

WELCOME TO THE REAL SOUTH



RACISTS NOT WELCOME

AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY

screw the klan, the confederacy & the cops

**columbia, sc
july 2015**

report from 'run the klan out of town'

Yesterday in Columbia SC the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan assembled in order to protest the removal of the Confederate flag from the state house. I'm told that their permit was originally set to accommodate 100-200 people. However, this pathetic organization has dwindled in numbers since its heyday in the 1920s, and there were fewer than 75 klan present at any given time. This event happened on the same day as an anti-colonial and antiracist event was held in Tuscon to protest an islamophobic and white supremacist group, and is happening in the wake of a resurgence of white supremacist rhetoric and actions in this country. People came out in droves and showed the racists that they are not welcome in Columbia, or anywhere!

Despite the almost 100 degree weather and at least the 100 cops, paramilitary, and state troopers swarming the grounds, I'd say that there were at least 2,000 anti racists, anti-fascists, and community members present ranging from concerned clergy to the much maligned out of town anarchists of all races. I was in a group of caucasian folks and non black people of color, and it felt vibrantly good to show our faces in the midst of this crowd, which I'd say consisted primarily of black people of all ages and the remaining third were folks of other races. The solidarity in the crowd was palpable, with people starting conversations with strangers, helping others out with water, and looking out for each other in the face of police violence.

When I rolled up to the event, the anti conf flag counter rally on the other side of the state house was starting to wrap up. This seemed to be mostly made up of New Black Panther Party and Nation of Islam members. The KKK harassed these people with racial slurs when they themselves paraded up minutes later through a funnel of their cop protectors, brandishing confederate flags and Nazi swastikas and screaming "white power".

They were instantly met with jeers and heckling from their nu-

Free Eddien

<https://freeddien.wordpress.com/>

Write Eddien:

Eddien Andre Patterson #591561

E Dorm

Alvin S Glenn Detention Center

201 John Mark Dial Dr

Columbia, SC 29209

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<https://www.facebook.com/defendsteve>

up on the brief interactions of the street with longer-term relationships?

Perhaps one way to follow up on the brief interactions of the street is by legal support. There were six people arrested at the demo, and two of them have asked for help. One person in particular, Eddien Patterson, is in for at least ten months on a probation violation, while also facing property destruction charges. People have set up a support page and are organizing benefits; he's asked for letters and help with commissary. And Richmond anti-racist protester Stephen Loughman was arrested after the protest when we went to collect his confiscated phone from the police. He is raising money to help with legal costs.

It was a spectacular event in all senses of the word, unfortunately followed by a return to normality that reasserts the daily violence visited upon black people in this country. That normality appears to us as increasingly rigid and concrete, but also cracked and shaking. We look forward to the day it is smashed to pieces.

merous enemies, which reached such a pitch that it made one of the racists burst into tears. At one point, one racist got separated from his group and was surrounded by the crowd, which screamed at him to go the fuck home and things like that. One man got arrested at this point and carted off to the crowd yelling "let him go".

The KKK then stood in the baking sun on the steps of the state house for about an hour. They roasted in the heat and waved their flags behind a phalanx of their pig handlers, all the while making pitiful attempts to engage the antiracist crowd, which had them outnumbered almost 27 to one. Some of their sympathizers who were dressed in confederate flag apparel were chased off the premises during this time, including one homophobic preacher and one Nazi peace police who was attempting to verbally shame people into leaving the racists alone. Several of the klan passed out from heatstroke during this time, including one old racist who had to be carried away by the cops wrapped up in a confederate flag.

The police cut their flag waving rally short by an hour due to the numbers of antiracists, which were growing steadily. The real fun began when the klan began to move out to the parking garage where their vehicles were being guarded by even more police. The cops attempted to hoodwink the crowd into focusing on one exit of the garage, while the klan was exiting out of another around the back. When the crowd got wind of this, we took to the streets and ran around the building to confront the klan as they drove out of town. They mostly had their windows up, staring forward and looking beaten. One klansdude however became so enraged at the verbal attacks he was receiving that he drove his SUV into a pole, crushing the front end of the car which leaked radiator fluid all over the pavement. The cops were unprepared for this, and the car was surrounded by antiracists who pounded on the windows and hurled rocks at the damaged vehicle. The cops then forcibly surrounded the car and drove the antiracists back. Several people got detained

briefly by the police and then violently unarrested by their comrades at this point. After about half an hour of tussling between cops and antiracists, a perimeter was established around the car and it drove away amid more heckling.

After this time the crowd marched back up to the state house, where the few remaining klan supporters were confronted and driven out of Columbia. I'm not sure how many people got arrested, but I think it was at least 5 people, for disorderly conduct and assaulting an officer. I'd urge people to keep up with that news, and help with people's bail however they can. Since this happened on a Saturday, I think people should be out by Monday.

Throughout all of this, it seemed very clear that the crowd had pinpointed their real enemies as being the police. While people were mad about the klan they were even angrier at the cops for protecting these Nazi racist scum. The weak attempts by cop sympathizers on the AR side to focus the crowd's anger at solely the KKK were entirely unsuccessful. I think that this event will be one in a series of many active and vibrant displays of anti racist and anti white supremacist actions in this country. I hope that people are staying safe and keeping their friends close.

Toward a world without racism, without police, without jail cells, and without the klan.

Solidarity from a comrade in Columbia, South Carolina.

<http://www.ashevillefm.org/the-final-straw/>

goals, the police and Klansmen have direct historic ties in the South, colluding as part of the same larger state strategy, and sometimes even exchanging their daytime uniform for another at night. It was no coincidence, given this history as well as the last year of marches, protests and riots, that the crowd expressed nearly as much anti-police sentiment as anti-Klan.

Aside from this, the police's protection of racists in the context of public protest is absolutely crucial to preserving the idea of the state as the sole arbiter of social conflict, as the one structure in society allowed to dole out justice. The demonstration on July 18 (temporarily) undermined this function. On that day, hundreds upon hundreds of people, dispossessed by nearly 400 years of capitalism and white supremacy and forced to face those systems' most brutal mechanisms of violence and exploitation, refused to allow the state to mediate their rage. Some have interpreted the renewed focus on the Confederate flag as the state imposing a war over symbols that channels anger away from the police and can more easily be coopted by politicians and protest managers; if that's true, then those politicians' strategy backfired on July 18.

For all its success in running out the Klan, the day brought up for us far more questions than answers: For those of us who are not black, how do we continue to find ways to step away from the role of ally and into the role of accomplice whenever genuinely possible? In doing so, how do we act fiercely out of our own rage without de-centering Black folks from their own struggle for liberation? When we are so used to seeing ourselves in the role of tactical escalation, do we act differently when the entire crowd is already prepared to act offensively, or do we merely ride the wave? How can we be critical of the leftist forces that seek to recuperate these moments, without being hampered from preparing effectively by default expectations of irrelevance, boredom, or failure? What does it look like for anarchy to emerge from these situations, as they expand beyond protests' usual boundaries of ritual, obedience, and narrative? Is it possible to follow

acists remind me what the power of my skin and heritage can mean. Afraid of the ways that the state's defense of whiteness feels sometimes impenetrable. Afraid for the moments that I feel trapped in structures built for me to hold up, structures I wish only to watch collapse around us.

Yet in Columbia, the feeling I had was not one of fear. It was for me a moment of, "You better step it up," the visceral realization of how my fear might hold me back and how much can shift just in the refusal to be afraid any longer. Yes, the disgust and horror and sadness of years of racial terror in this country felt undeniably present and tangible. But the streets also felt full of the possibility of something different. The Klan drove out of Columbia with the image of hundreds of people behind them who were not afraid anymore.

— Rose

Reflecting on July 18

Klan rallies are not unusual in the South and the Midwest. But this was no "normal" Klan rally. The context in Columbia — of the Confederate flag's recent removal after years of protest, of the Charleston massacre, of black church arsons across the South, of pro-Confederate rallies hundreds strong, of the #BlackLivesMatter movement and recent anti-police marches and riots — meant that Saturday carried with it the weight of escalating conflict in our region. Ignoring this Klan demo was not an option.

While the Klan are practically powerless compared to the day-to-day white supremacist terror inflicted by police, prisons, and the economy, their broader perspectives on southern identity, racial pride, anti-blackness, patriotism, and the police are shared by millions of white Americans. This demo directly exposed the way cops protect white supremacists to many folks who had never seen that before. It was common to hear, "Look at how the cops are protecting those motherfuckers! What the fuck!?" Due to white racial solidarity and shared institutional

"y'all are done"

On Saturday July 18, roughly 2,000 people gathered in Columbia, South Carolina to confront a KKK rally at the state capitol. The Klan rally was ultimately cut short an hour early due to police concerns for "public safety". However, rather than end there, hundreds of people spilled into the streets of downtown, running the Klan out of town. The following piece is an account from the individual perspectives of five people who participated in that demonstration. We wanted to share stories of the day from five people whose experiences ranged from being caretakers of little kids, holding banners, and marching, to stealing flags, fighting the Klan, and de-arresting people. We follow up on these accounts with a short reflection on several strategic and political questions that the event brought up for us.

We showed up at the Capitol Building in the middle of the Black Educators for Justice rally. Quietly, we found a place toward the back of the crowd, and laid banners across the grass. The thirty or so mostly black folks on the steps of the building were shouting "Black Power!" with fists raised in the air. Not even ten feet behind me came a quieter but venomous response: "White power!" I felt like I had arrived.

— Rose

I kept thinking the whole thing was going to be some boring circus: all the politicians with their stale party messages speaking to their choirs on their own little piece of permitted turf at the Capitol building. And I was skeptical that there was anything a white guy from out of town with his small crew could meaningfully do. It seemed the stage was set for a clichéd media spectacle, a war of words between the hated but irrelevant Klan and the misogynistic, homophobic, and equally irrelevant New Black Panther Party. But the air felt different when we got there — a circus, to be sure, but lacking anything resembling the typical, scripted element of most leftist protests. It was mostly black folks and a few white anti-racists swarming in crews and with their families, muttering under their breath about when the Klan would arrive, mostly ignoring speakers on the mic, bidding their time. Every now and then a random white person with

a confederate flag would mutter “White power” and scamper along before anyone could get at them.

— *Simon*

The city placed the “Panthers” on the north side of the Capitol and the Klan on the south side, with free movement between the two. Standing on the south side, I found myself in a bizarre scene, with hundreds and then suddenly almost two thousand anti-KKK folks milling about in the near-100 degree heat amongst the occasional skinhead or Confederate flag-bearer. A crowd of us chased after the cops at one point, who were themselves chasing after a group of black teens who had stolen the first flag of the day. A tug-of-war ensued between this crew and the police. We tried to surround the cops to keep them from arresting any of them, which helped, maybe — they let the teens have the flag and retreated. It was cool to see the newly viral #NoFlagginChallenge reinvented and collectivized by the crowd as people tore the flag to shreds in teams.

People started throwing punches as soon as the white supremacists got there. One old man in a confederate shirt was knocked out cold as the rally began, and two white cops carried him out in their arms to the sound of cheers from the crowd. Other Klan supporters were shouted down verbally or forced to leave before they could get behind their protective barricades. People threw bottles or whatever else was on hand. It wasn’t possible to tell whether someone was in the Klan, a Nazi, or just a Confederate apologist, but it didn’t matter.

— *Winston*

The group at the front of those barricades was an incredible mix of people: various gangs, some white anti-racists, some Columbia punks, and just a lot of angry black people from Columbia. Some of the anarchists had black flags and banners and gave out handbills, but we were all unmasked and wore regular street clothes, and mixed into the crowd in twos and threes rather than as a singular bloc. We were up against the fences,

away, getting up in their faces, trying to make them let him go. The pigs looked terrified. One cop pulled a shotgun, which only enraged the crowd, but then more folks behind us started screaming and ran in to pull their friends away. Before the cops could carry the guy off, we all heard a smashing sound, then screaming. I looked up to see everyone sprinting up the block; in the midst of all the chaos, a Nazi attempting a right turn got distracted by the mob of protesters chasing after him and crashed his large black SUV into a light pole. His airbag even went off. We were all laughing at him, trying to get to the car but pushed back by cops.

— *Simon*

At the end, I asked one of the boys how they were feeling. He said, “Awesome and scared.” I asked him to tell me more about why he was scared. “I was scared of the police,” he responded, “I thought I was gonna get arrested.” He was also scared of the fighting. When Cleo asked him if he understood why people were fighting, his brother chimed in and said that some people still wanted slavery to exist and that’s why they were fighting.

— *Savannah*

There was a significant number of children present. As we were walking away from the march, I saw a family with a 13-year-old boy, who said “I’m not gonna lie, I’m real scared.” There were a lot of families. I saw strollers. That felt different than a lot of demonstrations I’ve been to in the past. Something else that I didn’t expect to see and that is rare for kids to experience was people that usually hate each other — different gang members that came from different cities, for example — coming together on that day. They spoke publically to the media about how there was no fighting that day, and that they were going to continue to riot and demonstrate until there was racial justice.

— *Cleo*

I am a person who often feels afraid. I feel afraid of the Klan, Nazis, and the police. Afraid for the ways that white suprem-

war game in the shreds of confederate flags tied to shoes, to cars, to heads. We remembered that it is hard to burn a flag without lighter fluid. Still lighters were passed around and when all else failed, someone put their teeth to the synthetic fabric and ripped. Someone finally took that awful Confederate tall hat from the idiot who had been wearing it all morning and I didn't see it again.

— *Rose*

As the police escorted Klan members into the parking deck, a crowd of several hundred encircled the deck waiting to either run in after them, attack their vehicles as they left, or possibly end up clashing with the police that were guarding them. I saw a small crew of both Bloods and GDs going up to each individual black cop and getting right into their face shaming the shit out of them: "You should be ashamed brother, they would lynch your black ass as soon as they would mine." "You're just a coon Uncle Tom. Fuck 12!" and the most common insult heard was "Fuck you pig, you fucking house nigger!"

The scene was truly moving. I witnessed maybe ten young gang members from all three gangs, Bloods Crips and GDs throwing their respective set signs while posing together, showing off the torn confederate flags they had. I overheard people saying, "We made history today, I'm giving this [small piece of a destroyed flag] to my son to show I was out here for our people." An older black man was yelling towards the Klan stuck in the garage, "This is the new South, us out here. Y'all are done, you're done!"

— *Winston*

We chased after the Klansmen in their cars, who were slowed down by a massive police escort. I got separated from my people and found myself part of a group that was surrounding three cops, who had tackled a young black man on the grass. Our crowd of maybe a dozen or more — almost all young black men except for a couple of us — were refusing to let the cops take him

shouting "Fuck the Klan!" and "Fuck the Police!" One really tall guy with dreads asked me where I was from — he was stoked to hear people had come from out of town. I later saw that dude get pulled out of the arms of cops by his crew like three times.

On the side of the capitol, at the edge of the steps where the KKK and the Nazis were waving their flags, this white hippy-looking man had lugged a big kick drum and was playing a rhythm. There were some younger kids and a crew of older black women dancing as the crowd of people surrounded them and chanted "Fuck the KKK" to the beat of the drum. I remember a skinhead with red suspenders trying to escape, using his own child as a shield in front of him as he passed through the group of revelers.

At one point I saw my friend about to get in a fight with a young white kid and his old man, both there to defend the Confederate flag. I ran up to back up my friend, and right before shit went down, several older black men saw us arguing and came up to stand by our side, saying to them, "You fuck with them, you fuck with us." The younger kid was literally shaking; he and his dad walked out of the crowd without a further word.

— *Simon*

The police decided to shut the KKK/NSM rally down an hour early due to security concerns. As the racists were leaving their designated rally pen, the mixed detail of police attempted to make a larger space for them to pass through so that the enraged crowd would have a harder time getting close enough to throw punches or snatch flags.

I was with maybe one other anarchist friend, chilling with a crew of four crips. We started to walk down the line of police and almost simultaneously we noticed that the police had not made their lines nearly long enough. They were only about 15 cops long, while the south exit of the Statehouse was probably three times that length. I remember just fast-walking past the cops and yelling, "They don't go all the way down, y'all. We can

just get past them!”

The next thing I know, about 30 people have maneuvered around the police line and are blocking the KKK’s path back to Pendleton Street. I kept saying to myself, this is fucking nuts, my heart wasn’t even racing like usual at a demo, I just felt elated! I noticed a really tall skinny black kid getting hyped, ready to fight the Klan, doing that punching-your-palm thing that says: “I’m going to fuck somebody up!”

The police took a few seconds to respond but soon some SLED cops in vests were pointing shotguns at us – I assume they were pepper ball guns – yelling, “Get back!” Some dude I didn’t know shouted, “Fuck it, just go to the street. We can cut them off!” That’s when I looked back; we were pretty much at the very front of a sea of pissed-off people streaming into the street ready to give chase to the KKK, the Nazis, and the police who protected them.

— *Winston*

Once the police began to escort the Klan and their Nazi friends from the courthouse back to their cars in the parking garage a few blocks away, the tension that had been building all morning shifted. I kept an eye on friends, ran down the street with strangers, all of us checking in with each other as we went. Space and movement opened up into chaotic possibilities. People were laughing a lot. The police failed at every line they tried to make, barely able to hold most of us on the sidewalk for any length of time.

— *Rose*

As we made it to the street, the police had the KKK/NSM against the building while they made a shitty, very permeable line between us and the racists. The first thing I remember was spitting on the lot of them – cops and KKK – as another dude to my right spat a large gross wad directly on one KKK dude with douchey wrap-around sunglasses who was carrying a large Confederate flag, and then he just did it again. At that point

the KKK dude snapped and was like “Spit on me again boy!” The dude next to me kind of shrugged and spat directly into his face. The KKK guy attempted to hit my man with his flag but was pushed back by the crowd as well as the cops.

— *Winston*

I grabbed the sweaty, little hand of my friend’s child who I was watching and looked at him and asked, “Are you ready to run a little bit?” I looked over at my friend who was also holding onto a little one, we all nodded in agreement that it was time to move with the crowd onto the street. We took turns scaling the oversized architecture of the edge of the capitol building, handing down the boys to one another and winding in between the cops as they stumbled around trying to make a line. We emerged on the street, three of us adults and two little boys, walking briskly and ecstatically, swerving our heads constantly to watch the roving party all around us, as flags got snatched, brawls broke out and people danced in the street.

— *Savannah*

We stayed more on the outside, or a little behind, never in the middle of a crowd. With the kids, we were observers rather than instigators. People did a good job at keeping eyes on us and keeping us briefed on what was going on deeper in the crowd. It was a useful position to be in. Because of it, we were among the first people to realize that a friend we came with was arrested, and we were able to alert people to that. We were able to see more how the crowd was moving and shifting and see the police reactions on a larger scale. There was a close mass of people doing the same things, pretty much the entire time. Everyone was moving together in a really fluid way.

— *Cleo*

At times it felt like an absurdist circus. The clowns were the old white men shrouded in their Confederate flags, their self-righteous grins, and backed up by their loyal police barrier. Empty water bottles flew over our heads. Evidence of the flag tug-of-