

Harlem Renaissance (Rachel Dolezal) re: counter-protest of KKK protest in CdA, Jan. 13, 2012

I'd like to add a few responses to clarify, because I believe a false dichotomy is being created here. Why is the question education or protest? A true Dr. King approach is both. I am an Educator by profession. I began my work in Mississippi and have continued human rights and intercultural education at the university and public school level after leaving my affiliation with HREI. Yes, that's part of the solution. I will never minimize that. But to pretend that protest is not acceptable, needful or that it was not part of Dr. MLK's path is to not fully appreciate the Civil Rights Movement. The entire movement was based on DOING something rather than sitting by, ignoring things and letting the gravity of human depravity run its course with ongoing Black Codes and Jim Crow laws. The sit-ins were active, not passive. The marches were active, not passive. The voter-registration was active, not passive. Non-violent (on the part of those who championed equality) and tasteful? Yes, but passive? No. Did I attend a KKK rally? No. I did a stand-in, much like the sit-ins of Dr. King's era. I stood there silently while the KKK entourage hurled insults at me by name; I said nothing to them. I stood there because I encountered something unacceptable in the world, and I felt it was the right thing to do. I stood there because to ignore them and drive by would be the easy way out. I stood there for my sons, for the children at the program, and for my family who was tortured by white police officers in the Civil Rights Movement. People started standing with me - black, white, young, older, men, women; they wanted passersby to know that not all of Idaho is racist, that people here care about equality too.

So, I'd ask the readers to imagine this is your story. You are a minority family in Idaho; you have been a spokesperson for human rights. You have had your home burglarized on more than one occasion, your children threatened, nooses hung on your porch, and a swastika affixed to your office door. Neo-Nazis have come into your workplace and threatened you verbally. Aryan Nations have protested your speeches, and you have received death threats. One day, your friend flies in from Seattle to give a talk to 5th graders at the college where you teach. She sends you a message on Twitter and you go down to see her and support her presentation. After leaving, you round a corner and 6 Klu Klux Klan members stand with flags and signs that read horrific things including racial slurs and anti-American slogans. They are being photographed by the Spokesman Review and plenty of cars are honking and either booing or waving (aka they are not being ignored). They recognize you in your car and holler out at you by name. Would you drive away? Would you say something? Would you do nothing? What would you do? This was my response and this is my story.

Another clarification, and not that it needs belaboring, but let's know who's who in this struggle. This group was the KKK, not the Aryan Nations. The Neo-Nazis and KKK and Aryans are all white supremacy organizations, but I think it is important to know which group is protesting and when. For example, it was the KKK that bombed the Birmingham church with the 4 little girls. It was the KKK who threatened and harassed Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s family. It was the KKK who often infiltrated law enforcement

in the South. It is the KKK that flies the stars and bars (confederate flag). It was the KKK who stood in Coeur d'Alene last Friday.

A closing question: Should it be concerning that someone with such a high level of affiliation with local law enforcement (Christie Wood) would initiate an oppositional public statement against nonviolent, silent protest on the side of human rights?
