

NewsNation's *On Balance with Leland Vittert*

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5 minutes and 36 seconds

LELAND VITTERT: Democrats playbook against President Donald Trump is very simple: Oppose everything he does And if you can argue the facts, just pound the table and yell about January 6th. That's our Why It Matters segment tonight. The strategy was on full display Monday in our segment about Trump's surging federal law enforcement and sending in the National Guard to Washington, D.C.. Here's part of my interview with Mehdi Hasan.

MEHDI HASAN [on NewsNation's *On Balance with Leland Vittert*, 08/13/25]: You think it's because Trump cares about crime in D.C.? Really? Because I remember Donald Trump on January the 6th, 2021 not giving a —

VITTERT: Look, Mehdi, Mehdi — oh, come on.

HASAN [on NewsNation's *On Balance with Leland Vittert*, 08/13/25]: — crap about crime in D.C.

VITTERT: Noun, verb, January 6. [SCREEN WIPE] You can't have an argument about what's happening on the streets D.C. without going back to — without going back to January 6.

HASAN [on NewsNation's *On Balance with Leland Vittert*, 08/13/25]: I can, actually, because it's about Donald Trump.

VITTERT: You won't talk about actually the crime.

HASAN [on NewsNation's *On Balance with Leland Vittert*, 08/13/25]: Because it's about Donald Trump, Leland. But, Leland, it's —

VITTERT: No, it's not. It's about how to have people be safe.

HASAN [on NewsNation's *On Balance with Leland Vittert*, 08/13/25]: — come on!

VITTERT: And that's really what this is about. How to keep people on the streets of D.C. safe. Everybody is welcome to disagree on policy or argue data or philosophy. That's why we have this program. That's what makes us different. That's what makes you, as a viewer, different. You choose to tune in here to hear things you disagree with and to be challenged. But no one is welcome to come on here and hijack a segment and make it about something four years ago that has absolutely nothing to do with the topic at hand. Even MSNBC's Joe Scarborough says that crime is a problem, and the National Guard in D.C. is good for the people living here.

JOE SCARBOROUGH [on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, 08/12/25]: But, man, I don't care what the crime statistics say. Crime has been a problem in this city for the 32 years I've been living inside

and outside of the city.

VITTERT: Which brings us to the January 6 playbook. We're not going to put up with it on our show and you, our viewers, deserve better. You deserve an honest conversation on the merits of policy and making us a better country. Not talking points. January 6 was awful. I was in the middle of it. Hell, I was even confronted by the mob, multiple times. It is a stain on our country's history. But it was four years ago. It has absolutely nothing to do with the current crime epidemic in D.C. So, back to the here and now. Within minutes of Trump's announcement to bring in federal law enforcement to Washington, suddenly all we heard from the left, everybody across the board as if they all got the same talking points was crime in DC is down 26 percent.

PETER BAKER [on MSNBC, 08/12/25]: We know a crime crisis looks like we lived through that. This is not what that looks like.

AL SHARPTON [on MSNBC, 08/12/25]: We will just uproot our law enforcement, even though data things are going in the right way.

VAUGHN HILLYARD [on MSNBC, 08/12/25]: D.C. crime, According to the FBI earlier this year, is at a 30-point low.

VITTERT: I'm a journalist by training. And what you're supposed to do as a journalist is question the talking points. So, we did that, and here's what we found. From NBC 4 Washington back in July: "D.C. police commander suspended, accused of changing crime statistics...The union claims police supervisors in the department manipulate crime data to make it appear violent crime has fallen considerably compared to last year." So, maybe the talking points aren't even true. Even the chief of the D.C. Metro Police Department is now welcoming the cooperation with federal law enforcement.

D.C. POLICE CHIEF PAMELA SMITH: Yeah, I think this is going to be a good effort. It's going to be an effort that's supported by both teams. [SCREEN WIPE] We know that we have to get illegal guns off of our street and if we have influx or increased presence, it's going to make our city even better.

VITTERT: Okay, well, Washington D.C. isn't good to begin with. It is a mess, and crime is rampant and out of control, but an important point. Not only did the chief say she needed help, all of the officers spoke through their union and said the same thing. They demanded and thanked President Trump for the help. So, you probably didn't hear that either. On top of all of this, local news reports where stations across D.C., including our affiliate, found there are plenty of people who are thankful.

[SOUNDBITES FROM WRC-TV]

VITTERT: Okay, let's just now talk about the data, just to compare D.C.'s homicide rate in New York City's, it is almost five times higher. In fact, another murder happened just last night, not even a mile from the White House and two blocks from an anti-Trump protest. Police say a man

carrying a rifle opened fire and killed another man. But no, of course, D.C. is totally safe. Democrats and the left-leaning media outlets have no brand except to fight against Trump. And when they're on the losing side of an issue, as we have just shown you, they will fight on the issue. They go back to January 6 and that is totally their right. But it is our responsibility — it is my responsibility to call them out on it.