

Rittenhouse Verdict Puts “Broken” Jury System in the Establishment Crosshairs

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by [Kit Knightly](#), *OffGuardian*

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“If Kyle Rittenhouse didn’t break the law, we should change the law”

This quote, from [late-night TV host Stephen Colbert](#), is one of the more concerning reactions to Kyle Rittenhouse being found not guilty of murder.

What law, precisely, Mr Colbert would see changed is never specified. The vagueness only makes the sentiment more troubling.

Other responses have been just as dishonest, manipulative and foreboding.

Amber Ruffin, another late-night “comedian”, broke down in (very fake looking) tears. Ranting about the “*fucked up*” jury, “*white people getting away with murder*” and the “*broken system*”. Trying to insert racial issues that don’t apply, and telling lies about the facts of the case:

https://twitter.com/ambermruffin/status/1461870102060535813?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1461870102060535813%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Foff-guardian.org%2F2021%2F11%2F30%2Frittenhouse-verdict-puts-

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The [“broken system”](#) is all anybody wants to talk about. It's [all over the place](#).

In Washington, “the Squad” decried the verdict, wailing that “the system is broken”, that it [“protects white supremacy”](#).

Even alternate media aren't immune. [Democracy Now](#) invited the family of Jacob Blake to discuss the verdict, who have no personal ties to the case save the riot was allegedly being carried out in response to Jacob's shooting. They too wanted to headline the “system is broken”.

But why the misrepresentations and hyperbole? Why race-baiting and manipulation? Why the exploitation of victims' families?

What exactly do they want to change about the “broken system”?

Is it private prisons?

Is it absurd incarceration rates?

Is it the fact prisoners are used as de facto slave labour?

Nope. It's jury trials.

Not *just* jury trials, however, there are some other areas ripe for “regulation” and “reform” too.

The relentless focus on Rittenhouse “*crossing state lines with a firearm*” (he [didn't actually](#), but never mind) would suggest perhaps one potential “fix” is tighter limitations on travel. Covid has highlighted just how much the powers that be really do hate us being able to move around.

Another obvious potential target for these vague reforms is the Second Amendment. The right to bear arms is, ironically, [always in the firing line](#). The USA certainly can't go full-Australia while guys are allowed to carry rifles around.

Indeed, given how far into the realms of tyranny so many

governments are going, all these [attacks on the very idea of “self defense”](#) could be a worrying sign.

But, for now, it looks like the first item on the menu of “reform” is definitely trial by jury.

Why do I think that? Well, both Ruffin and *Democracy Now* make special mention of the jury being “fucked up” and “broken”.

Oh, and [this article says so](#):

After Kyle Rittenhouse trial, Biden still thinks the jury system works. He’s wrong.

Jury trials have been [under threat for years](#), with “educated” middle-class authors writing that, essentially, the law is too important to be put in the hands of ordinary people who are too stupid understand it.

Juries are described as “old fashioned”, [“slow”](#) and [“expensive”](#).

Juries are routinely described as racist, too. Before the trial even started, the Rittenhouse jury was criticised for being [“too white”](#).

The Rittenhouse trial is not alone in being used to undermine the jury system, Covid got there first.

In Spring of 2020, the Scottish parliament [briefly tried to ban jury trials](#) “as a response to the pandemic”, this was quickly repealed after complaints from the bar association. There’s also talk of [removing juries from rape cases](#) to “clear the backlog” and “protect the victim”.

In January this year, Simon Jenkins [wrote in the Guardian](#) that Covid has given us an “opportunity” to get rid of Jury trials for good. He would see it replaced with a [“trial waiver system”](#), as much of the US already does.

Trial waiver systems are ripe for corruption, one report describes them as [“highly coercive”](#), and this could easily result in a *lot* of innocent people pleading guilty to lesser charges because they can't afford a lawyer or don't want to risk going to prison. It is not a fair system at all.

Nevertheless, that's where they want to go – and whether by Covid or Kyle Rittenhouse – they'll get us there.

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