



# Get With The Protests

May 25, 2021 By [Shawn Decker](#)

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When the pandemic hit, I was just getting over a long haul Winter cold of some sort. I'd been staying very close to home for about six weeks, and after I started feeling better I managed to get out once or twice before the first COVID-19 "unofficial lockdown" began in March.

It was a scary time. I'm not on social media much, and I prefer to hide in plain sight in recent times. But I couldn't help but think that my experience living through the scary pandemic that is AIDS might be of service to others. Combining that with my synthpop music and a treasure trove of 80s cover tunes that I've amassed over the years, I channeled my creative energy into entertaining friends on Facebook and Instagram, and lifting the spirits of the many healthcare workers that I'm connected to.

I loved doing it. And after being in isolation pre-COVID, I felt like I was a bit ahead of the curve in terms of being cut off from society. For about two months, I'd go Live, in a Mystery Science Theater 3000-inspired space pod, pretending to be floating aimlessly in space while waiting for a safe time to return to Earth. As the threat of COVID-19 became increasingly clear to everyone outside of the most powerful man on the planet at the time, I wasn't quite sure when I'd be able to give up the schtick and come back down to Earth, so to speak.

Then, as I was preparing to step outside of the space pod and do an HIV awareness show to celebrate my survival and mark 30 years to the day since my Make-A-Wish Foundation meeting with Depeche Mode at age 14, the real world came crashing down on all of us.

George Floyd was murdered. All of our lives had already been ground to a halt, and no one with a heart or soul could turn a blind eye to the scourge of racism and police brutality that has been part of the fabric of the United States. One growing tragedy had given the spotlight to another, and I was heartened to see the response in the form of marches and online tributes to George, and everyone else who has been taken from us too soon simply because of the color of their skin.

So, on June 6th, instead of doing an anniversary show I went to my music room for a private moment of solace. Music has gotten me through some dark moments, personally. Whether it was listening to my favorite artists, or just meditating over the creation of a new song. A friend and collaborator who I had worked with years before, Kyle Wiggins, had sent me so music for the first time in ages, so I loaded up one of his demos and starting humming out some vocal melodies. When the first actual words came out, I knew what we had to do.

“We’re so long overdue for a changing of the guard.”

Over the next few months, we turned four of his demos into songs about the need for equality. I wanted my lyrics to be raw and conversational, and I’m proud of what came out of the decision to turn my energy toward the painful and difficult topic that is systemic racism and inhumanely callous brutality, made worse by the indifference and inaction of our society at large. (I’ve posted the lyrics below for anyone who has an allergic reaction to 80s inspired electronic music.)

In November, the EP, titled *Get With the Protests* (by Synthetic Division) was released just before the election. I didn’t do much to promote it, because promotion has a way of killing the heart and soul of a project and there were bigger fish to fry that week. But today feels like a good day to let you know about it. [You can listen to \*Get With the Protests\* and download it for free here](#). And, if you are able to, please consider making a donation to the [Black AIDS Institute](#), or a social justice organization of your choosing.

Positively Yours,  
Shawn

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*Get With the Protests* by Synthetic Division  
(music by Kyle Wiggins and Shawn Decker, lyrics by Shawn Decker)

KEEPING UP

you’ve played pretend

fogged up what’s clear

i’m a culprit

mastered by fear

life’s rich pageant

is so corrupt

we’re contestants

for broken stuff

catching up is slowing down

don’t need to stop to look around

i’ve been lost

you’ve been found

keeping up

is slowing down

if you know me better  
than i think i know myself  
then it would be of great service  
if you could keep it to yourself

pinch my thin skin  
to keep me here  
pinch my thin skin  
but not too rough

## CHANGE

they will never tell you about their crimes  
they will gladly sell you on a lie  
they will never tell you about those crimes  
deny, deny, deny, deny, deny  
did i ever tell you about those times?  
did i, did i, did i, did i, did i?

*we're so long overdue for a changing of the guard  
we're so long overdue for a change*

*deep immersed in fantasy  
we can see no problem  
each assigned identities  
we can see  
each life is a fantasy  
dreaming of no problems  
sleeping on a history  
just re-seeds the problem*

*"wait, right here... right now?"*

*"YIP."*

*"... you can't be serious?"*

*did i ever tell you about those times?*

HEY THERE

*hey there*

*hey there*

*what makes you sad?*

*hey there*

*who me*

*what makes you sad?*

*hey there (who me)*

*what makes you sad?*

*we're just riding the tide here*

*we're just biding our time*

*riding the tide here*

*we're just biding our time*

*hey there (who me)*

*what makes you sad? (REPEAT)*

*won't stand down*

*they won't turn this around*

*better keep chin up*

*as we're pushed to the ground*

*won't stand down*

*they won't turn this around*

*better keep chin up*

*won't stand down...*

*hey there*

*what makes you sad?*

TRY ME

*try me on for size*

*i'll hear your take*

*so true you live a longer day*

*hard work kind words*

*don't see to change a goddamn thing*

*it's not the desired result*

*at least we're not part of their cult*

*just wanted you to know*

*you have my ear*

*and i'll stay right here with you*

*try me on for size i'll hear your take*

*let me emphasize make no mistake*

*try me on for size i'll hear your take*

*don't speak with little sounds*

*don't mourn without a frown*

*don't keep it underground*

*when sadness seems it's here to stay*

*your life your hope's worth more*

*than what's been lost today*