

“Killing in the Name”: Three Books and the Exigencies of Antiracism

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Abstract: With frequency, the US Catholic Church has been slow to address racial inequality. Today, it is inadequately prepared to address the contemporary resurgence of ethnonationalism and xenophobia. This essay suggests that US Christian theologies, impoverished by their faith in an American teleology toward multiethnic liberal democracy, have often ignored or misdiagnosed the problem. Drawing from and evaluating three recent books that contribute to antiracist spirituality and Christian practice, this essay argues that a key to antiracist spirituality is the refusal to cooperate with brutality and exploitation.

IN MAY 2023, JONATHAN TRAN PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE IN *THE Christian Century* accusing popular and academic antiracism of misdiagnosing the problem. He explained that the “revolutionary antiracism” of the 1960s and 1970s understood itself as resisting the alignment of racialized society and exploitative economic systems. In contrast, the dominant contemporary strand of popular antiracism “retracted into itself, turning away from structures and systems—and turning on individuals. Instead of focusing its efforts on, say, building broad-based coalitions against racial capitalism, it reduced its field of vision and came after ordinary people.”¹ Contemporary “identarian antiracism,” as Tran calls it, seeks to confront individual prejudice and bigotry, correct unenlightened ideas, and regulate interpersonal interactions. However, it fails to deal with the entangled systems of “racist domination and political economic exploitation” that are the origin of prejudices and bigotry.² Tran reminds us that “race as we know it arose from a set of circumstances that required an instrument that could ideologically justify dominative exploitation. Race became this instrument and racism its deployment, its way of talking about and seeing the world that allowed exploitative activity to come off as natural.”³

¹ Jonathan Tran, “Anti-Racism’s Mission Drift,” *The Christian Century* (May 2023), 31.

² Jonathan Tran, *Asian Americans and the Spirit of Racial Capitalism* (Oxford University Press, 2022), 5.

³ Tran, *The Spirit of Racial Capitalism*, 116.

Since the publication of Tran's article, however, it is apparent that America's volatile mood has shifted. Today we face danger not from impuissant identitarian antiracism but from a renascent ethnonationalist identity politics. Rather than correcting exaggerated identitarian anti-racism, the federal government is aggressively dismantling policies, structures, and offices that redress inequality or simply enforce nondiscrimination law. The Supreme Court majority has signaled its perspective that entrenched racial inequality is no longer a sufficiently significant social problem to find redress in the court system.⁴ States have passed laws that proscribe the discussion of race and gender, which may include the history of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation.⁵ The federal government has launched an ideological purge that Julian Vazquez Heilig has likened to the Cultural Revolutions in China and Iran.⁶ The current administration now prohibits public funding of programs that seek to remediate historical or contemporary inequalities and punishes universities for allowing social justice protest.⁷ In a March 27, 2025, executive order, the US president denounced "the view that race is not a biological reality but a social construct," by implication affirming the overtly racist position that race is biological.⁸ The escalating rhetoric by political figures targeting immigrant and ethnic groups can reasonably be described as stochastic terrorism.

For scholars seeking to reconstruct the material and ideological dimensions of race, it is hard enough to understand the past. It is even more challenging to be clear-sighted about developments happening contemporaneously. Yet, in real time, persistent structures and systems of racial inequality—as well as individual prejudice and

⁴ *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013); *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

⁵ For example, Idaho HB 377 (2021) bans teaching what it calls the "tenets of critical race theory." Alabama SB 129 (2024) prohibits the promotion of "divisive concepts" in higher education. Florida SB 266 (2023) prohibits general education courses from teaching "theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, and economic inequities."

⁶ Julian Vazquez Heilig, "America's Cultural Revolution is Here: The Parallels We Cannot Ignore," *Cloaking Inequity*, March 17, 2025. cloakinginequity.com/2025/03/17/americas-cultural-revolution-is-here-the-parallels-we-cant-ignore/

⁷ See Michael C. Bender, Alan Blinder, and Jonathan Swan, "Inside Trump's Pressure Campaign on Universities," *New York Times*, April 14, 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/04/14/us/politics/trump-pressure-universities.html, and Katherine Mangan and Jasper Smith, "'It's Punishment for the Sake of Punishment': Under Trump, Higher Education Confronts a New Legal Landscape," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 28, 2025, www.chronicle.com/article/its-punishment-for-the-sake-of-punishment.

⁸ US President, Executive Order, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History, 2025, Executive Order 14253 of March 27, 2025," *Federal Register* 90, no. 63 (April 3, 2025), 14563, www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/03/2025-05838/restoring-truth-and-sanity-to-american-history.

bigotry—are surfacing in xenophobic ideologies and policies. The church is unprepared for resurgent ideological ethnonationalisms, and theological responses to racism have not adequately prepared it to respond. US Christian theologies engaging race have sometimes been impoverished by their faith in an American teleology towards multiethnic liberal democracy. They have assumed that laws, courts, and social institutions offer meaningful resistance to the separation of immigrants from their children, the expansion of the carceral state, and attacks on voting rights. They do not anticipate another Trail of Tears, a period of Jim Crow, or the internment of Japanese Americans. The allure of American exceptionalism has lulled the church into thinking of contemporary ethnonationalism as an aberrant force rather than a chronic feature of national life. Theologian LaRyssa Herrington says, “What we are witnessing as a country is the system attempting to revert back to the way it was originally designed to function: as an antiblack agent of the state.”⁹

Three recent books encourage a renewal of antiracist spirituality in Catholic tradition and seek to reinvigorate efforts toward antiracist ecclesial practice: Alex Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy: A Spirituality for Racial Liberation* (Orbis Books, 2022), Conor M. Kelly, *Racism and Structural Sin: Confronting Injustice with the Eyes of Faith* (Liturgical, 2023), and Mathew Kappadakunnel, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice: A Prophetic Call* (Paulist, 2024). Each serves as a contribution to antiracist pastoral theology, though the first has a more scholarly audience in mind.¹⁰ These projects are rooted in the respective authors’ disenchantment with racially partitioned society and their struggle for, as Mikulich puts it, “other ways of living.”¹¹ Each reminds us that other ways of living are not distant ideals; they are already being lived.

METANOIA

Alex Mikulich’s wisdom in *Unlearning White Supremacy: A Spirituality for Racial Liberation* is hard won from his experience as a white man raising adopted black children and as a longstanding

⁹ LaRyssa Herrington (theologian), conversation with the author, April 30, 2025.

¹⁰ Other books on race and antiracism have been published in the last several years, including Patrick Saint-Jean, *The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice: A Month of Meditations with Ignatius of Loyola* (Anamchara, 2021), Daniel P. Horan, *A White Catholic’s Guide to Racism and Privilege* (Ave Maria, 2021), Vincent W. Lloyd and Andrew Prevot, eds., *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics* (Orbis Books, 2017), and Jeannine Hill Fletcher, *The Sin of White Supremacy: Christianity, Racism, and Religious Diversity in America* (Orbis Books, 2017).

¹¹ Alex Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy: A Spirituality for Racial Liberation* (Orbis Books, 2022), xxxviii.

member of predominantly black parishes. It is grounded in his affection for and solidarity with black people. The theory of the text comes from Thomas Merton's observations in *Seeds of Destruction*: first, that racial injustice "*is rooted in the heart of the white man himself*" (46); and second, that we are open to conversion, the transformation of exploitative relationships into kinship. Borrowing from Merton, Mikulich describes antiracism as a process of unlearning and learning. Unlearning is the deconstructive phase of "beginning the work of acknowledging, gaining consciousness of, and undoing the many ways we have been malformed and deformed by a society that idolizes whiteness."¹² The second phase is constructive: "learning how to dwell with and for Black people."¹³ These two phases constitute the structure of the book.

In the first part, "The Colonial Context of Anti-Black White Supremacy," Mikulich begins by unravelling the false history into which Christians have been baptized, namely a forgetfulness of colonialism and slavery that makes racial-social inequalities appear natural. Next, Mikulich examines what he calls the "white habitus." In Pierre Bourdieu, *habitus* refers to the internalized patterns into which individuals have been socialized that shape their thinking and feeling: "embodiment, racial dispositions, tastes, emotions, and perceptions."¹⁴ The *white habitus* intersects "position . . . geography, social capital, location, and power" with "practice—the ways white people are socialized to perceive and act within the world."¹⁵ Mikulich sees the white habitus as a socialization that "normalizes" white separation, white domination, and social hierarchy. Finally, Mikulich addresses the forgetfulness of the church's complicity in the transatlantic slave trade. Drawing from Pius Onyemechi Adiele's work, he argues that the Catholic Church laid the groundwork for the slave trade by legitimating subjugation of non-believers for the sake of salvation.¹⁶ The papacy gave legal cover for Portuguese and Spanish practices of raiding and enslavement in the Mediterranean and the Americas. Theology legitimated European domination as part of God's providential care for souls. A colonized historical consciousness, white habitus, and theological legitimation constitute three layers that suffocate our capacity to live with and for one another.

The second part of the book, "Living Decolonially," proposes a way to follow "the call of the gospel to social, political, and spiritual

¹² Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, xix.

¹³ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 4.

¹⁴ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 32.

¹⁵ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 46.

¹⁶ Pius Onyemechi Adiele, *The Popes, the Catholic Church, and the Transatlantic Enslavement of Black Africans, 1418–1839* (Georg Olms, 2017).

racial intimacy.”¹⁷ The language Mikulich employs is one of conversion. To live in intimacy with racial others, one must “die to false [hierarchical] images of self and society.” White people, he explains, need something like a “second sight,” the term W. E. B. Du Bois uses to describe the capacity to see oneself through the eyes of others. Mikulich laments, however, that many white people prefer white comfort to conversion. *Unlearning White Supremacy* is sharpest where Mikulich links the racialized patterns of perception to concrete forms of social exchange. Colonized social life and political economy are structured so as to remove the capacity to give and receive as equal partners. An economy of extraction inhibits the freedom to give and capacity to receive a free gift. One is forced to give; one is conditioned to exploit.¹⁸ Mikulich recommends a courageous alternative to relationships of exploitation: the practice of “decolonial repair.” This means the ongoing process of repairing relationships and engaging in practices of racial equity. In the context of Black Lives Matter protests, he says it means “putting our White bodies on the line to protect Black Americans in the midst of public protest, giving the substance of our lives socially, economically, and politically so that Black Americans may thrive.”¹⁹ In the final chapter, he expands these relationships that must be repaired to those of our non-human kin, the living and nonliving world.

The structure of *Unlearning White Supremacy* is Mertonian, a movement from illusions of the false self to insight on the true self. What is distinctive is that Mikulich historicizes the false self and the true self. If the spiritual pathologies of racialization arose through particular historical arrangements, those arrangements can be undone and spiritual pathologies healed. For Tran, race arose as a justification for exploitative economic relationships and it is sustained in the “aftermarkets” of slavery. While this may be true, the brutality of racism (particularity in its antiblack manifestations) may be difficult to reduce to racial capitalism and markets. As William David Hart observes, “Antiblackness is excessive. It exceeds the logic of capital and labor.”²⁰ In the spectacles of slavery (family separation, forced migration, chains and shackles, brutalization of the body) being revived today, illogical cruelty suggests profound pathologies of the spirit. Mikulich encourages us to confront racism in both its spiritual and material dimensions.

¹⁷ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 82.

¹⁸ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 96–97.

¹⁹ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 117.

²⁰ William David Hart, “Constellations: Capitalism, Antiblackness, Afro-Pessimism, and Black Optimism,” *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 39, no. 1 (2018): 15.

VIRTUE

Conor Kelly's *Racism and Structural Sin* draws from his struggle with the reality that the common good is not equally available to all. Kelly explains that according to Catholic moral tradition, evil is never a sought-after end. Instead, the will always seeks some good, albeit partial. Yet, he observes that the choices he makes to live in affluent suburban neighborhoods with well-resourced schools reinforce the conditions of relative abundance and scarcity. Thus, we often choose goods for ourselves and our families yet ignore how those choices, within the racialized geographies in which we live, contribute to racial inequality.

Following Bryan Massingale's *Racial Justice in the Catholic Church*, *Racism and Structural Sin* attends principally to the structural elements of racism rather than personal ideas or attitudes. Kelly, however, proposes that the "resources of our shared faith"—classic sources of moral theology and contemporary doctrinal sources—can speak to the institutional, social, and systemic dynamics of racism.²¹ These resources include Thomas Aquinas, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The first section of the book draws from traditional sources of Catholic moral theology to show that Christians are morally obligated to confront personal and social forms of racism as part of the call to conversion. Although Christians are called to change their individual attitudes and prejudiced thinking, Kelly argues that the most malevolent elements of racism are built into social life.

The second section shows that structural inequalities create a "system of perverse incentives and warped ideals."²² The conditions that allow one group to flourish and another to languish also corrupt our judgment and action. Sinful social structures are accomplices to prejudiced attitudes and individually sinful actions. In the third part, Kelly attends to specific social systems that produce racist outcomes: healthcare, policing, education, and housing. This is where social inequalities manifest their most pernicious effects. The final part examines personal conversion and commitment to justice articulated within the principles of Catholic social teaching—common good, human dignity, solidarity, and subsidiarity. Lest we think of these as abstractions, for Kelly these principles describe social conditions

²¹ Conor M. Kelly, *Racism and Structural Sin: Confronting Injustice with the Eyes of Faith* (Liturgical, 2023), 4.

²² Kelly, *Racism and Structural Sin*, 53.

conducive to a “true community of persons,” “relationships of solidarity,” and “friendship.”²³

Racism and Structural Sin feels like a throwback to an earlier age, which is not a bad thing. It leverages the Catholic tradition of moral theology in a way reminiscent of antiracist writings in the *Interracial Review* that from the 1930s through the 1960s confronted the realities of lynching and segregation in conversation with the Catholic doctrine of the human person. Its writers proclaimed that racial inequality falsifies the gospel and hinders the church from being the point of unity for all people. They frequently suggested that if Catholics failed to stand against racial injustice then the Catholic Church will lose its contests with Protestantism and atheism. Similar to this earlier body of literature, Kelly confidently appeals to the heart of Catholic moral and social doctrine to address the afterlives of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation.

My concern is that some Catholics appeal to the tradition of Catholic social teaching—albeit a selective and narrow expression of it—for the legitimization of ethnonationalist ideology (e.g., recent assertions by Catholic politicians and intellectuals that the Augustinian/Thomistic teaching on the *ordo amoris* [“the order of love”] justifies anti-immigrant policies.)²⁴ This is the darker side of “Christian society,” a nostalgia for the aristocratic governing elite, social stratification, and a people who are “well governed.”²⁵ This nostalgia manifests in overt opposition to antiracism in policing, education, and social institutions, as well as in the ethnic and cultural demarcation of national belonging. Despite denials of racism, they find little common cause with those struggling to dismantle racial inequality. One can only hope that the vision of the human person Kelly articulates is more powerful than a degenerate Aristotelianism.

PROPHECY

The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice: A Prophetic Call is Mathew Kappadakunnel’s response to Catholic prelates and lay leaders who openly oppose movements for racial justice. The phrase “prophetic call,” he explains, is employed deliberately to describe

²³ Kelly, *Racism and Structural Sin*, 96–97, citing the *Compendium for Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 185.

²⁴ See “What is ‘Ordo Amoris?’ Vice President J. D. Vance Invokes This Medieval Catholic Concept,” *Associated Press*, February 6, 2025, apnews.com/article/jd-vance-catholic-theology-migration-e868af574fb2e742c6ed3d756c569769 and Pope Francis, “Letter to the Bishops of the United States of America,” February 10, 2025, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2025/documents/20250210-lettera-vescovi-usa.html.

²⁵ Patrick Deneen, *Regime Change: Toward a Postliberal Future* (Sentinel, 2023), 113.

antiracism. In its ideological and practical manifestations, racism is an obstacle to the church living its vocation. Racism, he argues, is a *heresy* because it denies or effaces the image of God present in all people, a core tenet of faith. Catholic leaders, he charges, have abetted this heresy. He writes, “While the Church and its leaders, whether clergy or prominent laypeople, undermine the mission and identity of the church by being complicit with racial injustice and not taking an active stand for the racially marginalized, we, the nameless Catholics in the pews, have a power and a call from on high. . . . God wants to use us as a healing balm to alleviate the division in the Body of Christ.”²⁶ Kappadakunnel explains that prophecy belongs to all Christians by virtue of baptism, though it is an often-costly duty to proclaim and live the gospel. It is the charge of Christian people to correct the church’s complicity in racial injustice.

The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice is refreshingly direct. Kappadakunnel’s parents immigrated from Kerala, India, a place with ancient Christian heritage. Yet, he says that he was frequently treated as an outsider in the Catholic Church. Now, as a priest of the Syro-Malabar Rite, Kappadakunnel is sensitive to the scandalous permissiveness of racism on the part of Catholic leaders. In many cases, partiality towards whiteness is frequently couched in preferences for Euro-aesthetics, Euro-language, and cultural expressions. In others, Catholic leaders have publicly denounced racial justice organizing, often employing bad faith arguments. Kappadakunnel declares, “When prominent, vocal bishops take a stand against the racially oppressed, they appear to speak for the Church and manifest that it is turning its back on Black people and persons of color.”²⁷ Kappadakunnel is not developing a new theory. Instead, he is encouraging the church to exercise the duty of pastoral care it has neglected.

The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice astutely observes the reason for this neglect. The church’s hierarchical and social leaders frequently align themselves with right-wing ideologues who effectively reject the social teaching of the Catholic Church. The root cause, Kappadakunnel explains, is “the power of *money*. While there is a browning effect in the US Church, most donations come from a wealthy white minority.”²⁸ The church’s failure to confront racism is less about the Euro-descended-majority composition of the church and more about its dependence upon wealthy white benefactors. His description of the entanglement between Catholic

²⁶ Matthew Kappadakunnel, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice: A Prophetic Call* (Paulist, 2024), xiii.

²⁷ Kappadakunnel, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, 39.

²⁸ Kappadakunnel, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, 42.

ecclesiastical economy and racial politics is insightful and, perhaps, a direction for significant scholarship. As French ecclesiologist Yves Congar explained, “the way the church is involved in the structures of society” at times requires an evangelical reform.²⁹ Today, theological antiracism requires the interrogation of the entanglement of ecclesial life in racist social conditions and the refusal to cooperate with those conditions.

Kappadakunnel insists that Catholic leaders honor their baptismal call. Kappadakunnel supplies a checklist of action items for local churches (chapter 6), a list directed primarily to bishops due to their capacity to catalyze movement in the church. It includes: “Listen to Black Catholic Voices, Particularly Black Theologians, Writers, and Activists” and “Desist from Protecting and Harboring Racists.” The message of the book, however, is that the prophetic calling is something *all* baptized Christians share and the struggle for racial justice is integral to living out the gospel.

“KILLING IN THE NAME”

While Tran may be correct to see the origins of racism in political economy—slavery and its aftermarkets—the effects are manifested in the social economy.³⁰ Racial exploitation, M. Shawn Copeland explains, conditions our “cognition, language, meanings, and values, thereby reshaping nearly all practices of human encounter and engagement.”³¹ The racial partitions inscribed onto our “structures and systems”—neighborhoods, schools, lands, prisons, ownership, and labor—begin to feel quotidian and natural. Mikulich, Kelly, and Kappadakunnel remind us that racially exploitative systems condition ecclesial relationships: they impede mutuality, debilitate the Christian capacity to live for each other, and foreclose reciprocity.

²⁹ Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibert (Liturgical, 2011), 165.

³⁰ Although I am supportive of his political-economic formulation of racism, I do not endorse all elements of Tran’s analysis. I would argue Tran too closely associates “identitarian antiracism” of popular culture with “ontological” frameworks that find antiblackness within the very architecture of modern Western thinking. However, his rejection of the “ontological” position does not preclude his recognition of the brutality of antiblack racism. He writes, “one does not have to go all the way with Afropessimism’s ontological framing in order to recognize . . . that the world we inhabit is violently structured against black life” (*Asian Americans and the Spirit of Racial Capitalism*, 287). In my interpretation, ontology and economy have reciprocal causation: racism is an ideological justification for expulsion, removal, and exploitation; antiblackness is an ontology that partitions the human/defective human, marking a people as available for expulsion, removal, and exploitation.

³¹ M. Shawn Copeland, “Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy in the Making of American Catholicism,” *American Catholic Studies* 127, no. 3 (2016): 7.

Slavery and its legacy systems of exploitation are parasitical to mutuality, friendship, and shared life. As Stefano Harney and Fred Moten explain, the transatlantic slave trade—"the first massive, diabolic, commercial logistics"—was oriented not toward the free flow of capital as much as the "blockage" of social life.³² The enslavement of human beings was, in effect, the removal of the capacity for a shared existence, through both the act of ownership and being owned.³³ These "diabolic logistics" embedded in our economic and social arrangements today "further concentrate the means of production with the goal quite simply and starkly of preventing us from taking care of one another, from looking out for one another."³⁴ Racialized borders, partitions, systems, and structures impede the fecundity of social life. They constitute "the ossification of sharing."³⁵

Striking a more hopeful tone, Harney and Moten also recognize that "all property remains vulnerable to sharing."³⁶ Property can be stolen back into the circulation of community. Property can become fugitive. Human beings—relegated to the status of property—can run away. They can refuse owning and being owned. Frederick Douglass identified his refusal to obey as the moment he became free. In *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), Douglass described his fight with the "slave breaker" Edward Covey. When Covey attempted to restrain and whip him, Douglass came to physical blows with him. He wrote, "The cowardly tyrant asked me if I 'meant to persist in my resistance.' I told him 'I *did mean to resist, come what might*'; that I had been by him treated like a *brute*, during the last six months; and that I should stand it no *longer*." He described the effect of this resistance: "It rekindled in my breast the smouldering embers of liberty."³⁷ Douglass's refusal to participate in his dehumanization and exploitation was an assertion of his humanity. Refusal is not only negative but it is affirmative and constructive. Beneath and in the cracks of racist systems of exploitation there exists already a humanity that seeks abundance, sociality, and joy.

In an era of ethnonationalism meaningful antiracism requires what Mikulich calls "epistemic disobedience," a refusal to give our life to exploitative systems.³⁸ The rock band Rage Against the Machine captures this epistemic disobedience in the lyrics of the 1992 song

³² Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *All Incomplete* (Minor Compositions, 2021), 16–17.

³³ Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 16–17.

³⁴ Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 18.

³⁵ Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.

³⁶ Harney and Moten, *All Incomplete*, 14.

³⁷ Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 244, 246 (emphasis original).

³⁸ Mikulich, *Unlearning White Supremacy*, 104.

“Killing in the Name.”³⁹ Towards the end of the song, lead singer Zack de la Rocha repeats the blunt lyric, “Fuck you, I won’t do what you tell me.” The band’s guitarist Tom Morello explained that the song’s lyrics had resonance with Frederick Douglass:

“Fuck you, I won’t do what you tell me” is a universal sentiment. While it’s a simple lyric, I think it’s one of [Zack de la Rocha’s] most brilliant. And to me, it relates to Frederick Douglass. Frederick Douglass said the moment he became free was not the moment that he was physically loosed from his bonds. It was the moment when the master said “Yes.” And he said, “No.” And that’s the essence of “Fuck you, I will not do what you tell me.” And that’s why it’s encouraging to hear it shouted at the Fed goons who are shooting tear gas at American citizens.⁴⁰ **M**

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³⁹ Rage Against the Machine, “Killing in the Name,” track 9 on *Rage Against the Machine* (Epic 1992), CD.

⁴⁰ Brian Hiatt, “How Rage Against the Machine Created ‘Killing in the Name,’” *Rolling Stone*, August 17, 2020, www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/rage-killing-in-the-name-song-tom-morello-1042814/