

USA

America's Front Window

WORLD

15_10_2020

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A brick was hurled through America's front window this week. It landed on the living room floor with a sickening thud.

In a new level of civic disintegration, captured by Senior Writer Julio Rosas of [Townhall.com](https://www.townhall.com), rioters chose Wauwatosa, in suburban Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as the place to probe beyond the pale. Beyond the smashed store fronts and the tear gas and

the National Guard barriers – and right into the front window of your home – the brick came hurtling.

My front window, you ask, incredulously? Yes, your front window, my front window, our front window. And thank goodness it did. It is time to wake up.

I am the first to confess to slumber. I heard the brick through the window because I was there, sheltered 500 yards away in my own home, waiting for the mob to pass.

Scholars of the Holocaust note that people have an almost infinite ability to rationalize. We redefine normal and readjust, and then we readjust some more. We tell ourselves that everything is fine, and we block out what is too shocking to process.

Let me walk you through our new anesthetized American afternoon:

Receive a curfew alert. Check.

Head home from work early to get your jog in before the 7 P.M. order goes into effect. Check.

Drive past the local mall noting concrete barriers, military vehicles, and armed National Guardsmen on the street in broad daylight. Check.

Text a few friends to cancel plans. Have dinner. Watch VP debate. Check.

Hear military choppers overhead. Assume everything is still fine.

Then you receive a shelter in place order. You are told to secure your home and move away from windows. The barrier has been breached, and the rioters are moving into your neighborhood. You recheck all the locks, head upstairs, turn out all the lights, and wait.

The blue glow of your phone and the interior hallway light are the only lights on in the house. The only thing protecting you now is the whim of the rioters. Whatever direction they veer will bear the brunt. Hopefully they will pass another way.

And then you hear it coming down your street: air horns, chaos, bricks thrown through the dry cleaner's windows and the pharmacy doors, smashing with grotesque accuracy right into the learning center. A single thug finishes the destruction with a billy club. Neighborhood businesses totaled. Check.

Then, everything changes. This time, there is more. The rioters move to the houses up the street. They run toward the front picture windows and hurl their bricks. A few rioters call out the mob: "Hey, that's somebody's home! Those are people's houses!" they shout, as captured by [Rosas' video](#).

This crime is new. This crime is too much. To state the obvious is now a final cry of civil order.

The rioter is correct. That is somebody's home. That smashed front window is the apartment home of a 70-year-old woman. The landlord comes as quickly as he can and comforts this shaking, frightened lady. Is she your mother? Is she you?

What you don't see on the news is the quiet, destroyed aftermath of the "loot 'em and leave 'em" approach. The pieces are now ours to sweep up. The damaged homes and shops, as well as their unscathed but protected neighbors, sport brave new plywood window and door coverings. I shopped yesterday at a shuttered but still-functioning grocery store, everyone on edge, closing early to meet the requirements of a continuing curfew.

Boarded up but "open for business" is the new American paradox. Like quarantining the healthy people and closing the churches to save souls, we now shutter our shops, replace the picture window, and go about our day.

But we can't go back to such a fitful sleep. The shattered American front window matters. Our neighborhood matters. Our home matters. And the journalistic coverage of these crimes matters. Thank you, Julio Rosas. You had America's back this week. We noticed. We appreciated it. If not you, who?

The only thing we have when the barriers fall is God and each other. The answer is not simply to go back to our business, take down the plywood in a few weeks, and return to our collective new normal. The answer is to find a place to serve. Serve the civic discourse, serve the educational needs of your neighborhood, volunteer your time, pass on your ideals, and build up what is broken.

It won't happen overnight. I will be a few more nights locked down in my home watching the Police Department Twitter feed. But we must emerge changed. The brick hurled this week through America's front window was the first and it must be the last. I am offering free tutoring to MPS (Milwaukee Public School) high schoolers who have had their schools closed and not much interest taken in their educational survival. Nivea has signed up to come next Saturday to begin studying. It is a start, a plug in the dam. It matters.

Let's get building.