

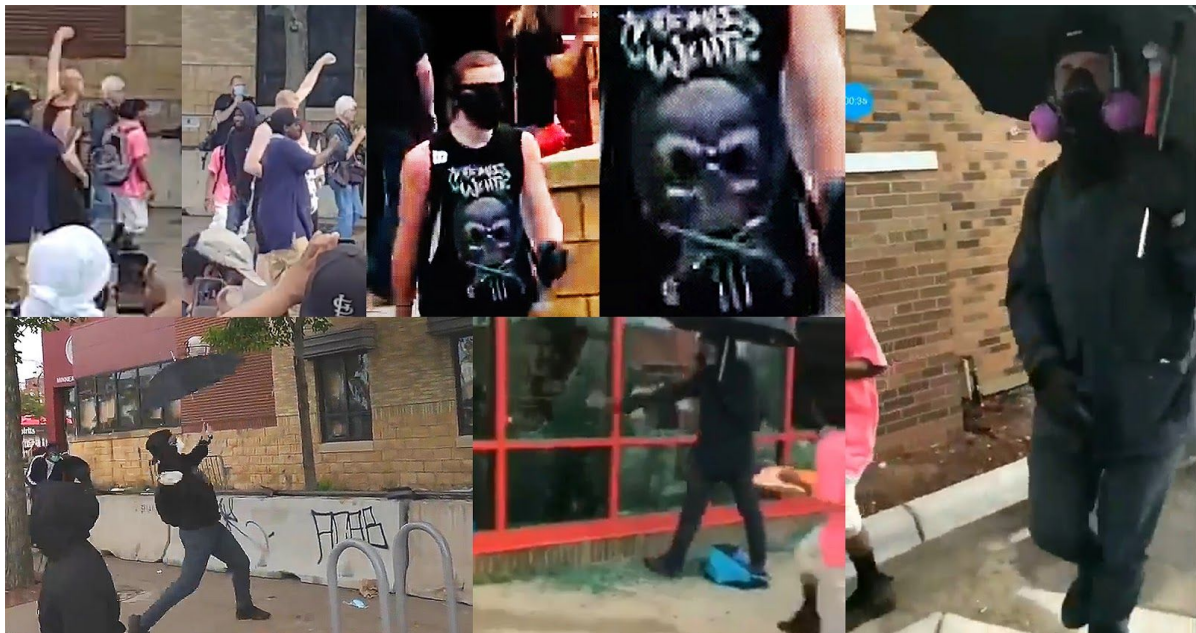
## Umbrella Men: Rioters in Minneapolis & *The Man Who Tried to Stop Them*

by Jeremy L. Quinn

[Publicreport.org](http://Publicreport.org) part 3

There were Umbrella men in Minneapolis. They dressed head to toe in black bloc. They wore gas masks and protective headgear. They were rioters. But whose side were they on politically?

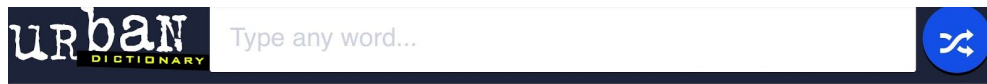
The Autozone Umbrella Man, named by the Minneapolis police, wasn't the only black clad riot accerationist Elijah Easley confronted on May 27th. Elijah, the BLM activist in a pink shirt & Rasta tam, had run-ins with at least three extremists that day and several others in black bloc garb.



*Umbrella man (right) and others in Minneapolis on Wednesday May 27th*

The umbrella carrying vanadal who broke into AutoZone, the first business burned in Minneapolis, wore the garb of anarchist activists seen active in Portland's unrest. They

define themselves as radicals or contemporary “Leftists.”



TOP DEFINITION

## Leftist

A person belonging to the political left and usually identifying with **the radical**, anti capitalist, or revolutionary sectors of left politics. Includes anarchists, marxists, communists, **socialists**, and all other explicitly **radical left** ideologies.

*That guy's a total **leftist**, his **pantry** is full of **Molotov cocktails** and nothing else.*

by **Zipongj** September 14, 2019

Here's the unexpected twist. Police believe Umbrella Man is a Hell's Angel and associate of the right wing prison gang, The Aryan Cowboy Brotherhood. He isn't identified by his legal name in a July report by the Minneapolis Star Tribune, though [Heavy.com](#) revealed the suspect's identity and surname to be Carlson.

Elijah Easley famously did his best to step in ([VIDEO](#)). After the incident, AutoZone would soon be set ablaze and riots would sweep the city.

Many may view Carlson to be an “infiltrator” or “agitator” to BLM, but in the climate of Anarchy itself, he may be right at home. Leftists deride the myth of outside agitation as a racist trope insisting that the press has a bias to portray community uprising as illegitimate. So how do we make sense of the men with parasols ?

Here's an explanation. Contrary to mainstream tendencies to categorize Anarchists solely on the left, Anarchism can be characterized as an “umbrella philosophy” that welcomes all who oppose hierarchy or coercive authority ([per Stanford University](#)). Hells Angels have always clashed with police in the past and hold the designation of “One Percenter MC.” Those are male, racially homogenous motorcycle clubs that maintain

outlaw status among their peers.

Like the Libertarian right, disparate groups one wouldn't immediately associate with Black Lives Matter may see themselves first & foremost as anti-government rather than traditionally right or left. To the establishment of course, their collective revolutionary tendencies are leading the way for insurrection. The affidavit filed July 27th by Sgt. Erika Christensen of MPD details how the "individual's sole aim was to incite violence."



Police allege the 32 year old tagged a message on the doors welcoming looting to the AutoZone before it was set aflame.

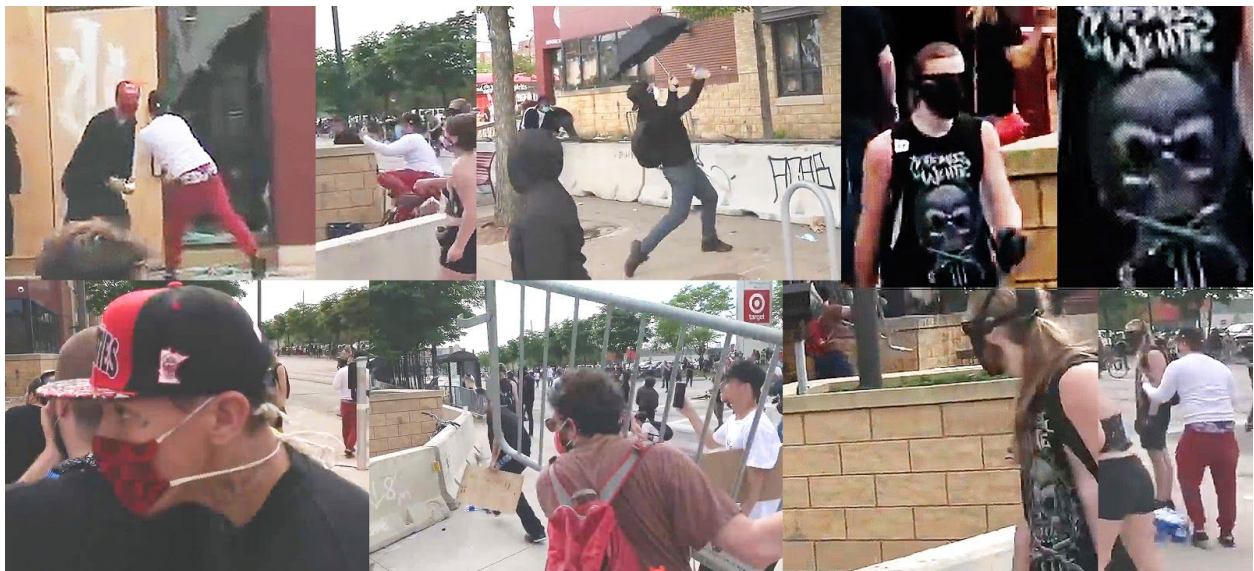
"In the short time after the front windows are broken out in the AutoZone, looting started," the affidavit reads, "This was the first fire that set off a string of fires and looting throughout the precinct and the rest of the city."

Rioting would hit Seattle and Portland only days later, both which have a strong

Insurrectionary Anarchist presence, networked Antifa groups, and an affinity for the black bloc tactical playbook.

Who were the others clad in black that Elijah Easley came face to face with in the hours before? We have to rewind to before the encounter at AutoZone, before Elijah took a break to get pizza, before gas was first deployed by police at the 3rd precinct.

At that point, the protest had been peaceful and Elijah was suddenly single handedly trying to stop a riot from metastasizing outside the 3rd precinct.



*Minneapolis begins: An hour before the AutoZone break-in, a Direct Action team abandons bundles of water bottles at the 3rd precinct (lower right). A man with a skull shirt monitors. Windows break and graffiti is tagged on the police station's plywood.*

In video obtained by [The Public Report](#), one of the rioters in a white tank top deliberately makes a raised fist as soon as Easley [turns his back to him](#). Elijah had just confronted the man for throwing a stone into a precinct window.

The ADL cautions a gesture should be judged in the context in which it is made. A fist is

often made by an individual in solidarity with BLM, however, it could mean the opposite. It is important to note that the “Raised Fist” has historically signified the universal symbol for solidarity in social revolution. That the fist was made to Easley’s back as he turned away confuses and complicates the imagery.



*Umbrella Man 2: The umbrella was used in pro democracy protests in Hong Kong. It is considered a useful riot tool for deflecting projectiles & obscuring identity from overhead surveillance cameras, a popular accessory in the northwest.*

In this confusion it’s impossible to know who is affiliated with what. Affiliations become secondary to the ultimate goal of total disorder in the face of authority; the very essence of Anarchy. As one begins to investigate city to city, however, white folks making the fist of solidarity in Portland and Seattle especially is widespread & commonplace.

Easley says he remembers others in black bloc breaking windows at the precinct on Lake Street and trying to take down the fencing. In one clip Easley can be seen yelling, “Stop!” He then pleads with police to stand down and let him try to quell the disorder.

At the start of the video man in white pants and a red hat is seen dropping off bundles of water bottles to be used as projectiles. Another man kicks off the disorder by [tagging a trident like symbol on the police wall.](#)

None of the men are Black.

“It had nothing to do with their ethnicity. It had everything to do with the fact that they were doing something that I disagreed with,” says Easley, who told The Public Report he was just as vocal with people of color joining the mayhem, “Race was not the motivation for me doing that. I saw what was going on. I felt it shouldn’t be going on. So I stopped it.”

At first he succeeded. In Easley’s initial encounter, he stops a curly haired man in shorts wearing a red backpack who throws three metal barricades into the area police sectioned off. These would later be used as battering rams by anybody nearby who wished to partake in the mayhem.

The man with the red backpack and shorts is perhaps the most active in the videos as he later jumps atop the fence in an attempt to bring it down. But when Easley stops him from throwing his third barricade, something unusual happens.

Both the “graffiti vandal” and the man with a blond ponytail together [make a coordinated beeline to Elijah.](#) They stop short only after seeing Elijah had already disarmed the red backpack rioter. The vandal quickly spray paints the overhead surveillance camera. The lookout man then perches on a concrete barricade nearby, “spotting” the unrest as it continues around him. In Insurrectionary Anarchist terms, he’s on cop watch.

He wears a skull shirt with indiscernible lettering.



*Few rioters in Minneapolis were so bold to wear insignia. Most, who were there to riot, were clad in black bloc attire, devoid of identifiable markers.*

Minneapolis saw a new group of individuals storming the precinct the next day on May 28th. [Video obtained](#) by The Public Report from a foreign news agency, clearly shows the riot starters wearing world war era helmets. Another black bloc rioter takes down the fence surrounding the precinct. An older man in the group doesn't bother to wear a mask. BLM supporters try to stop the escalation. A Black man tells the crowd, "This is not what it is."

Like the day before, the instigators were white. The precinct would burn that evening.



Minneapolis Police made a 9:53pm exit from the precinct which would have far reaching implications. Anarchist website ***CrimethInc*** would declare “the siege” a victory for autonomous Anarchist action.

Questions remain with so many disparate groups at work and even possible cross-pollination between those we tend to think of only in terms of “right” and “left” wing groups.

We are left with unidentified suspects, though it’s clear regional variation exists across the nation.



Insurrectionary Anarchist groups like the Pacific Northwest Youth Liberation Front as of August 5th began taking action independent of BLM in August. Other regions may have seen Anarchist “Direct Action” with different degrees of influence, or none at all.

The reveal of Umbrella Man’s identity gives some solace to pacifist minded protesters, even though an arrest wasn’t immediately made.

Elijah Easley says there was a feeling of uncertainty in those first days of unrest. The unmasking of the man who Easley confronted while he walked with a pizza box in hand, may be the first step on a path to more concrete answers.

“We are paying attention now to the fact that there are people trying to do this to us. That’s what the major concern is,” Easley says, “It’s something that’s always been suspected. So now it’s like, aha. I knew it.”

*Jeremy L. Quinn is a Photojournalist for Public Report. This piece constitutes part 3 in a series of the publication’s independent, non-partisan coverage of the riots following George Floyd’s death.*

Conclusion forthcoming 8/14/2020 at [Public Report](#)

*Part 4 “Anarchist Tactics in the USA”*