

Fuck I.C.E. City-Wide

Los Angeles Goes Up

C/S

6/18/25

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Sunday, June 8th, 2025

As rocks, bottles, e-scooters, fireworks & other found objects rained upon California Highway Patrol SUV squad cars parked on the 101 Freeway (a below-grade cement corridor that runs through downtown Los Angeles), it appeared that everyone out on the streets was in agreement. This was fine, keep an eye out for incoming cops, but this was fine. Not only was it fine, it was fun. The crowd would go “ooh” and “aah” after a particular crunchy hit. A sight to behold and also an action open to wide participation. Anyone could pick up something and chuck it down at them.

On the bridge over the freeway people were milling about, chatting about the confrontations with the cops elsewhere in the city “center;” talking about people they saw injured; helping the wounded get mended; freely tagging anti-ICE & anti-police messages; drinking; smoking; and decompressing because the cops were for once not all around us, but down below us.

Now that freeway takeovers are part of the social lexicon for fighting-the-fuck-back, we had California Highway Patrol pre-emptively “securing” the freeway, while in effect blocking it themselves. Though, getting on the 101 Freeway in downtown Los Angeles is rarely a good idea as there are very high walls on both sides, so escape is very difficult once the pigs show up. But here, we had an inversion of everyday capitalist reality. The cops were not only blocking the freeway for us, they were locked in a tactically bad position: anyone could come by and rain upon them whatever they want. This was the first lesson from the first few days of a broad uprising against Federal & local law enforcement: that the pigs are not as omniscient and omnipotent as regularly advertised in movies, news broadcasts and broader culture. That they can be surrounded and overwhelmed. This was also a lesson that the police learned and to which they would respond to with increasing viciousness in the coming days.

There is much back and forth whether what occurred on that day was a riot. The Far-Right and MAGA-base would like for it to be one because it would seemingly imply that the “federalization” of the National Guard by President Trump was necessary; the Left would like for it not to be because then there is an argument against the calling of the National Guard; the ultra-left & anarchists would like for it to be a riot because it is a sign that proles are in revolt. Whether it was or not a riot, is not the goal of this piece. What did happen, felt a lot like a riot; even if but for a few city blocks. The tension of everyday life under the regime of Capital was released because the cops were off somewhere else, or were simply overwhelmed by the force of protestors on Sunday. A feeling of communal sharing, solidarity and joy. As ugly as everything has been since the inauguration of this presidency, here was a moment of revolutionary beauty. Beauty was in the streets again.

Prelude

Earlier in the day (June 8th) there was a running stand-off with LAPD, who were protecting the Edward R. Roybal Federal Building at Alameda and Temple St. Here the feeling was much more on edge as the cops were aggressively holding a line with periodic deployments of rubber bullets and tear gas. Cries of “medic!” kept coming as more and more protestors were injured at the front-lines.

Now a part of broader resistance culture in Los Angeles, dirt bikes and mini bikes would often roll through the crowds and taunt the line of riot cops. Though they would eventually roll away, they do offer a bit of loud prole joy in the midst of stale chants of “shame” or “peaceful protest.” In fact, multiple times we would see random Los Angeles drivers pull up in front of a line of riot cops to obviously flick it up for social media. The city hates its police department and this was an opportunity to openly taunt them. To flex our collective power. Now, we don’t condone sharing illegal activity on social media as it leaves one, and others, open to the long arm of the State, but it demonstrates a deep need within Los Angelenos to tell the cops to FUCK OFF.

Eventually, a badly-timed breakaway march thinned out the numbers at the Federal Building and thus the line was broken as the police declared an unlawful assembly. They now gave themselves a *carte blanche* to attack at-will the protestors. This also gave us another lesson: hold the line. The more there are of us at any given point, the more we can overwhelm police. Reminding ourselves and each other to not run when we hear the flash bangs and the other weapons of the State; to look out for each other and in that care is our strength. What we saw was many people who took it open themselves to offer water, KN95 masks, snacks or medical care. Here is another lesson: not everyone needs to be at the front-line to support this struggle against ICE and the police. We can all play a role.

As the day grew hotter, we took a break at a local bar to stave off heat sickness. Then we saw a plume of black smoke rising above the buildings: *something* was burning. This was the contradictory nature of the day. Businesses were still mostly open while Waymo cars were burning on Los Angeles St. *But something was still burning.* Walking ever-closer and cutting through police lines, we saw the burning Waymos. Someone with an ingenious idea, called on some Waymos and then set them aflame. A rather blatant proletarian act against the ever-encroaching **enshittification** of our lives through technology that only works to disempower us. Some may just see a self-driving car, but some of us see yet another extension of surveillance and A.I. in our lives. And in those flames we saw what would become hyper-mediated images and videos that would help embolden the moment, the movement. A moment which opens up a world of possibilities for the viewer and the participant: we *can* fight-the-fuck-back.

As an aggressive police line pushed us away from the burning Waymos on Los Angeles St., we fell back a bit. Some sharp protestors hauled out wire fences to form a defensive barrier, just across the street from the former location of the Parker Center, the former LAPD HQ, and a flash point during the L.A. 1992 uprising / riots (see photo below). As I walk through the city, all I see are the ghosts of revolts past. The Parker Center was demolished in 2019. Now at the site is an LAPD detention center.

As we watched the Waymos burn, we could see the police slowly advancing behind plumes of acrid black smoke. But there was a lull. In that lull there were people dancing to Latin American music, whether cumbias, reggaetón or norteñas. Tagging was free to do and city government buildings were damaged. Dancing to music may not seem revolutionary, or insurrectionary, but music helps keep the energy going. It helps bring people into the struggle because it shows that while we will be ferocious with the police, we will share joy with each other.

Pushed further into the city “center” by the police, we ended up at Temple and Spring St. As we were attempting to navigate through the ever-moving police lines, an LAPD helicopter overhead was openly taunting and threatening physical violence from their loudspeaker. “We’re gonna kick your asses.” This is not new. For as long as I can remember the police hovering above in helicopters, I recall them openly taunting & threatening those below. Whether at protests or

when they fly over inner-city neighborhoods to torment its residents. Collectively we gave them the finger.

Now closer to City Hall, some ahead of us decided the time was set for a proper street barricade. Across from City Hall is Grand Park, a green band of city park that goes across 3 blocks and is set between Spring St to the south-east and Grand Ave to the north-west. This park is a common site for labor rallies, may day rallies and city-sponsored events. Today, its iconic pink outdoor furniture, installed in 2012, played a pivotal role. Protestors dragged these pieces of furniture (tables, benches & chairs) onto Spring St. to protect themselves and others. Again, no one voiced any dissent when it came to re-purposing this furniture. Even the original design and manufacturer, *Rios*, lauded after the fact how now the furniture was not only offering “comfort” but also “protection.”

A protestor who said they had been there the last few days, noted that as soon as the barricade advances the cops would escalate and advance. Sure enough, as the barricade lurched but a few inches forward the LAPD acted as though they were under siege and let off *hundreds* of less-lethal rounds at the barricade. This went on for at least 30 minutes. More pigs would roll up with boxes of munitions as they just went through an incredible amount of rounds. It wasn't until we decided to get away from the barrage of tear gas and rubber bullets that we came up the scene at the 101 Freeway. We jumped from a scene of entrenched self-defense, to a scene of entrenched **offense**. What I saw that day I will never forget. I have been to protests, riots and everything in between in Los Angeles since the late 90s (I was too young to join in on '92) and nothing felt like the power of that moment.

It was like a collective act of daydreaming that became reality.

Saturday, June 14th 2025

By this day, the National Guard had already been deployed in Los Angeles. President Trump had already “federalized” the National Guard against the wishes of the state governor and the city's mayor. This proved to only further incite the city, rather than tamp down the energy. But this time, it was clear that the police, in all its local agencies, were out for revenge.

When we arrived in downtown and made our way to City Hall, the protest felt very tame. It almost looked like the kind of fake protest you see in a movie or T.V. show. Not much was going on, so we ventured to Temple St. and it was there that we saw people confronting a line of cops. It seemed to be the Los Angeles Sheriff Department this time. A notorious law enforcement department that has a history of internal racist gangs and outright brutality. LAPD surrounded City Hall in riot gear. There was an ebb and flow to confronting the line of police. People would push up against the line and then fall back as law enforcement let off periodic “less-lethals” weapons.

Here is where divisions began to show themselves. The chants of “peaceful protest” became more and more pervasive. A chant that is infuriating because it assumes that being peacefully assembled (whatever that means), means that one will not be attacked by police. This is dead wrong.

As the police line pushed up Temple St. the crowd began to throw projectiles, but you could hear voices of dissent in the crowd this time around. Still, fireworks were set off against the cops. At a certain point the police line stopped and a lull came on. It was concerning that protestors

instead of taking the whole of the intersection, would let vehicles pass through. Though there are of course random motorists who get stuck in protests taking over the streets, we have to recognize vehicles as deadly weapons against those on the streets.

Suddenly, an unmarked SUV aggressively drove through the intersection. Friends said they saw what appeared to be an undercover police officer, in an L.A. Dodgers hat but with their faces obscured with some kind of mask. Before they knew it, this person was chucking tear gas canisters outside the windows that left off a cacophony of startling explosions, noise and tear gas. Protestors ran and someone appears to have broken their leg in the melee.

Later, after we all checked in on each other and attending to the injured, we debriefed over what we saw. Were they police? Or maybe fascists being opportunistic? Either way, they used the same brand of tear gas as deployed by local law enforcement. This is a tactic which I've never experience before and it is one which I will now ever-be on the look out for.

As the tear gas began to keep flowing, we pulled back and decided to get away while we were able to and not be kettled. Even without direct exposure to tear gas, the effects will eventually make you feel terrible. Taking a breather at Grand Park we then were subjected to MANY people randomly yelling at us to get off the streets because "we were given them a reason to attack." They were actively working against people trying to build barricades or even just being in the street. After just being attacked out of nowhere by police, in what was effectively a police drive-by, we just ignored them.

The previous week the "peace police" were not making themselves known; but this week they were. Anyone that has spent anytime on social media, especially Instagram, would have seen how the old argument of "good" vs "bad" protestors has once again become the topic of the day. We cannot discount how much social media companies, in this case Meta, are manipulating what we see to push this narrative. The repetition of phrases like "paid protestors", "outside agitators" or "people just wanting to destroy" only divides us and promotes falsehoods as truth. Those who profess these sentiments may mean well and they may think they are protecting the "good" protestors, but the police will beat you whether you are throwing a rock or having your hands up in the air. Just as they will attempt to deport whether you have some sort of legal status, or even citizenship.

People are being disappeared, kidnapped and trafficked by the State: if you think that any kind of violence against those who enable and support them is wrong, then you are fighting a struggle you have already lost in your mind. The lie that non-violence can bring about revolutionary change is one that we need to get away from. Take for instance the Civil Rights Movement: it is now common to think that *solely* non-violence forced the arm of the State to give some level of concessions to this movement. That the State had suddenly decided to make a moral decision. This ignores how many U.S. cities were rocked by riots and revolutionary violence and it was indeed the threat of violence that forced these concessions.

Back to the streets: the Sheriff police line looked so militarized up-close, that at first I took them for the National Guard. In front of them were a line of LAPD officers on horses. Suddenly and violently the Sheriffs let off a barrage of tear gas and rubber bullets that apparently not only hit protestors but also the LAPD. There is audio from a police scanner, noting that LAPD were taking on objects thrown by protestors but also rubber bullets fired by Sheriffs (we had an audio link, but the link is now down). There were other moments where even National Guard was in the line of sight of LAPD setting off their less-lethals. Wafts of tear gas heading towards National Guard without gas masks, but armed with M16s.

Local and national media would eventually pick up on how incredibly violent the police were, on a mostly non-confrontational crowd. There are videos all over social media of people being beat by batons by cowards on horseback. It was clear to myself and my friends that the police were out for revenge for the humiliation they faced the previous weekend when they were truly overwhelmed. I personally have not seen such a violent, massive escalation since the Democratic National Convention which took place in 2000, at the former Staples Center. It was clear that the police were trying to send a message of deterrence and fear.

MORE TO COME SOON.

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