

*The Huddle*

01/19/26

37:58 mark

9 minutes and 7 seconds

RACHAEL BADE: [W]e've got to hit something that's really taken off on the right going — going viral, and that is this storming of a church in Minnesota by anti-ICE protesters. Let's bring up our first element just to look at what happened here.

DON LEMON: So, you can see the protesters here — are have gathered over here. They're in the middle of the church. So, during the beginning of the church service, the pastor was speaking and Nikima stood up and said her peace and then the protesters surrounded her. But this is a clandestine mission.

BADE: Clandestine mission? Let's bring up our second element here which is focused on Don Lemon talking to —

SEAN SPICER: Well, that was his voice by the way.

BADE: — yes, that was his voice, and reminder, Don Lemon was he was fired from CNN and he's now sort of an independent media doing his own thing. Let's bring up element two of him.

PASTOR: It's unacceptable. It's shameful. It's shameful to — to interrupt a public gathering of Christians in worship. So —

LEMON: But there are folks who support —

PASTOR: — listen, I have to take care of my flock and my family.

LEMON: — okay, but listen, we live in a — there's a Constitution and the First Amendment to freedom of speech and freedom to assemble and protest.

PASTOR: We're here to worship. We're here to worship Jesus because that's the hope of these cities. That's the hope of the world is Jesus Christ.

LEMON: I want to be very respectful. Please don't push me, though.

PASTOR: We're — we're here. We're here to worship Jesus.

LEMON: Yes.

PASTOR: That's why we're here.

LEMON: Okay.

PASTOR: That's why we're here. That's what we're about.

LEMON: Would you think Jesus would be understanding —

PASTOR: And we're — we're about —

LEMON: — and love these folks?

PASTOR: We're about spreading the love of Jesus.

LEMON: But did you try to talk to them as a — as a Christian?

PASTOR: No one is willing to talk.

LEMON: Okay.

PASTOR: I — I have to take care of my church and my family, so I ask that you actually would also leave this building —

LEMON: You don't want us to chronicle what happened?

PASTOR: — unless you're here to worship — unless you're here to worship.

LEMON: I'm always worship. I'm a Christian.

PASTOR: We're here to — well, we're here to worship. We're here to worship.

LEMON: Okay. Thank you very much.

BADE: There is a difference between being a journalist following along to cover a protest, cover some sort of demonstration. I mean, we sent journalists following along with the January 6 rioters in the Capitol, but what Don Lemon is doing right there, is very much, you know, in — in line with the — the anti-ICE protesters. He's on their side. He's saying they have a right to storm the church. He's going way beyond just being there and observing. He seems to be sort of, you know, rallying these people and stirring them up even more. Not a great look, obviously. Sean, you flagged this for us.

SPICER: Yeah. So — so number one, he's not a journalist. I mean, like, let's not confuse that.

BADE: That is totally fair given what he just said.

SPICER: That's not — that's — he's an activist. He always has been and he is now. I've never sworn on the show and I won't do it now. But I will say this: Don Lemon is a disrespectful POS. And if you need to Google that, to go into a Sunday service —

BADE: Yeah.

SPICER: — where people are — are worshiping God and to claim that you have a constitutional right to do that is one of the lowest, most disgusting things I've ever seen in my life. The idea

that they think that — like, do you have a — first of all, it is a private — like, you don't have a right. That's just not true, okay? And for him to say I have a right to be here. It's a First Amendment. Like, it's so disgusting and inappropriate and wrong. The idea that there's not more outrage and that it's a right-leaning issue is just what's wrong. The idea that there's not equal outrage — again by saying no, there's a line, you crossed it, you're wrong, is so what's going on right now. The idea that people that — that this is not getting coverage anywhere else is literally what's wrong right now. I — I just — I'm so disgusted by that —

BADE: Yeah.

SPICER: — and that this guy's going to become some kind of a hero to the left because he stormed in the middle of a church service and — and accosted the pastor and then said, "I have a right to be here and I'm a Christian." I — I literally — I — I — I actually will pray for that dude today and hope to God that — that God comes down to him and says, "you're a moron. Don't ever do this again. Atone for your sins."

BADE: Like, shouldn't local law enforcement be like helping the parishioners in this situation?

DAN TURRENTINE: Like, well, I mean, hold on a second. The doors of the church were open, right? So, anyone when — the doors of a church are open — can walk in. It is a terrible look to interrupt a church service just like it's a terrible look to interrupt a classroom. It — you know, people go there to kind of seek relief, to seek inspiration, to, you know, to make peace literally and figuratively. So, I — I — I think it is a terrible look. I think the average person who goes to church on Sunday looks at that and thinks, if that happened in my community at my church, I would be upset, right? Full stop.

SPICER: I would be more than upset.

TURRENTINE: Yeah. Okay. Like fine. So, I — I think, from a media standpoint, what I think you're seeing with Don Lemon is we — we've talked about this, like, kind of journalist these independent journalists on the street with their camcorders kind of trying to make news. I'm sure he wants — he wants imagery. He wants, you know, the — the — the pastor criticizing ICE to take it and say, "see, look, the pastor," and I — I know there was the opposite. They think the pastor is part — was part of ICE or is part of ICE. It's — it's crazy. I — I mean, all of this is just this feeling of both sides trying to get the other. I hear a lot of Democrats who would tell you that they wish, like, the Pope and others who have spoken out about what's happening on immigration, that this is not how you treat people, not what the Bible tells you about how to treat people. So, you know, everyone's trying to get their aha moment on camera.

SPICER: But — but wait. Just — I — I just want to put this out as a PSA in case Don's listening. If you come to my church, I will not react the same way that pastor did. I will spend Monday in confession atoning for my sins for what I will do. Just for the record. But I — I —

TURRENTINE: You're like the dad in *Landman* who's like, this is how I would have handled it.

SPICER: — but — but I will say that what — what — what — what upsets me on this whole thing is that, like, this — this treat people the — if you don't like what ICE is doing, change the law. Don't have —

TURRENTINE: Well, but Sean, hold on. It — here's the thing, though, you got to be careful about. You have instances now where ICE has stopped people — the people have said, "Hey, I'm an American citizen." And they're like, "where are your papers? Where are your papers?" And the person's like, "hey, okay, wait, hold on a sec. I don't —" And these people with whistles and other things start pointing and the ICE agents have basically peeled out. On the left, what they're saying is, "oh, that's not lawful what they were starting to do, and that's why they ran away." Now, I hear you. This is why it's spinning out of control, right? Because everyone is looking to get the other side. You're doing something you're not supposed to be doing. I hate that now you have these people walking around with cellphone cameras hunting for wrongdoing almost trying to cause wrongdoing.

SPICER: But — but — but —

TURRENTINE: That's where — the left is saying —

SPICER: — okay.

TURRENTINE: — enough.

BADE: But it's also — but it's also, like, directing — directing the fire and the anger at ICE officials or people with — tied to ICE who are just following orders.

TURRENTINE: Yeah, it's crazy.

SPICER: But — but — but —

BADE: Like, there's these civil servants who are following orders.

SPICER: — so — and also, are they create — they're creating the very chaos that they're then denouncing, number one.

TURRENTINE: Yeah, I agree.

SPICER: Number two, you know, there was a guy named Nick Sortor is out there. He's, you know, videotaping stuff. He got accosted. Like, where are the people on the left saying, "hey, the vandalism is wrong. The accosting people's wrong. The violence is wrong."

TURRENTINE: Agreed.

SPICER: All these people who suddenly cared about ICE agents being masked have no problem with all these other hoodlums walking around with masks accosting people. It's — I — I'm — look — look, you have an absolute right in this country to oppose policies. It's — it's fundamental to who we are. But I — I don't hear anyone on the left saying, "hey, we — we cannot assault. We cannot come after these people. Vandalism is wrong." What does vandalizing get you? Let me explain — like — I — this is George Floyd 2.0. You destroy small businesses in Minneapolis and somehow that furthers your cause?

TURRENTINE: No.

BADE: Have any Democrats come out and said, "let's not storm churches?"

TURRENTINE: No, I mean, this —

BADE: You know, like I haven't seen a single one.

TURRENTINE: — I mean, look, you can go further. The — when you had the members of Congress trying to, you know, break into the ICE facilities. I mean, there is — I — I agree. this is where, as Democrats, when — when we were in the headlines in the spring for this stuff, the Trump team was winning because we looked unreasonable and out of control. Now, when the headlines are, you know, massive weaponry knocking on doors, the administration looks out of control. It is — this race to — neither side feels like they can back down.

SPICER: Well, I said this last week and I'll just say it again because this started with our side being all fired up about Minnesota fraud. We were on the high ground. We're going in and then I agree, perception-wise, it didn't look good how it played out, like, in terms of what's going on — on — on television screens in the morning. But I think that this is another this goes back now. This is that moment where does storming a church in the middle of a Sunday service reflect well? And — and again, no one on the Democratic party saying, "hey, this is wrong. Don Lemon's a clown." I haven't heard, you know, is this now going to pinball back the other way?