

Mobs, Mob Looting, and Other Crimes

The last couple of years has presented us with a constant string of mob crimes to watch. While crime in our society is nothing new, it seems to have taken a turn for the worst in the last couple of years. Crimes that used to be committed by individuals are now committed en-masse, making the situation that much more dangerous for law-abiding citizens. What started as “mostly peaceful protests” due to the killing of George Floyd has turned into something much uglier.

Let me say here and now that I’m not here to point the finger at any one group of people. From what I’ve seen, legal protests were taken over by groups with their own nefarious purposes. Whether those groups rose from within the ranks of the protesters or infiltrated their ranks is a question that has yet to be answered, but I think it’s clear that not everyone who protested was a criminal. We had a protest in the city where I live, and everything remained peaceful, with no violence, no vandalism, no destruction, and nobody committing any crime.

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By and large, it seems that those on the political left controlled the cities that were hit the hardest by the violence. I doubt that those on the left were particularly

angry with the leftist politicians who ran those cities; it just seems that those politicians ordered the police to stand aside and allow the mob to do whatever they wanted.

This was from the same party that insists on calling the January 6th break-in of the Capital an “insurrection,” ignoring the fact that nobody was armed and almost all of them were acting like tourists. They want to throw the book at anyone who went anywhere near the Capital building that day, and the House of Representatives impeached then-president Trump over it, but they won’t do anything to stop crime in their cities. Something’s clearly out of order.

The most recent manifestation of this is currently happening in Southern California, where “flash looting” and breaking into cars is the rage. Things have become so bad that residents are leaving the trunks of their cars open and posting signs on their car windows asking the criminals to go in through the unlocked door, rather than breaking the glass on the vehicle, forcing the owner to pay for an expensive repair.

Much of this is due to politics, with mayors telling the police to stand down and District Attorneys who publicly declare that they won’t prosecute cases of theft or shoplifting of less than \$1,000. As much as they might not think it is, from the criminals’ point of view, that’s giving tacit approval for them to go ahead and commit whatever crimes they want, just as long as the total value is under whatever threshold is established.

The thing is that the only thing holding most criminals back is the threat of criminal prosecution. They don’t want to go to jail and try to do whatever they can to avoid it. With the current state of politics in some of our major cities, we have a situation where these criminals are encouraged to commit crimes, not discouraged from achieving them.

While this is just happening in a few cities right now, there's no question that it will spread. Criminals learn from each other and find ways of adapting what works from one place to another. They might have to adjust the tactics somewhat to avoid going to jail, but they're clever; they'll find a way to do that.

Mob Violence

The current streak of violence started with the protests to George Floyd's death. Roughly 10% of those turned violent, which gave the mainstream news media the opening they needed to have to call them "mostly peaceful." But the ten percent that were violent more than made up for the peaceful ones. At last count, I heard that the total damages ran upwards of two billion dollars.

Any mob situation is dangerous, as Kyle Rittenhouse discovered. Even when you do everything right, you could end up in a hazardous situation, one that has the potential of costing you your life. But even if it doesn't cost your life, it could very well cost your liberty. Rittenhouse will never escape the negative notoriety associated with killing two criminals, especially after his case was politicized and publicized so much.

I wouldn't have put myself in the position he did unless it was to protect my own business. Even then, I'd have to think long and hard before doing it. There is no physical item that is worth someone's life. Standing as an armed guard over physical items might only be intended to be intimidating, but it also means that you're willing to kill to protect those items. What could be worth that?

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying we should just let the criminals have their way. But a large part of the reason why Rittenhouse was standing guard was that the mayor of that city had told the police to stand down and allow the

mob to have their way. In that case, without police backup, does anyone think that they can keep order on their own? The very fact that so many people were involved in the riots makes it impossible.

While history has shown that there is a definite place for citizens to protect their homes and property, it also indicates that those were coordinated efforts by the community. There's a vast difference between that and people taking a stand by themselves. While there's a chance that such people guarding businesses through a show of force can protect those businesses, there's no guarantee that it will work, putting the guards in danger.

So what should we do?

The best thing to do with any mob situation is to be someplace else. I don't care what the mob is there for. They're eventually going to be up to no good, vandalizing property, committing acts of violence, and looting. If you're not part of what they're doing, then you're likely to become a target of their violence.

If the mob is operating near your home, prepare yourself to defend your home. But don't do it as the McCloskeys did in St. Louis. They made two big mistakes. One was to be outside with their guns, where any action of theirs could be seen as a provocation by the mob, and the other was when Mrs. McCloskey pointed her gun in the direction of the crowd. Had anyone in the group taken a shot at her, they could have claimed it was self-defense.

Remember, you can't defeat a mob on your own. There is no gun that you can buy short of an actual machine gun, which will allow you to stop them all. And if you try using a machine gun against a mob, I'm pretty sure you're going to go to jail for life. Is it worth it?

Mob Looting

A more recent form of mob activity has been the mob looting that's been going on in some cities. This started with thieves strategically limiting the value of the merchandise they stole to \$999 or less, in direct response to statements by DAs that they would not prosecute crimes under \$1,000. But as their tactics have evolved, they've moved up to high-end stores, grabbing as much as they can, with little regard to the theoretical \$1,000 limit. Over a million dollars worth of watches were stolen from a high-end car dealer in Chicago in the worst case I know of.

It's a mistake to think that these criminals and these crimes will limit themselves to the cities where they are already happening. Criminals learn from each other, and when something is as successful as mob looting has been, you can be sure that it will spread.

The big problem with these crimes is that they are almost impossible to prevent or stop once they are in process. If a mob of criminals descends on any store, there is nothing to stop them from stealing whatever they want, right in broad daylight. Even if the police are called, the criminals will be gone by the time they get there. At best, the police might catch one or two slow ones who just didn't run away fast enough.

Can you imagine being a police officer, arriving at a big department store in response to a mob looting call? What are you going to do? If you block one door, they'll just run out another. There would have to be enough of your fellow officers there to block all the doors, as well as to run down any of the criminals that try to run through your ranks.

We can forget about security cameras too. All it takes is a mask, hood, or floppy hat to defeat a security camera. If the camera can't see your face, it can't record you committing the

crime. Oh, it can record someone committing the crime; but it can't tell who that is.

So what do we do?

As much as I'd love to catch a few of those criminals, that's not my responsibility. That's the police department's job, and I wish them the best in accomplishing it. My job is to protect my family. So if I find myself in that sort of situation, that's what I have to concentrate on. More than anything, that means getting my family out of the way of the crooks so that we don't get caught in the middle of what they're doing and attacked for no other reason than being in the way.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but the best course of action is to head in the opposite direction unless you're near the doorway. Those criminals will be running for the doors, along with everyone else in the store that's trying to escape. The doors will quickly become bottlenecks, where people can get hurt. By heading in the opposite direction, either to a wall or to the back of the store, you take your family to where the risk is lowered, where they are less likely to get hurt.

Once you accomplish that essential task, then it might be worthwhile to try and catch some of the criminals on your camera's phone. If the police are ever able to apprehend any of them, then your photos or video might help bring about a conviction. But if you're going to do that, be sure that you stay aware of what's going on. You're going to have to testify to present that evidence, and if you can't make yourself sound credible, then your evidence won't be credible either.

Keep in mind that some of these people might get a bit violent if they see your camera phone pointed at them, so try and be stealthy. Your priority is still to protect your family, not catch criminals.

Smash and Grab

The third sort of mob crime that's happening is smash and grab. This category of crime is being done by small groups of criminals rather than mobs, but the frequency is reaching the point that it may as well be mobs committing the crime. Again, it is limited to only some cities, but as with the other offenses I've mentioned, it is likely to spread, especially as difficult as it is for the police to prevent.

There are two types of smash and grab going on. One is where criminals are smashing store windows and grabbing what they can before the police respond. By the time the police can arrive, the criminals are long gone. The other type is where criminals break car windows to steal whatever they can. This can happen to parked vehicles or vehicles stopped at a red light.

Things have gotten so bad in San Francisco that people are now leaving their car doors unlocked and their trunks open, with notes taped to the windows letting the criminals know that the door is unlocked. I don't know if that is helping, but at least it keeps the owners of those cars from buying new windows. Of course, that doesn't help with stopping smash and grabs at stoplights.

So what can we do?

Criminals are becoming more and more sophisticated, with a considerable amount of technology available to them, allowing them to scout out cars and even homes, finding the ones who hold the most significant profit potential for them. If you leave your laptop locked in your trunk, the chances are that they can find that out before they take a crowbar to the trunk to open it.

3 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TONIGHT TO AVOID A BREAK-IN



The best protection for any of us is to make sure that we don't leave anything in the car worthy of stealing. That can be a bit difficult for us as preppers, as most of us keep an emergency kit in the trunk of our car. Somehow, we have to balance both types of security, making sure that we have the gear we need and that it doesn't get stolen.

One possibility is making the trunk harder to break into. It probably wouldn't look all that good to put a couple of hasps and padlocks on the trunk, giving them three locks to break. But there's no reason why we can't install a strongbox of some sort, bolted down to the floor of the trunk so that we have a more secure area for our survival gear. While they could probably break into that too, the harder we make it, they are more likely to give up and find another car.

Of course, the other option is to drive a vehicle that is old enough that it doesn't look like it's worth breaking into. That's not a guarantee that your car won't be broken into, but criminals are more likely to go after a rich-looking target than they do not look like it will be worth their while.