

It could have ended there

When the knee was lifted from the dead man's neck it could have ended there. But it was murder and that couldn't go unpunished. Others colluded and they were arrested too. Bad men in a responsible job. It happens, bad apples, or even a rotten tree. That policeman should have stopped being a policeman, long before, his history told us. His managers were incompetent. There are bad managers everywhere, ask anyone who's ever had a job. Replace them and it could have ended there.

This isolated one off could have stayed as a terrible tragedy for a few, but there was nothing isolated about it. A list of deaths scrolled on, some famous some not. Some brutal, straightforward murder, some bitter irreversible colour stained 'mistakes'. Some murderers brought to justice, some were not. So the police love power and wield it beyond their job descriptions. Nothing new. Nothing shocking. It could have ended there, in the endless cynical dissolution with those who are supposed to protect us, the front line, the courts, the politicians.

The president surprises no one by his eagerness to send others to their deaths for his ego, for his winning angle. No one is any longer even horrified. "It's just him. He'll be gone by January."

And it could have ended there, with a country that combines guns with fear to equal tragedy. So, a normal suburban guy can squeeze a trigger because he's got a gun and he's got a fear. And so another normal man is dead. They were a 'shade' different and that's what makes all the difference

over there. That's the casual way they do things in that foreign place. So it could have ended there.

But the shades mattered and pictures mattered and the statistics didn't lie and people thousands of miles away felt the same need to scream they want to breathe. But the lashing out at long dead evil, the marches, banners and newspaper inches could have been enough. Had always seemed enough in the past, to quietly hide the devil, put the genie back in the bottle and go on as before, like nothing happened. It could have ended there.

Then we would all go back to wherever we were; successful, ignored, struggling or making our way in the world. It normally ends just there. Great steps are made but the giant ones trip and fall away.

"Too much."

"Too soon."

"Too risky."

"Too great a sacrifice to the status quo."

But this time. This time. It seems this time. It won't be ending there. It's going everywhere.