SOME THOUGHTS ON THE POLICE MURDER OF RICKY ARD

No matter how much investigating is done by police, one side of the story will always be excluded from the narrative... and that is the personal account of Ricky Ard, who was murdered in cold blood by federal agents and the Evansville Police Department.

The suggestion that the feds and the EPD “did all they could” is inconsistent with history.

When Ammon Bundy and about 30 armed men rammed their ATVs into vehicles owned by the federal government, seized federal-owned land, and pulled assault rifles on federal agents, the federal government engaged in a month long negotiation period, and have since given them a trial by jury in a court of law. When a white supremacist mowed down several dozen protesters with his car in Charlottesville just last week, severely injuring nine and immediately killing one, the suspect was arrested and is currently awaiting trial. Even Timothy McVeigh, who blew up a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people and injuring 100 received a trial, and was not shot on sight.

Ricky Ard was given no such due process... he killed no one, and he brandished no gun, and yet the federal authorities and the police department decided to kill him by shooting him 7 times. If he was middle or upper class and white, like the those far more dangerous men mentioned, there is no doubt in my mind that we would be here to defend himself today.

At age 55, Ricky Ard was a senior... at a time when he should’ve been retiring and enjoying his life, he was upset about the material conditions he found himself in and was frustrated his mistreatment by the federal government.

While we may never know Ricky’s exact political grievances, it is telling that he chose the federal building to air them -- a building that houses a federal courthouse and an FBI headquarters. The same courts that in the 1857 Dred Scott case claimed Black Americans were inferior, and in modern times would have us believe that the lives of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Alton Sterling and so many others are inferior, too. It is in this building that the same FBI that has spent much of it’s existence spying on, infiltrating, and silencing black social movements – from Martin Luther King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to the Black Panther Party for Self Defense to Black Lives Matter. A building that is presided over by a billionaire president, whose first step on the national stage was the front page of an October 1973 issue of the New York Times, under the headline “Major Landlord Under Fire for Anti-Black Bias”, a president who just a week before this deadly shooting happened, made it easier for assault weapons from Afghanistan and Iraq to be funnelled to police departments. As a society, we are to the point of living under military occupation, and poor and working class black people in this country are bearing the brunt of this state violence and repression.

It must be remembered that the issue is broader than Ricky Ard’s presumed guilt or innocence. It is an indictment of a culture in which police protect each other at all costs, regardless of guilt or innocence. The media, city officials, and some bystanders have spent too much time asking whether Ricky Ard was guilty of the allegations made towards him, whether he wielded a bat or broke a window or spoke out against the government or defended himself when charged by men with guns, tasers, and an arsenal of laws behind them. There is a more critical question at hand: is there any scenario in history which the police and the federal government have come forward willingly to admit their wrongdoing? Has the Evansville Police Department ever, in its 154 years of existence, willingly done so? Has the federal government in its 241 years of history willingly done so? Are we, as a community capable of rational thinking, to believe that in all these years the Evansville Police Department has existed, that they have never unnecessarily killed a single person? Because if we were to take their word at face value... that’s what they would have us believe.

WE WANT JUSTICE IN AN UNJUST SYSTEM.