



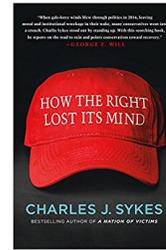
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# AIM REPORT

For Fairness, Balance and Accuracy in News Reporting

October 2017 | XLVI-10

## Why Right After a Shooting is a Terrible Time to Ask for Gun Control

By Brian McNicoll

It's as predictable as night following day. A mass shooting occurs, Democrat politicians rush to the microphones to declare that "this is the time" we push gun control over the top, and their handmaidens in the liberal media eagerly repeat the talking points.

By 10 a.m. the day after the Las Vegas shootings, Hillary Clinton already had begun to tweet about gun control. It wasn't the usual, "This time we act." It was specific. She was calling out the Trump administration for supporting a regulatory change that would have made some sound suppressors legal. Imagine if the shooter had had a "silencer," she said, deliberately using a misleading term to alarm the public.

The scribblers made the usual arguments. We can't become inured to this. We can't accept it. We know the cause, and the cause is guns, and this time we need to stop it. "The 'how' of the tragedy is simple: Our nation is flooded with guns, and the constitutionally protected right to 'keep and bear arms' – established in the age of the single-shot blunderbuss and muskets – has been deemed to include military-style assault rifles and other high-powered weapons," Eugene Robinson wrote in *The Washington Post*.

Followed, as always, by, "No deer hunter or target-shooting enthusiast needs a weapon intended for war zones – a weapon designed and optimized for use by soldiers against enemy forces."

Before getting to what gives him the right to decide what guns others need to hunt, shoot skeet or simply collect, Robinson jumps to another point. He says the 12,000 gun homicides per year have left Americans "emotionally and intellectually numb to this appalling toll."

Then he says, "Newspapers rush to profile the shooter, then the victims. The president makes a statement expressing the nation's grief. Gun-rights advocates pre-emptively declare that this is not the time to talk about gun control, accusing anyone who does so of politicizing tragedy. Gun-control proponents



ask: If not now, then when? Everyone agrees we should do something about mental health, but we end up doing nothing. A long series of funerals ends the ritual."

He actually has it backwards. Gun-control types start suggesting laws first, then opponents tell them this is not the right time. But they persist because they are taught to never let a crisis go to waste.

Only it never works. It didn't work after Orlando or San Bernardino or Roseland or Charleston or Tucson or even Sandy Hook, where 20 of the 27 victims were elementary school children. A more sympathetic group of victims would be difficult to find.

There are a number of theories on why. A piece on NBCnews.com recently said it had to do with who owns guns. About 42 percent of all American households have at least one gun. In white households, it is almost half; in black, about a third, in Hispanic, about a fifth.

But in the Midwest, West and South, about 45 percent of homes have a gun; on the more populous (and gun control-friendly) East Coast, it is about 27 percent. Among urban households, 29 percent own a gun, compared to 41 percent in the suburbs and 58 percent in the rural hunting areas.

In other words, guns are much more prevalent in the pro-Trump, pro-hunting, pro-conservative, pro-individual freedom parts of the country and less in the urban centers on the

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# AIM

in the News

AIM CEO **Don Irvine** spoke at the first in a series of planned annual Amm-Con seminars sponsored by the Second Amendment Foundation in Dallas, Texas last month. **Irvine's** topic was "Why It's Important to Get it Right the First Time." He focused on the lack of ethics in journalism which has given rise to the flood of fake news we see today, and encouraged the bloggers and podcasters in attendance to be honest and accurate in their reporting on Second Amendment issues, since the news media, he pointed out, will gladly pounce on the slightest error.

**Irvine** also addressed the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Gun Rights Policy Conference in Dallas where he spoke about "Using New Media to Advance Gun Rights." He told the audience that using live video on platforms such as Facebook, Periscope and YouTube would be an easy and effective way to get their message across as well as podcasting, which has exploded in recent years.



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*Please remember AIM in your will.*

## Editor's Message



### Predictable Stories

Dear Fellow Media Watchdogs:

There's nothing as reliable as mainstream media leaping on stories of Republican infighting. A member of the GOP breaking the Reagan Rule against criticizing fellow party members is the political press's equivalent of "if it bleeds, it leads."

The story in the AIM Report talks about a book that frames an intraparty battle the Post promoted as "conservatives v. crackpotism." As long as Washington stays within the usual debate, parameters the stalemate continues and conservative ideas never get enacted. But a President Trump comes along and shatters the old alignments, and both sides find plenty to be concerned about.

The same thing is happening in Congress. Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee and Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona both have announced recently that a.) they're not running for re-election after announcing previously they would; and b.) Trump is very bad for America. The truth is both were having trouble raising money and support because they were seen as opponents of the president.

Others who feared moving into the crosshairs of the Trump-Bannon coalition that is seeking to remake Washington with Trump-aligned conservatives have scurried back into line.

That's not what the press wants to hear. The press wants to hear about how this means there is dangerous and crippling discord in the party that controls the White House, both houses of Congress, 37 statehouses and 68 of 99 state legislative bodies.

So its headlines talk of dark and dire warnings and a revolt by the establishment. The establishment may as well revolt. It's not wanted in the Republican Party anymore, and with more than 90 percent of Republicans backing Trump, that's not likely to change anytime soon.

It's working. Trump is building perhaps the most dominant political brand in Washington in many a year. There is no way the mainstream media can let that story get out.

In a way, the same goes for the gun control debate. The narrative after each mass shooting is "This time Americans are fed up and ready to change the laws." But the solutions offered – more extensive background checks, closing the so-called gun show loophole – don't at all match the problems presented by the shooters.

It may be a more effective strategy for the gun control people to indeed let a crisis go to waste. But it's unlikely they'll ever try it. •

For Accuracy in Media

Brian McNicoll

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coasts. Indeed, 56 percent of Republican households have guns, compared to 30 percent of Democrats.

Moreover, the story pointed out, the pro-gun side cares more. Among Republicans, 45 percent say gun laws are “important enough to you to have an impact on how you vote in an election.” That’s more than immigration (36 percent) or abortion (26 percent). Only 29 percent of Democrats rated “gun rights or gun control” as having that level of importance to them.

But that’s only part of it. Another part is that the media come at this all wrong. Take the shooter in Las Vegas. He had 23 guns in his room. He had cameras installed to watch the hallway outside. He had tripods in two windows to support his weapons. He had math

calculations on his bed where he tried to determine the angle of descent of the bullets he was firing.

Hillary comes out with something about silencers, which had nothing to do with the Las Vegas shooting. Editorials in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Chicago Tribune* all supported various ideas for tightening the loophole at gun shows and requiring more documentation of sales among friends and relatives and background checks for gun buyers.

Only, it is quickly pointed out that these measures have nothing to do with stopping this shooter. The guns owned by the shooter in Vegas were legal, as were the guns owned by Omar Mateen in Orlando and Adam Lanza in Connecticut. Lanza was even taking

shooting classes.

The measures aren’t even aimed at these types of shooters. They are more appropriate for stopping gangs and straw purchasers, few of whom become mass shooters. That’s why a measure outlawing bump stocks – the devices that converted the Las Vegas shooter’s gun into effectively an automatic weapon – might pass but the other bills probably won’t even be introduced.

Perhaps the answer for the gun grabbing media is to quit trying to take advantage of every tragedy. Quit blasting a legislative package that has nothing to do with the events at hand. Discuss it when people aren’t mourning loved ones. Otherwise, prepare to live with never getting any results. •

## Trump Says He’s ‘Surprised’ by Dishonesty in Media

By Don Irvine



President Trump recently said that one of the things that surprised him the most after he took office was the “dishonesty in the media,” calling CNN “a joke” and NBC “a total joke.”

Trump spoke with WMAL radio host Chris Plante at the White House as part of the administration’s effort to push for tax reform.

“Actually, dishonesty in the media is one of the things that surprised me the most. I thought after I won, the media would become much more stable and much more honest. They’ve gone crazy. CNN is a joke. NBC is a total joke. You watch what they report, it bears no relationship to what I’m doing. But the media are absolutely dishonest and frankly, I’ve never seen anything quite like it.”

Trump also mentioned that the media has an agenda.

“The *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, they write whatever they want to write. You know they have an agenda, we’ll have to figure out what their agenda is, but they do have an agenda.”

The media are probably not surprised

that Trump has chosen to fight back rather than allowing them to filter the news as they have been doing for decades. •

## HuffPo Calls Out Rachel Maddow for Niger Conspiracy Theory

By Don Irvine

Rachel Maddow, whose anti-Trump tirades have propelled her show to the top of the ratings rankings, went a little too far for the HuffPost, which said her latest conspiracy theory “was so flimsy that it could be debunked by a quick glance at a map.”

Maddow recently spent 25 minutes tying the ambush that killed four Green Berets in Niger to the inclusion of Chad in President Trump’s latest travel ban.

Maddow tried to make the case that Chad withdrew its troops from Niger as a direct result of the travel ban and that the pullout “had an immediate effect in emboldening ISIS attacks.”

Colby College Department of Government assistant professor Laura Seay told the HuffPost that “any expert” would have said that Maddow’s theory about Chadian troops battling ISIS was “crazy” and that everyone she knew was “appalled” by it.

While Maddow called the attack “absolutely baffling,” Seay said it was actually “almost inevitable,” because even though American special forces are

operating in an “advise-and-assist role,” they are on patrol with local military and wind up in the line of fire.

Andrew Lebovich, a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, told HuffPost that violence in this area and nearby areas has been increasing for more than a year and that the overall security situation has been getting worse.

The Rachel Maddow Show declined to comment to HuffPost, but Maddow addressed the situation on her show that aired on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>.

“Over the course of the day today, lots of people have been very upset with me for reporting that last night, which is fine. I didn’t know you cared. But the upset over my reporting doesn’t mean that anything I reported wasn’t true,” Maddow said. “Everything I reported was true.”

“Now, this doesn’t mean that Chad withdrawing their troops was necessarily the cause of what happened to those U.S. troops who were ambushed. That ambush is being described by the Pentagon as a shock.”

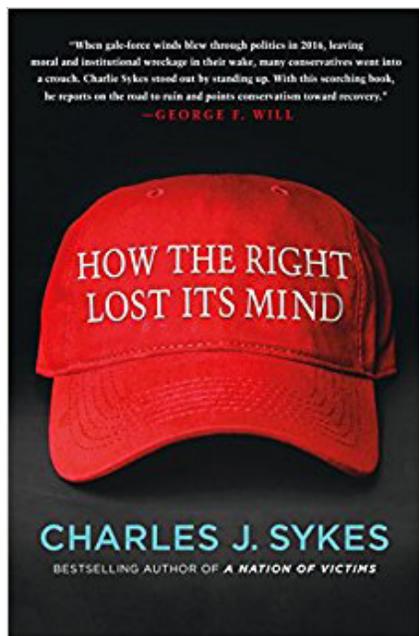
What’s a real shock is that a liberal called Maddow out for her nonsensical conspiracy theory.

“Maddow reduced the story so thoroughly that it lost any semblance of the larger truth,” HuffPost writer Willa Frej said.

As President Trump would say, more evidence of “fake news.”

## WaPo Digs Up Another R(epublican)-Rated Trump-Hating Book To Review

By Brian McNicoll



One thing that keeps the mainstream media up nights is their eternal search for Republicans willing to say bad things on the record about other Republicans.

Such was the case when *The Washington Post* devoted some of the most valuable real estate in the world of opinion journalism to a review of a book by Charles Sykes.

He has written a book called *How the Right Lost Its Mind*, which the Post promoted as “Conservatives vs. ‘crackpotism’” and “like ‘What Happened,’ but for conservatives,” referring to Hillary Clinton’s new book that gives her explanation for how President Trump won last November.

This is not “like ‘What Happened’ for conservatives” at all. Clinton was the candidate. She could not have been more involved with the inner workings of the campaign. And she has sold a lot of books to people who are curious to see what and who she blames.

Sykes is a Wisconsin radio yakker and devout neverTrumper who once called Trump “a cartoon version of every leftist/media negative stereotype of the reactionary, nativist, misogynist right.”

He had then-candidate Donald Trump on his show in mid-March 2016 to berate him for his role in the dustup involving his wife and the wife of Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, then also a candidate.

Then, two weeks later, he had Trump back to batter him for his alleged poor treatment of women.

The Post’s Carlos Lozada quickly revealed whose side he was on. “The culprits (culprits? Were culprits ever mentioned with regard to President Obama’s election?) are not James Comey, Vladimir Putin or a reality television opponent, but the return of ‘crackpotism’ on the right; the fecklessness of conservative media, political and religious figures; and the rise of a distorted worldview in which Trump’s overwhelming character flaws mattered little to a base that behaved as though civilization was in play in his election.”

In other words, the 84 percent of the party that controls both houses of Congress who supported Trump have a “distorted worldview” that this was the last best chance to save America as they knew it.

He then quotes Sykes from the book, saying the election marked “the abandonment of respect for gradualism, civility, expertise, intelligence, and prudence – the values that were once taken for granted among conservatives.”

It is barely possible that conservatives got tired of waiting for gradualism, civility and prudence to deliver results, recognized the politicization of the professions that formerly brought expertise and intelligence to the table and decided to try something new. It also is possible some of the policies that defined conservatism in the last 20 years – free trade, lip service on immigration to keep labor costs down, a lower international profile – no longer inspire voters, and Trump and others adjusted.

Much of the rest amounts to a clichéd attack that could have been levied by any Democrat, or any playground wag for that matter, at any moment for any reason. Today, despite being in control of 37 state governments, both houses of Congress and the White House, “conservatives will need something very different – an exorcism of the forces that have possessed and, ultimately, distorted conservatism,” the book says in one passage.

Trump has “coarsened the culture as a whole.” Conservatives have “tolerated the ruminations of Pat Robertson,” whom

he calls “Christianity’s crazy uncle.” Republicans and conservatives are “not pushing back hard enough against the crackpots.”

And where did all these freshly minted crackpots come from? John McCain picking Sarah Palin as his running mate; Drudge linking to InfoWars, Heritage Action for America being formed and serial pedophilia defender Milo Yiannopoulos.

And, of course, Rush Limbaugh. “Few figures in the Right’s media ecosystem did more to enable the billionaire’s rise,” Sykes wrote. “With his audience aging and shrinking, the reality from a business perspective was that Limbaugh could simply not afford to stand against the populist tide.”

Lozada then shows how he might arrive at conclusions that don’t measure up. “Sykes’ perch as a former popular radio personality should give him an insider’s perspective into the travails of the conservative movement, yet the book feels oddly distant.”

Why should it give him an insider’s perspective? He goes to work in Wisconsin every day, talks into a microphone for four hours, then leaves. Who does he see? Who does he talk to? What does he experience that gives him all these insights?

These details are key to establishing the insider bona fides needed to take this book seriously. Otherwise, it’s not hard to see how it feels oddly distant. •

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