechBro-hating class warriors, yelling imprecations at the Google employee van during morning boardings in the city's changing Mission District. But much of the source code of modern-day American anarchy was written in Seattle.

I've come to know the place well. And it must be admitted: Seattle makes a great first impression.

Heretofore a flatlander, and with a good job offer in hand, I moved there with my wife from Chicago in 1994. It was boggling.

Outside of town were mountains to hike upon alongside peaceable wild goats. There were bright blue alpine lakes set in cirques of snow-capped peaks; and stunning high ridge trails flanked by sloping wild-flowered meadows, studded with marmots enacting tragicomic operettas.

Within eyeshot of walking paths in Seattle's city parks were whales, seals, blue herons and wild salmon cavorting in Puget Sound, as bald eagles perched overhead. An ocean lay not far away with deep beaches, towering twisted sea stacks, and shoreline caves to probe at low tide.

Back East – places such as Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and even sleek and sensuous Miami – had felt saturated, spent, and spat out. We started a family. We lived, quite literally, in a shining city on a hill, the Olympic mountains and Puget Sound dramatic from our street, and from inside our fixer-upper, nabbed for a song before Seattle housing costs spiraled so crazily.

Yet I soon apprehended a timorousness in the city's public thinking, a shuttered dialog. It proved to be a feature, not a

bug.

Although choice was sacrosanct in matters of abortion, it was not so with respect to education. State legislators eventually approved a small number of public charter schools but kept the yoke on future growth because their expected success threatened the monopolistic government-run schools from which teachers unions could extract membership dues.

A statue of Lenin had been salvaged from a junk heap in Poprad, Slovakia, and welcomed to Seattle's mannered bohemian district of Fremont, an adjacent tablet touting his support of childcare in his day. We were to understand that the spiritual godfather of 20th Century Communist exterminations totaling no less than 50 million was misunderstood, actually a benign family-friendly communitarian, a Progressive Pasha of sorts. His huge cast-metal likeness was adjacent to a burrito stand, after all. Just a bit of kitschy free expression, said local opinion leaders. [I thought not.](#)

Money was shoveled at programs for the homeless but the number of unhoused street-dwellers grew by more than 100 percent from 2012 to 2019 in the Seattle-King County region, versus seven percent nationally. Seattle-King County in 2019 had the third highest number of total homeless in the nation.

Downtown Seattle became ever more saturated with open air drug markets, feces, urine, theft, organized shoplifting rings, the mentally ill accosting pedestrians and merchants, and violent crime.

"I don't want to live in a city surrounded by filth and criminals and drug addicts," one downtown resident told the City Council in early 2020 as a crowd filled a public meeting after a fatal downtown shooting on a notorious corner two blocks from tourist-thronged Pike Place Market. Chronic offenders were regularly released within hours, only to re-offend within hours. Compassion was reserved for the

perpetrators. Victims were just to soldier on.

Some 20 years of homeless task forces and commissions had amounted to less than nothing.

But aggression was not merely passive, and neglectful, in Seattle. Authority was something to be cowed by the angry and the bold.

The Ur Text for Post-Millennial disorder in U.S. cities was written by 1999 rioters who violently disrupted the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference in Seattle. Carrying their window-breaking, Capitalism-smashing agenda to the city's downtown streets, they overwhelmed police at first and had to be set back with rubber bullets and tear gas. How to shape dialog on international trade policy? Break things, storm the barricades.

Many of the pioneering, black-clad, masked anarchists had traveled up Interstate 5, from Oregon, particularly Eugene, home of the University of Oregon. Seattle's then-Mayor Paul Schell, a successful developer, was embarrassed at the use of force. He said, "The last thing I ever wanted to be was the mayor of a city where I had to call out the National Guard, where I had to see tear gas in the streets."

Spooked by the city's flexing of muscle at WTO and worried about optics, Seattle authorities then proceeded to let the city's 2001 Mardi Gras street party in historic Pioneer Square get badly out of hand. Some 350 police officers were present, but ordered to the sidelines by Schell's police chief until it was too late, resulting in brutal physical attacks of civilians, by civilians, and a young man's death.

"Several groups beat people at random and several women were sexually assaulted," the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported. Attendees suffered injuries including skull fractures, brain hemorrhages, and broken noses and teeth. Public outrage was widespread.

The Mardi Gras killing claimed a Good Samaritan. Kristopher Kime, bending over to help a young woman being mauled by a group of revelers, was smashed in the back of the head with a bottle and later died. He was 20 and worked construction. He had been captain of his high school soccer team at Evergreen High School, a short distance southwest of Seattle. He was a natural leader, a charismatic live wire, according to classmates.

Kime's killer was later identified as Jerrell Thomas, then 17. Thomas had been earlier convicted of assault and sentenced to anger management classes, community service, and a curfew. Yet there he was that night cutting loose with deadly effect. After he served his 10-year sentence for killing Kime and was released, Thomas would be sentenced to another five years, stemming from domestic violence and firearms charges.

Following the WTO and Mardi Gras debacles, Seattle May Day protests turned violent in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016, making national and international news.

In 2012 anarchists broke downtown store windows, set off a smoke bomb, flung bags of urine and feces, and attacked property and person with hammers, rocks, pry bars, and paint bombs. One journalist was bloodied after suffering a wood pole to the face, another was soaked with red paint. The mayor declared a civil emergency and for a time customers were locked inside one downtown store for their own safety. It was all said to have something to do with "workers rights."

In 2015, Seattle May Day protesters sported signs that said, "All Cops Are Bastards." They smashed windows of neighborhood small businesses; they brought long wood poles, ball bearings, rocks, hammers, wrenches, knives, fire works and smoke bombs. Three police officers were seriously injured.

After some five straight years of May Day violence, the city finally heard merchants' complaints and contained disorder for

the next several years.

Sustained New Millennium destructiveness in Seattle through the 2010s had a rippling national impact in an age of viral social media. In 2020 after George Floyd's death, it all reached a 20-year apex. The riots and looting and violence – from record murders nationally in 2020 to new homicide records in 12 cities in 2021, to now-commonplace carjackings, and strikes on sidewalks and in stores by organized armed robbery and looting crews, has outlined a great reset – already – in the U.S.'s big cities.

The normalization of public criminality and the bland acceptance of it, traces back to Seattle. Call it the defining up of deviance.

Another dark legacy of Seattle's public life for the United States is the deadly targeting of police.

On Halloween night in 2009, a troubled man named Christopher Monfort approached a Seattle Police car and shot two resting officers, killing one, wounding the other. Days earlier Monfort had at a city maintenance yard set a fire and detonated pipe bombs, destroying police vehicles. At trial for murder of the one officer and attempted murder of the other, Monfort pleaded insanity and his lawyers argued that he saw killing police as a means to end police brutality.

A 2010 Seattle Times profile of Monfort which included jailhouse interviews, revealed that already somewhat radicalized, he had entered the University of Washington in 2006 to major in Law, Societies, and Justice. In the academy his work included a focus on racial disparities in drug arrests and systemic racial bias in criminal justice. He was particularly interested in "jury nullification," a practice by which jurors make decisions based on social justice principles rather than points of fact, or law. Defending to the interviewer his shootings of the two police officers, he

emphasized recent cases of alleged police misconduct.

Basement anarchists in Brooklyn organized a letter-writing party to Monfort and approvingly cited him as an exemplar of justified anti-police violence. Monfort ultimately got life without parole. His deadly ambush of Seattle cops in 2009 was followed less than a month later by the assassination of four police officers sitting down to coffee in a Lakewood, Washington Starbucks forty miles south.

The suspect Maurice Clemmons, a lifetime criminal later slain fleeing a police manhunt after the mass shooting, had been recorded in jail phone calls saying, "Sometimes it burns me in the chest, man, I have so much hatred for the police. The strategy is gonna go, kill as many of them devils as I can, until I can't kill no more...I'm going to war."

More ambush killings of cops followed, by other men who had also articulated anti-police sentiments. Two officers in New York City in 2014, three in Baton Rouge in 2016, and five in Dallas in 2016. [CNN reports](#) that in 2021 there were 73 felonious killings of police in the U.S., according to FBI preliminary data. It is the highest annual total since 1995, not counting the 9/11 attacks.

Among the ranks of police killed in 2021 was Chicago Police officer Ella French, 29. She was killed during a summer traffic stop, allegedly by a 21-year-old on probation for felony robbery. In January of 2022, five police officers were shot in New York City, and two died at the hands of one gunman. They were Jason Rivera, 22, and his partner Wilbert Mora, 27 – ambushed in an apartment where they had answered a domestic disturbance call. Their alleged killer was out on probation for a 2003 felony narcotics conviction in New York and reportedly had four arrests in other states, including a 2002 charge in Pennsylvania for assaulting a police officer.

It becomes easier to kill police of course, when you are first

able to invalidate and delegitimize them. Banners with anti-police slogans will only get you so far. The next step is to shut them down.

In 2020, as organized violent protests against police grew after Floyd's death, protesters in Seattle targeted the heart of hipster Progressivism, Capitol Hill. Here, amassed and inspired, they demanded closure of the Seattle Police Department's East Precinct, one of just five such police district headquarters citywide. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, scion of a tough local Irish political family, and former U.S. Attorney for Western Washington under President Barack Obama, had somehow met her match. She agreed to banish cops from the East Precinct over the objections of her police chief Carmen Best.

Thus was established the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) – later renamed Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP). On Pine Street and 12th Avenue East around the vacated precinct headquarters and in adjacent Cal Anderson Park, protesters set up camp, envisioning a cop-free utopian space of poetry slams, vegan cuisine and Critical Theory.

Durkan had quaffed the Kool-Aid and enthused that it might turn out like San Francisco's famed Summer of Love in 1967 – full of flowers, music, and groovy vibes.

Instead, four shootings and two killings ensued, plus arson and several sexual assaults. In one of the deaths, police who were needed to escort emergency medical technicians into the CHOP zone couldn't get past angry protestors.

Not done yet, the City Council announced a six-figure cut in Chief Best's salary, although they hurriedly tried to walk that back to a lesser amount. It was too late. Along with restraints on riot response ordered by City Hall, Best, a Black woman who had risen through the ranks to Chief, had reached her limit and quit. Several other Black police chiefs

in Blue cities were hung out to dry by mayors and city councils and also left their jobs.

At last humbled by the bleak and murderous chaos during Seattle's Summer of Love, Durkan allowed police back into the East Precinct building to do their jobs.

As the summer of 2020 rolled on, protesters angrily confronted outdoor diners in Washington, D.C. and pressing up close, loudly, demanded they too raise a fist in solidarity. In Rochester they approached outdoor diners, shouting and shaking tables. In Pittsburgh tableware landed on the ground broken, diners were yelled at and made to leave, as protestors, a great many of them white, shouted "Black Lives Matter." One Black Pittsburgh disruptor added, for clarity's sake: "Fuck the white people that built the system against mine."

Northern and coastal U.S. cities in 2021 descended further into chaos and violence, while K-12 public schools and universities became ever more fastened on advancing a racialized version of Critical Theory.

But by election day in November, the beginnings of a Revolt of the Cities was evident as centrist voters re-asserted their might.

Espousing a law-and-order platform and support for school choice, ex-cop Eric Adams won the Democratic primary for Mayor of New York against Left-leaning opponents, and later won the general election.

In Buffalo, a socialist won the Democratic primary for mayor but was beaten back by a more centrist incumbent using a write-in campaign in the general election. Minneapolis defeated a ballot measure to end the police department as currently configured. Against radical leftists, centrists won election as a Seattle mayor and one city council seat, while a Republican was elected as City Attorney against an advocate of abolishing police.

In San Francisco in 2021, a recall election was set for mid-February, 2022 of three school board members. They had tried the considerable patience of local parents and voters in several ways. During the Covid shutdown of in-person classroom instruction, they announced plans to weigh the renaming of several dozen schools said to honor supposed oppressors. They began dismantling merit testing for admission to the city's premier academy for high-achieving secondary students, Lowell High School. The trouble? Too many Asians were getting in. That irksome white-adjacent minority which could not learn its place at the bottom of the heap. Lastly, one of the three targeted school officials was discovered to have posted anti-Asian tweets.

All the same, The Revolt of the Cities in the U.S. still faces stiff headwinds – particularly as [universities and colleges tilt further Left](#).

Urban progressive prosecutors funded by intermediaries of Leftist billionaire George Soros continue to light the pathway to hell in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Milwaukee, Philadelphia and New York City. There are prosecutions later quietly dropped, and not always for good cause. Prosecutors are making lousy plea deals. Practically begging repeat offenders to repeat again. They are taking entire classes of crimes off the table for prosecution, such as theft, and resisting a police officer. In the guise of “bail reform,” they ensure that all but the most ardent repeat violent offenders are let go in fairly short order after arrest and before trial. That these criminal suspects charged with serious crimes and let free, may then commit more violent crimes before trial, is no matter.

Further, the true root cause of cascading urban violent crime – negligent parenting rather than inanimate firearms which do not fire themselves – is rarely if ever discussed. There are estimated to be as many as 400 million firearms in the U.S. That may be shocking but then perhaps so is this: the vast

majority of them are not mis-used

Finally there are the junk numbers used to describe the contours of urban crime. The full extent of violent crime – whether or not it follows on the heels of low-cash or no-cash bail for alleged violent offenders – is dramatically undercounted in official statistics. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that nationally in 2020, two-thirds of property crimes and six of every ten violent crimes not including murder, [were not even reported to police](#). There is vastly more crime than what official tallies show. Some and quite possibly much of it committed by perps with prior convictions, including some awaiting trial on new charges.

In cities like Chicago, police foot chases are now bound by so many rules as to be effectively out of bounds. Real community policing centered on crime-busting foot patrols, have been off the table for years because race-hustlers – though not most residents, who *want* more police presence – will decry “over-policing” in Black and Latino neighborhoods.

Police manpower and morale have plummeted in America’s Blue Cities as mandatory days off morph into mandatory overtime. Cops are quitting, or relocating to police forces in the suburbs, or the cities and counties of Red States, where they’re not vilified. Nationally, gun sales have been skyrocketing.

In Seattle, somebody had better be lying bullet-riddled in a pool of blood, for police to actually respond to a call. They’re stretched beyond thin.

Your catalytic converter just got sawed off your car’s underside? Police aren’t coming. Your car got stolen? The prosecutor’s not prosecuting that anymore. Anyway, it’s reparations.

Left Coast activism of the sort nurtured in places like Seattle, Portland and San Francisco has become evident on the

East Coast in places like Bill DeBlasio's New York, Lori Lightfoot's Chicago, and [the Philadelphia killing fields of putative prosecutor Larry Krassner](#). This activism is really a de-activation of moral force and authority. It is full of sound and fury and vaporous emanations of righteousness. It is about the politics of personal virtue. There is no cognitive dissonance in Tweeting For Justice and Peace – while acting against both.

So rather than turn tail, the right and righteous in our nation's signal cities of the North and the Coasts – cities which still go a long way toward defining for better and worse our nation and its values and future – must field candidates for mayor, city council, local school board, district attorney, and the state legislature.

They must undertake voter education in minority communities and go hammer and tongs – with crime victimization data, judicial decision data, school performance data, and more – at the absurd notion that constituents of color are best represented by “progressives” of any sort.

Those who would take back America's Blue Cities must highlight the disastrous effects of the “long march through the institutions” – and through the language itself – by American “progressives” who are in fact the new arch-conservatives.

They are upholding sixty years of failed statist policies centered on the idea that people cannot be held accountable for their decisions and cannot set their own course.

To you who would reclaim our nation's dangerously failing cities: It is not enough to talk, to write, and to agree with others like-minded. Because being right, in an echo chamber, is not winning. Winning is winning.

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