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Democracy Dies in Darkness

Robert E. Lee statue and Daughters of Confederacy building attacked by Richmond protesters

Confederate monuments across the South were vandalized during George Floyd demonstrations

By Lynda Robinson

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On a <u>night of violence</u> in the former capital of the Confederacy, protesters targeted Richmond's fraught history as they decried the killing of George Floyd—a scene repeated in Charleston, S.C., Raleigh, N.C. and other Southern cities.

The statue of <u>Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee</u>, which towers over Monument Avenue in Richmond, was covered with graffiti, including the phrases "No More White Supremacy," "Blood On Your Hands" and "Black Lives Matter." The Stonewall Jackson. JEB Stuart and Jefferson Davis memorials were also defaced. A

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Robert E. Lee statue got tagged #Richmond #NoJusticeNoPeace



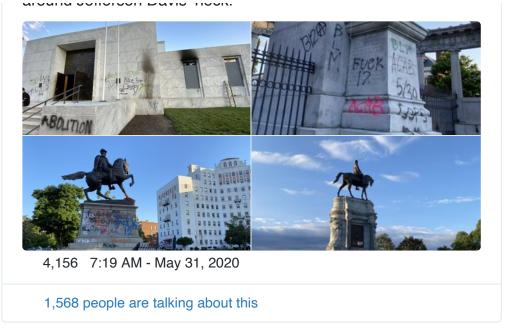
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The morning after in Richmond, Virginia - where they burned the Daughters of the Confederacy building and hung a noose around Jefferson Davis' neck



In Charleston, protesters spray-painted the Confederate Defenders statue with the words "BLM" and "traitors," the Associated Press reported. At the University of Mississippi, the phrase "spiritual genocide" and blood-red handprints were scrawled on the sides of a Confederate monument on the campus, the Oxford Eagle reported. A Confederate monument at the State Capitol in Raleigh was vandalized, too.

Richmond has been grappling with its Confederate history for years, especially after a 2017 gathering of white supremacists in Charlottesville ended in violence. Mayor Levar Stoney (D) formed a commission to consider removing the city's Civil War monuments. Last year, it recommended taking some down, especially the statue of Davis, putting up new ones and adding more historical context to those that remain.

None of the Confederate memorials have been removed, but in December, a new statue, "Rumors of War" by artist Kehinde Wiley, was unveiled by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The soaring bronze figure of a 21st-century African American man in dreadlocks atop a horse sits not far from the now-charred headquarters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

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And by early Sunday evening, the protesters had returned to the Lee statue to scrawl more graffiti on its base.

Correction: An earlier version of this story suggested the Kehinde Wiley statue was commissioned by the city of Richmond. It was commissioned by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and sits beside the museum, not far from the United Daughters of the Confederacy headquarters.

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