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### August 26, 2016: The Murder Rate is Down

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Title: The Murder Rate is Down

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8/26/2016—Paul Krugman today in the New York Times criticized Donald Trump for his dystopia. Donald has been going around reaching out to minorities by describing America's cities as unlivable hellholes. He is the law and order candidate. Except, says Krugman, that none of this is true—unlike Donald's earlier claims that there are no manufacturing jobs. Krugman argues that the murder rate (a proxy for violent crime because it is so easy to count) in cities did climb from the 1960's to the 1980's. But after that it dropped and is now back to its earlier-in-the-century rates. Cities are as safe as they have ever been. Good news. But Krugman's larger point is a values point—critics said that the reason crime was up was that Christianity was in decline. You have to restore values, they said. Well, says Krugman, no you don't. For those of us who have been bemoaning nihilism, this raises a question. What does nihilism look like socially? Does nihilism mean that people will go out and kill? That has actually been a criticism of Nietzsche for a long time. See Leopold and Loeb in 1924. Well, maybe nihilism does not look like that. Maybe nihilism looks like our current political dysfunction. Or, maybe it looks like tolerance for gay marriage—not justice, but you-can-do-what-you-want. Maybe nihilism is not so bad. I have to think about all this. One thing looks pretty certain. Organized religion is not headed for a comeback. So, the moral foundations for society will have to come from somewhere else.