

WEEKDAY MAGAZINE – City Island Protests

By **Diego Barcacer** - June 28, 2020



TEDDY CARS
THE HUGGABLE DEALER

Upgrade & Lower
Your Payment **Today**

Learn More TeddyCars.com

Volkswagen NISSAN



Black Lives Matter protest on City Island (Ron Turner)

by John Doyle

Now that the non-existent dust has settled from the great “City Island ANTIFA riot of 2020”, the time for self-reflection is upon us. Whether or not you agree with the purpose of the #BlackLivesMatter protest or like the organizer(s) is not the issue. The fact is no one can be proud of the state of panic that beset our quaint nautical community in the week preceding this peaceful demonstration.

While I can certainly understand some level of concern, anyone who took eighth-grade social studies with Mr. McConnell should be familiar that the right to peacefully protest isn’t subject to a popularity contest. All people could have asked for is that the event would be safe and peaceful. It was quickly announced that the 45th Precinct was coordinating with the protest organizers and thus

safety concerns were seemingly addressed. Yet for some reason, threats, scare tactics, division and paranoia ran high for days. Why?

It's worth noting that nearly every year, our Island gets worked into a frenzy over an event that ultimately turns out to be a nothing burger. Remember the "J.Lo concert/invasion of 2014"? Or how about the nasty rumor that "Dan Treiber was going to open up the beaches!" that was coincidentally started right around the time of the Civic elections? Much of this anxiety is fueled and driven by folks who call themselves "leaders" of our community, yet their behavior over all three incidents and consistently throughout these times has been less than stellar. Each and every time a rumor campaign starts, usually with some sort of racial undertone, and quickly takes to social media. Lies are often repeated as if its gospel, the evidence is either in short supply or non-existent, and in the emotional whirlwind of the "debate" being the loudest voice in the room often trumps being right. We are told we must "act now!" or our Island will be put into "REAL DANGER!". The event occurs and nothing happens. City Islanders quickly forget the incident. End scene and repeat. I found the whole experience eerily reminiscent of how President Trump used the immigrant "caravan" before the 2018 midterm elections that strangely disappeared as a pressing issue after Election Day.

The time has come for City Island to rise above this behavior. Leaders have to act with a sense of purpose to bring unity, rarely did I hear in the days leading up to this event: "While I may not agree with this protest, it is their right to do so. All I ask is that the event is safe". Also, how many people were spreading rumors that they merely heard without checking with the source or someone who can answer their concerns in an official capacity? How many picked up the phone to call our elected officials (who were there), the police or the community board? Surely that would have been more productive than spreading unsubstantiated gossip for six days. Ultimately and for our own collective sanity, I must ask if people have continually supplied you with misinformation, why are you still listening to them?

We still live in a great community, I was privileged to have grown up here and like many, I have chosen to return here in my adult years. That being said, there are times we fail to live up to this greatness, and the response to this protest was one of those times. Now that this nonsense is behind us, let's use this experience as a teachable moment and move onward and upwards in a new direction for the good of all City Islanders.

John Doyle is a third generation Bronxite. He's worked in both public relations and political organizing. He also ran unsuccessfully for City Council in 2017.

To submit writing for publication on WEEKDAY MAGAZINE, [click here](#). Fiction, non-fiction, commentary, news, news analysis, and poetry are welcome. Bronx slant always preferred.

Disclaimer: Each WEEKDAY MAGAZINE article is submitted by our readers. GAX Productions, LLC does not verify nor confirm facts and the articles represent the views of the Writer and not GAX Productions, LLC.



Diego Barcacer