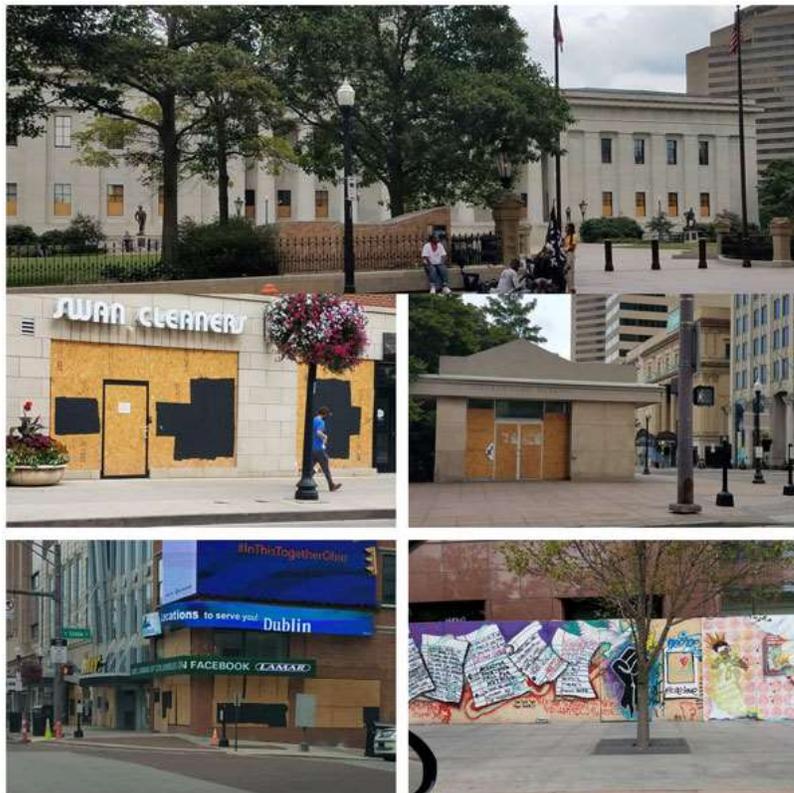


## War Zone Columbus Still Boarded Up



May 28<sup>th</sup>

Protests turned into riots on May 28<sup>th</sup> as outside agitators provided implements of destruction to conduct riotous activities on Broad and High Streets. Businesses and restaurants became targets of the destruction as rioters broke windows and doors and then began looting. The Ohio Statehouse itself was targeted with 27 broken windows, the front doors were compromised, and the building was rushed and ransacked by anarchists. The handful of Highway Patrolmen who were on duty were shaken by the experience. Columbus Police came to their aid, deploying teargas and firing wooden bullets (knee-knockers) at the anarchists. Fourteen arrests were made, but all charges have since been dropped by the City Law Director.

**In other events of that night**, building after building, including the Rhode's Center and the

State Supreme Court, had windows broken and were vandalized. Condominium housing units also had their first-floor plate glass windows shattered. Block after block of destruction can be seen in the photographic evidence as the scars of the late May and early June riots remain, as many downtown businesses have yet to reopen, and many may not reopen.

According to reports, the Capitol Square district is a food desert. It still remains difficult to buy a sandwich or drink anywhere downtown in the immediate area of Capital Square.

Video footage from cell phones and still frame photography captured by some State Representatives in the following days tell the story of the extent of the damage caused by rioting and looting that took place in the capital city.

Long-time city residents have been shaken by the experience. Many will now not venture downtown. Continued stories of flash mob protestors stopping vehicles and city buses have been reported (look up story ABC Channel 6). Personal testimonies of some Statehouse staffers report that in the days following May 28<sup>th</sup>, and for the next few weeks, their cars were surrounded by protestors upon leaving the building, were hit on, and had bottles thrown at them. A frightening experience for anyone.

Paul, a resident who lives one block away from Cap Square in a condominium on the Olentangy River, reports that his condominium unit had all its first floor windows busted out. He serves on the condominium residents committee that addresses security issues. That's where he learned about another near-by condominium tower in which rioters rushed up the stairwells the night of May 28<sup>th</sup> to the second and third floors. Residents

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had their doors hammered on by rioters who yelled at them to open the doors or they were going to burn down the building. The Columbus SWAT team was deployed to discharge the rioters.

This went unreported in the local news. The Columbus media has been limited in their coverage of the extent of the damages and the terror that has been unleashed on downtown residents.

Columbus police reports corroborate the events of May 28<sup>th</sup> that we have pieced together through numerous eyewitness reports. There is a 35-page police call log that details the rioting and looting on the evening of May 28<sup>th</sup>. Copies of this report will be provided to members of the State Legislature.

Pastor Coats of the Interdenominational Ministers Association and elected member of the NAACP of Ohio shared his eyewitness reports with OCA President Chris Long on the weekly radio program News in Focus. Pastor Coats said that the planned so-called peaceful protest was unknown to him and many in his network. He went downtown Columbus on May 28<sup>th</sup> after hearing about it on the news, and personally witnessed seeing frozen water bottles, boards with nails in them, and pallets of broken concrete used by rioters. He said this riot was planned by outside sources; it was not organic. Though local residents participated, they were urged on by outside agitators.

**Local police and Highway Patrol were told by their leadership to stand down on June 18th.**

**A 9-1-1 call on June 18<sup>th</sup>** in the afternoon is a call from a man on Broad Street in front of the Statehouse who has his vehicle stopped by protestors. When he asked the officer for aid, the dispatcher replied that the Columbus Police had been told to stand down by order of Mayor Ginter. At about the same time, the Ohio Statehouse was rushed by local protestors with buckets of red paint. In broad daylight on the afternoon of June 18<sup>th</sup>, they began to deface the War Memorials, the Ohio State Motto, the front steps and pillars and walls of the Ohio Statehouse. The Ohio Highway Patrol did not engage to stop or arrest any of the vandals. We have learned now through multiple sources that leadership at the Highway Patrol gave a stand down order to the officers on duty. On the following day, Friday June 19<sup>th</sup>, Governor DeWine urged Colonel Richard Fambro to protect the People's House. House and Senate leadership also urged the Highway Patrol leadership to take charge and stand guard of the People's House. Since that time, the Highway Patrol has been visible each day guarding the Statehouse properties and Memorials. There still have been no arrests for the vandalism damage of June 18<sup>th</sup>. The total property damage at the Statehouse now exceeds \$160,000 that the Ohio taxpayers will have to pay.

OCA President Chris Long has spoken to a number of people who work or live in downtown Columbus who are very unsettled with what has happened, and question what the future will be for some time to come in Columbus, as policing has been drawn back by city officials, and crime, assaults and shootings are on the increase. This is a disturbing report, considering that Columbus hosts our state capital and state government. According to police, when venturing downtown use caution and be aware of your surroundings. Members of the Ohio Legislature are working on legislation to protect state property in our State Capital, and to stiffen the penalties for those commit acts of vandalism and violence on state property.