



FROM AN 'OLD REDNECK'

I was just reflecting on Sam Mitrani's January 2015 article for *In These Times*, "The Police Were Created to Control Working Class and Poor People, Not 'Serve and Protect.'" Now, in 2021, it is all the more clear.

I also recently heard someone say that, in the United States, the purpose of the police is to keep poor people away from rich people. To my mind, this idea sums up your entire, excellent article. As an old redneck white man, I can't even conceive of how much more obvious the concept must be to non-whites. Sadly, we lack the political will to lift a finger to fix it.

Just as it has always been throughout history, the rich people call the shots and the poor people have to live with it.

—RONNIE CHILDS
Richmond, Va.

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

I'm not sure where the author of "Cuban Dissidents Log On" (February 2021)

gathers information, but I suggest they visit Cuba before slamming it. If they have visited the island, they did it with their eyes closed.

—KEVIN HALEY
Colona, Colo.

FROM THE EDITOR:

I find it helpful to read an article with my eyes open. As author Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo writes, he lived in Cuba. Not just a visitor to the island, he spent the first four decades of his life in Cuba; he "escaped," as he puts it, in 2013 when he was 41. He was one of the Cuban writers featured in our 2009 special edition to mark the 50th anniversary of the revolution, "Inside Cuba: Voices from the Island." In his 2009 article, "Guerilla Blogging: A Virtual Democracy Against All Odds," Pardo Lazo describes the persecution faced by famed Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez and other writers.

The day after In These Times' special issue went to press in 2009, Sánchez and Pardo Lazo were abducted, beaten and dumped on the outskirts of Havana, an event Sánchez chronicled in her blog, Generación Y.

Pardo Lazo was not the only In These Times contributor to suffer. After agreeing to write an article about LGBTQ rights in Cuba for the magazine, activist Mario Joe Delgado Gonzales was arrested and jailed, ostensibly for trying to organize a "Mr. Gay Havana Contest."

—JOEL BLEIFUSS