

‘Horrific’: Dozens of Neighbors Sign Letter Calling Out St. Louis Gun Couple

*Kelly Weill*ReporterUpdated Jul. 02, 2020 3:48PM ET / Published Jul. 02, 2020 1:45PM ET

Dozens of residents of a [St. Louis](#) neighborhood have signed a letter condemning the actions of the [couple who brandished guns at Black Lives Matter marchers](#) on Sunday.

[Mark and Patricia McCloskey](#), a pair of personal injury attorneys, made headlines this week after they were filmed waving weapons at Black Lives Matter activists who walked in their gated neighborhood en route to a protest at the mayor’s home nearby. Residents of an adjoining gated neighborhood say the couple doesn’t represent the area.

The nearly three-dozen signers live on Westmoreland Place. That street and the adjoining Portland Place, where the McCloskeys live, make up a historic gated district in St. Louis’s Central West End.

“From many walks of life, people choose to make this neighborhood home for many reasons, including the sincerity, empathy, and neighborliness exhibited by the vast majority of those who live here,” the open letter reads.



“Some of us choose to speak up following the horrific event that transpired on Sunday evening near our homes. As the undersigned, we condemn the behavior of anyone who uses threats of violence, especially through the brandishing of firearms to disrupt peaceful protest, whether it be in this neighborhood or anywhere in the United States.”

Tim Noonan, a Westmoreland Place resident and a signer of the letter, told The Daily Beast he was shocked by Sunday’s confrontation.

“I think we, as a group, were absolutely horrified,” he said. “It didn’t speak to the types of values and the approach to building a civil society that we believe in, even from a common-sense view.”

The McCloskeys could not immediately be reached for comment. In a statement to The Daily Beast, the couple’s lawyer Al Watkins called the neighbors’ letter

"disingenuous," citing the gated enclave's private security.

Noonan said the community was close-knit, and that after the incident, neighbors began to sound off on the email networks that are more typically used for communicating about trash pickup and Halloween parties.

"Peaceful protest should not be met with threat of violence," Noonan said. "From what we can discern—and of course there are many more facts that need to be put on the table—it was a protest. Even in conditions of civil disobedience, it shouldn't be met with violence."

The McCloskeys contend that they came outside with guns because they feared the marchers would kill them and their dog and set their mansion on fire. (Footage of the protest shows activists encouraging the crowd to move along, away from the armed couple.) The McCloskeys also noted that the protesters were trespassing on the gated street. Although marchers in the video contested that fact, shouting that they were walking on public sidewalks, the Portland Place couple was correct that local law designates the street as private.

Nevertheless, Noonan said, trespassing is not necessarily grounds to draw a gun.

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"We don't condone trespassing," he said, noting that the neighborhood bylaws had specific language about unauthorized entries. "But if that happens in the form of civil disobedience, it cannot ever be met by threat of violence."

This story was updated to include comment from the McCloskeys' lawyer.