



BLM Activist to “White Folks”: Your Money and Your Life

As the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement — which grew from a hashtag on social media posts to an organized movement after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014 — has grown, it has become a force to be reckoned with. BLM claims to be about justice and equality. BLM leaders and apologists frequently deny that the movement is itself racist and inflammatory. But just every once in a while, someone will get ahead of themselves and tell it like it is.



Last week Ashleigh Shackelford had a vulgarity-laden article published by *Wear Your Voice* in which she makes it clear that white people are — at best — second-class citizens in the movement. In fact, she says the proper role of “white folks” is either as human shields, criminal agents, or financiers. Only she is not so delicate or eloquent about it.

Shackelford — a self-described “[Radical Black Fat Femme. Queer, Agender Baddie. Writer, Body+ Advocate, & Activist](#)” — shows her (and her movement’s) true colors in all their white-hating glory. Her [article](#) — entitled *For White People Who Want to Attend #BlackLivesMatter Protests* — is nothing if not straightforward. Against the backdrop of the BLM crowd claiming that the movement is just about people wanting to be treated equally, Shackelford’s article is a blatant admission of the true nature of BLM. In 1,585 words, she betrays the pretense of the BLM crowd and — probably without even realizing it — shows it for what it is: a racist hate group built on sensationalizing the deaths of black people for the express purpose of capitalizing on the negative emotions it stirs up while destroying the very fabric of America in the process.

She begins by saying that the last two years of “organiz[ing] around anti-black violence and within the #BlackLivesMatter movement” has taught her to get over her “personal/political naiveté” about having “white allies” in the fight against oppression. She says she came to realize that “trying to work with white people in direct actions became extremely triggering and tasking.” And why is that? She says:

White people are 400 years too f**king late for a round of applause for a damn tweet with a hashtag, or for showing up to a damn rally. So many white folks use politicization around #BlackLivesMatter to perform woke-ness because they are still praised in doing so. There is a special snowflake card issued to every white person who goes above existing in silence. But the reality is that even when white people “speak up,” those words are often plagiarized from us, they’re almost always given without citation or credit to whichever Black person they heard/read it from and they are almost always in a position to do more than just “talk.”



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Notice that she capitalizes the “b” in “Black.” The word “white” is only ever capitalized in her article when it appears at the beginning of a sentence. The word “Black” is capitalized in every instance in which it appears with only two exceptions: (a) when it follows a prefix as in “anti-black,” and (b) when she says, “Your presence only triggers the black people that are frightened by you.” The implication is clear: “Black” is greater than “white.” That one sentence is possibly intended to denote that when black people are “triggered” by the white people they fear, the word (and the person) loses value. Most likely, though, it’s just a typo and she intended to capitalize the “b” in that instance, as well.

After laying her disjointed foundation, Shackelford offers her list of “the things that matter the most at this point in time for white people who want to show up to a #BlackLivesMatter protest.”

Numbers one and four on her (did I already say disjointed?) list are, “Ask yourself why you need to go to a #blacklivesmatter protest.” She asks, “Unless Black organizers have specified that you need to come to a rally for buffers against the police, as a legal observer, or to collect other white people, why are you going to a protest when you’re the oppressor?” One need not listen too closely to hear echoes of “Sit at the back of the bus.” Just to put in the for-what-it’s-worth column, I agree with at least *part* of her question. Since the movement is built on the kind of idiotic racism espoused by Shackelford and other BLM “leaders,” why would any self-respecting white person *want* to be at a BLM protest? Her acceptable reasons for white people attending include acting as “buffers against the police.” The more descriptive term is “human shield,” which she makes clear next by saying, “If you really believe that #BlackLivesMatter, ask yourself if you’re willing to die for us and to die to dismantle this system.”

As inflammatory as her opening remarks are, though, Shackelford is just getting started. She lists other questions white people should ask themselves and says that “If you cannot answer yes to ALL of these questions, you don’t need to be at a protest.”

Are you willing to learn everything possible about antiblackness and its many forms so that you can dismantle it? Are you willing to give up everything you have to make sure Black people can survive, thrive and be safe? If you cannot answer yes to ALL of these questions, you don’t need to be at a protest. There are more ways to actually use your privilege and more ways to challenge the antiblack violence embedded within you without being at a protest that you serve no purpose for. Your presence only triggers the black people that are frightened by you, and you actually don’t change anything by being at a protest if there is no work to match your visibility.

So, to be clear, it’s perfectly all right to be anti-white (in fact it’s a praiseworthy goal for white people to strive toward), but unless white people are willing to give up everything they own and die to “dismantle” a system of “antiblackness,” they need not apply. The fact that her argument turns in on itself and commits suicide as it crumbles under its own weight seems lost on Shackelford.

Her second point is neither less inflammatory nor any more logical: reparations. Now there’s a word that is sure to stir up controversy. While race-baiting black “leaders” have trotted out this idea for years now and there is nothing really new to say on the subject, Shackelford does manage to make the idea sound even more distasteful than usual. She says to her supposed white audience:

Nothing you have is yours. Let me be clear: Nothing you have is yours. Also, Let me be see through: Reparations are not donations, because we are not your charity, tax write off, or good deed for the day. You are living off of stolen resources, stolen land, exploited labor, appropriated culture and the murder of our people. **Nothing you have is yours.** [Emphasis in original.]

This would be a great time to point to all of the millions of hard-working, educated black people who



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have prospered and made something of their lives. Among them are millionaires and businesses owners and doctors and lawyers and congressmen and senators and governors and even a president. This would be a good place to point that out, but some logical points are like punchlines: If you have to explain them, they are pointless.

In case “white folks” missed her point, Shackelford spells it out in pure snark:

We live in a white supremacist capitalist world, so ain’t no spinning webs of lies around “money isn’t the answer.” It is because money and exploitation and power are interconnected concepts of violence. Y’all spent hundreds of years selling, mutilating, raping and beating our bodies and labor but you think money doesn’t matter to our freedom and liberation? Cute. Write me a check for this shade because it comes with 400 years of trauma.

We need housing, transportation, food, clothes, free space for meetings and work space; we need laptops, cell phones, encrypted systems for communication, solar power and LAND. Stop playing. Y’all really thought pulling up to the protest in your Hyundai was gonna be enough? Nah. You have to give us everything we need and more, because even if it means you go without — it doesn’t matter because that’s how we been living for 400+ years. Reparations will never be negotiable. So if you’re not willing to talk money, you are not here for #BlackLivesMatter as a movement or for us as individuals.

Don’t let her jab at the connection between “white” and “capitalist” slip by you unnoticed. She and others like her in the BLM crowd mean to lump them both together and eliminate them both together. In the twisted recesses of their minds, wealth comes from nothing and “white” equals “capitalism” and both are oppressive. The only thing that keeps black people down is the oppression of “white capitalism,” and if that were removed and white wealth were redistributed, then black people would all somehow be wealthy. After all, she wants “white” people to give “Black” people “everything [they] need and more, because even if it means [white people] go without — it doesn’t matter.”

In her next point — intentional acts of disruption and shifting of structural power — Shackelford fleshes out her vision of white people as the criminal agents of BLM. Besides “shut[ting] down and boycott[ing] white businesses instead of Black folks having to do it” and giving “all their money to Black folks,” Shackelford says that she wants to see “white allies” (oh, now we’re allies) “shut down police stations and highways across the nation for #BlackLivesMatter” and use “violence as a tactic against other white people perpetuating violence against Blacks.” She continues:

Shifting structural power is key. Reparations falls in line with that as well. I don’t want to see white people holding up a damn sign, I want to see white people doing work that will get them killed because that’s how much they want to dismantle antiblackness. Are you willing to die for us? Because Black folks have a death count of 7 million and up. Are you willing to kill for us? Because we get called violent for protesting “peacefully.” At this point, ain’t no white allyship, b. You either an accomplice (and even then, I don’t trust you) or you ain’t sh*t.

Wait. I thought we were allies; now we’re accomplices? And even if white people kill and die for BLM, Shackelford doesn’t trust them (which, of course, makes more sense than I am sure she realizes). If white people *don’t* kill and die for BLM, then they “ain’t sh*t.” Talk about being damned if you do and damned if you don’t.

Again, point four is “See #1” (which is “Ask yourself why you need to go to a #blacklivesmatter protest.”), presumably because Shackelford thought of a few more points that she should have included



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there and rather than go back and edit her rant, she just stuck those thoughts at the end.

These are not really *new* points as much as simply her saying the same things in an even more disjointed way than before:

Ask yourself if you care more about what the world thinks of you or if you care about the safety and protection of Black lives. What is the truth, boo? If you do decide to go to a protest, be ready to write checks and give up your car keys. Be ready to connect with other white people to start planning a highway shut down so that you can involve yourself with the high risk that would harm us more when we do it. Like I said, if you not about this sh*t, DON'T GO.

Whiteness operates in a way that means that using your privilege “for good” often requires Black folks to still be a position to be “saved” or “in need.” We don’t need white saviorism. We don’t need white people to speak for us. We don’t even really need white people to show up to rallies. We need our reparations, we need intentional disruption that involves high risk and we need y’all to stop playing.

Saving the best for last, Shackelford reveals her “victim-for-profit” mentality by listing her PayPal link along with the plea, “Support my emotional and intellectual labor by donating.”

At the risk of Shackelford accusing me of plagiarizing “Black” people, her anger and lack of logic remind me of something Malcolm X once said: “Anger is the wind which blows out the lamp of the mind.” Actually, though, Malcolm “borrowed” that quote from Robert G. Ingersoll, a white man. And while both Ingersoll and Malcolm were almost always wrong, they got this one right. Anger blinds the intellect. So does hatred. So does greed.

Racism, even — and possibly even especially — that which presents itself as anti-racism, is always wrong. In their victim mentality and anger and thirst for other people’s property, Shackelford and others like her in BLM either miss that or deliberately pervert it for their own purposes. Given her PayPal link, I think Shackelford’s motives are clear.

Photo of BLM protest in Los Angeles: AP Images



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