



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 7, 2011

Published in the issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 27, No. 03

## Tragic Response to a Tragedy

After the mass shooting in Tucson, Arizona, left six dead and more than a dozen wounded, including Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.), the politicization of the tragedy began immediately. And despite an absence of much concrete information on the motives of the shooter — who at this point appears to be an extremely disturbed young man — efforts to demonize the Second Amendment, free speech, and conservatives in general have truly taken flight.



AP Images

News reports immediately following the shooting pointed out over and over again that Rep. Giffords' office was vandalized in connection with her vote for ObamaCare. She was also one of the politicians targeted for defeat by former vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin on a website using an image of crosshairs, a fact which has been parroted in countless media stories about the attack. Tea Party efforts to replace the Congresswoman also received a great deal of publicity, as if those were somehow related to the shooting.

Despite the lack of any connection whatsoever between accused shooter Jared Lee Loughner and the Tea Party or even the conservative movement, the seed was already planted early and firmly in people's minds. The disingenuous link was so pervasive in media coverage of the tragedy that one of the victims — a liberal activist who was widely quoted in major media including the *New York Times* demonizing conservatives — even screamed "you're dead" at a Tea Party spokesman during a town-hall meeting. And that was more than a week after the attack.

## Quick on the Draw

The outrageous politicization of the shooting began — literally — right after it happened. An Associated Press story published the same day claimed that the shooting had "left Americans questioning whether divisive politics had pushed the suspect [Loughner] over the edge." Later on in the same story, the AP, for no apparent reason, alleged: "It is not clear whether the gunman had the health care debate in mind." The piece also referenced a narrow electoral battle between the Congresswoman and a Tea Party candidate who raised campaign funds with — gasp! — target-shooting events. It turns out that none of the wild speculation was relevant at all, under any circumstances. But no correction or apology has been issued.

The *New York Times* pounced on the non-existent connection immediately as well — with an article on the front page the very next day with a headline that read, "Bloodshed Puts New Focus on Vitriol in Politics." *Times* columnist Paul Krugman was quick to hop on it as well. "We don't have proof yet that this was political, but the odds are that it was," he claimed the day of the shooting. "And for those wondering why a Blue Dog Democrat, the kind Republicans might be able to work with, might be a target, the answer is that she's a Democrat who survived what was otherwise a GOP sweep in Arizona,



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 7, 2011

Published in the issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 27, No. 03

precisely because the Republicans nominated a Tea Party activist," he wrote. At the same time, he took the opportunity to link opposition to ObamaCare to the Oklahoma City bombing: "Just yesterday, Ezra Klein remarked that opposition to health reform was getting scary. Actually, it's been scary for quite a while, in a way that already reminded many of us of the climate that preceded the Oklahoma City bombing." Of course, Krugman was dead wrong about Loughner, but still no apology or retraction from him yet, either.



**Leftist website DailyKos** and its founder were among the first to blame conservatives and Sarah Palin for the tragedy, despite the site's past use of inflammatory language to "target" Rep. Giffords.

Television coverage was similar. In a report on Fox News, for example, the Washington correspondent made sure to demonize allegedly lax gun-control laws, even though current law already prohibits the possession of firearms by illegal drug users. (Loughner was arrested for drug paraphernalia and reportedly used various mind-altering substances.) The Fox reporter also implied — like the rest of the media — that the tragedy would rightly revive the debate on gun control in America, wondering aloud how the law could possibly have allowed Loughner to purchase a gun. Leftist MSNBC personality Keith Olbermann also hysterically attacked guns and rhetoric in a "special comment" segment, saying, in part, "The rhetoric has devolved and descended past the ugly, and past the threatening, and past the fantastic, and into the imminently murderous." Less than two hours after the tragedy, CNN had already found a talking head to put on who claimed the tragedy was "inevitable" due to Arizona's gun laws and because "the Right in Arizona, and I'm speaking very broadly, has been stoking the fires of a heated anger and rage successfully in this state." Every network TV station joined in the demonization.

Leftist Internet media was also busy hate mongering and pointing fingers at conservatives. Referencing threats that were made against Arizona's top federal judge, who was among those killed in Saturday's attack, popular leftist website DailyKos wrote that "his story is instructive of the increasingly — and obviously — dangerous and violent rhetoric of the far right, fueled by hate radio and rightwing media." (Maybe that website missed the fact that Judge Roll was a life-long Republican, appointed by George H.W. Bush, who was almost universally considered conservative.) The founder of the website, Markos Moulitsas, sent out a message reading "Mission accomplished, Sarah Palin" shortly after the attack, referring to her targeting of Giffords for defeat last election.



## Hyper Hypocrisy

Ironically, the same website had also placed Rep. Giffords on a “target list” — in bold letters — for supposedly being a “blue dog” Democrat, exemplified by her tepid support for gun rights and tougher border control. The day before the shooting, a DailyKos writer even published an article about Giffords headlined: “My CongressWOMAN voted against Nancy Pelosi! And is now DEAD to me!” Some right-of-center commentators have suggested the piece might be “evidence” in the shooting case, but what is certain is that the leftist site’s hysterical blaming of conservatives for the tragedy is at least misplaced and hypocritical. In fact, the Media Research Center has extensively documented the fact that leftist media uses violent metaphors and language far more hateful and often than the so-called “conservative” media. Yet the vilification of right-wing “rhetoric” continued unabated.

Even some law enforcers joined in attacking conservatives. Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik — responsible for Tucson — for example, was the most outrageous. Instead of discussing the numerous death threats Loughner reportedly made that had previously attracted the attention of his office, or even the facts in the case, Sheriff Dupnik tried to link “anti-government” rhetoric to the tragedy. “When you look at unbalanced people, how they respond to the vitriol that comes out of certain mouths about tearing down the government — the anger, the hatred, the bigotry that goes on in this country is getting to be outrageous,” he was quoted as saying. “And unfortunately, Arizona, I think, has become the capital. We have become the Mecca for prejudice and bigotry.”

Politicians from all over the political spectrum condemned the attack and offered condolences and prayers for the victims. But like the media and Sheriff Dupnik, at least some were already making the rounds trying to politicize the murders before anything was even known. State Senator Linda Lopez, for example, went on Fox News to point blame at the Tea Party. She said the Congresswoman had been threatened by right-wing activists and that the shooter was an Afghanistan veteran, an allegation disputed by the U.S. Army and since debunked.

But while establishment news organs and opportunists attempted to paint the shooter as a Tea Party-type ideologue — criticizing Sarah Palin and others for their “rhetoric” — the truth is far more complex. A YouTube account believed to belong to Loughner, for example, lists his favorite books as the *Communist Manifesto* and *Mein Kampf*, a book by Nazi (National Socialist) leader Adolf Hitler, among others.

## Way Out There

A cryptic video that was uploaded before the shooting regarding Loughner’s “Final Thoughts” is hard to make sense of. But it is also revealing. In it, the alleged shooter discusses the creation of new languages and currencies, government mind control enforced through grammar rules, sleepwalking, dreaming, the definition of terrorism, and more. He appeared to have an extreme obsession with government mind control and brainwashing. “All conscience dreaming at this moment is asleep,” read the white letters against a black background in the video he supposedly posted. “Jared Loughner is conscience dreaming at this moment. Thus, Jared Loughner is asleep.”

After offering a fairly standard definition of terrorism, Loughner incoherently disputes the notion that he should be classified as such. “If you call me a terrorist then the argument to call me a terrorist is Ad hominem,” noted the text. “You call me a terrorist. Thus, the argument to call me a terrorist is Ad



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 7, 2011

Published in the issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 27, No. 03

---

hominem.”

The video also discusses government-issued Bibles to military recruits in the Phoenix area. “Every United States Military recruit at MEPS in Phoenix is receiving one mini bible before the tests,” the video claimed. “Jared Loughner is a United States Military recruit at MEPS in Phoenix. Therefore Jared Loughner is receiving one mini bible before the tests.” He also noted that he did not identify a “belief” on his Army application and that “the recruiter wrote on the application: None.” He was reportedly rejected as a recruit candidate due to excessive drug use.

Later on in the same video, Loughner seems to advocate collectivist revolution against property owners and authorities. “If the property owners and government officials are no longer in ownership of their land and laws from a revolution then the revolutionary’s from the revolution are in control of the land and laws,” he wrote. “The property owners and government officials are no longer in ownership of their land and laws from a revolution. Thus, the revolutionary’s from the revolution are in control of the land and laws [sic].”



**Sarah Palin** was one of the first political personalities blamed for the tragedy by media leftists, largely due to the metaphorical use of crosshairs over congressional districts she hoped to turn Republican. Death threats to Palin have spiked since she was blamed for Arizona. *(Photo credit: AP Images)*

He blasted the idea of trusting in God as well, writing “No! I won’t trust in God!” A bizarre shrine found in his back yard featured occultist symbols and even a replica of a human skull — hardly a staple of the largely Christian Tea Party.

A MySpace social-networking account linked to the shooter, taken down minutes after Loughner was identified, reportedly included recent posts reading “Goodbye friends” and “Please don’t be mad at me.” A YouTube video recommended by Loughner featured somebody dressed in an odd costume burning an American flag to raging lyrics like “let the bodies hit the floor.”

A woman claiming to have gone to school and played in a band with the shooter wrote a series of messages on the social-networking site Twitter after the attack that has attracted a great deal of publicity. She claimed, much to the dismay of those attempting to demonize conservatives, that Loughner was a leftist. “As I knew him he was left wing, quite liberal,” wrote Caitie Parker, noting that the shooter was also “oddly obsessed with the 2012 prophecy.” Parker described her former schoolmate, who is now 22, as a very philosophical “pot head” loner who enjoyed rock music. She also





Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 7, 2011

Published in the issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 27, No. 03

---

noted that he was popular until an episode of alcohol poisoning in 2006, after which he dropped out of school. From there, according to numerous reports, Loughner's descent into apparent madness accelerated: countless run-ins with campus police and law enforcement, extremely erratic behavior that continued to become more pronounced, some cryptic final goodbyes, and finally, the massacre.

"They're jumping to this conclusion that it has to do with the hotly contested Congressional race," said Pima County Tea Party Patriots founder Allyson Miller in an interview with Talking Points Memo. "Well, apparently, from what I've seen so far ... it's looking like that's not the case." And she was correct — so far, no evidence whatsoever has been produced by anyone, even circumstantial, associating Loughner with the Tea Party.

There were a few analysts in the left-wing media who suggested a more plausible scenario than right-wing rhetoric as the cause of the shooting. "I am a licensed psychologist ... from afar, and am not in the position to diagnose Mr. Loughner," wrote Jeff Kaye in a piece for a blog called Fire Dog Lake, one of the first leftist Internet outlets to politicize the tragedy. "However, one can make some initial impressionistic comments based upon the video content he posted on YouTube." Kaye speculated that Loughner could suffer from schizophrenia or a variety of other mental illnesses. "There are also indications of a sense of multiple internal selves, or a dissociated kind of experience ('conscience dreaming') that may also mean he had dissociated personality as well," Kaye wrote. "I would caution against implying any politics to someone who appears so disturbed, as his interpretation of political symbols and phrases are interpreted in a highly idiosyncratic and irrational way," he added.

But even for the thinking leftists, it really came down to a lower chance that right-wing rhetoric was to blame. The left-wing psychologist didn't rule out anti-government rhetoric or stop short of trying to politicize the tragedy: "However, if he were susceptible to violence, then the targets available by the given society, i.e., the rhetoric out there in the society, would have pointed him towards liberals, leftists, Muslims, or other minorities, and that kind of rhetoric has mainly been from the right-wing, as has been copiously commented upon."

According to news reports, police were looking for a possible second suspect connected to the attack. That man, reportedly the taxi driver who drove Jared Loughner to the crime scene, has since been cleared by the Sheriff's office. Loughner is already in custody, reportedly refusing to talk, facing numerous federal charges of murder and attempted murder of federal employees and more. State charges will likely follow, but the Federal Bureau of Investigation took over the investigation soon after the tragedy.

But as the courts and criminal justice system (and possibly the mental health system) deal with Loughner, America is dealing with the fallout of media personalities' and politicians' insistence that government needs more power and Americans need fewer rights. So, it is important that people who value freedom continue to stand up for the God-given rights enshrined in the Constitution — especially in the First and Second Amendments. Polls taken after the tragedy show that most people do not blame "rhetoric" for the tragedy. But at least two separate polls claim that over 30 percent of Americans do hold political commentary at least partly responsible.

Tightening gun laws even more has also been a prominent topic in commentary about the attack. But again, facts show stricter regulation of guns is not the answer. As noted by commentators, Mexico, which maintains a strict ban on civilian firearm ownership, has an astronomically higher rate than the



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 7, 2011

Published in the issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 27, No. 03

---

United States of politicians, civilians, judges, and law-enforcement personnel being targeted for kidnapping, assassinations, and even beheadings. In fact, it has become a regular part of life in Mexico. Opportunists' efforts to link the Second Amendment to the shooting, therefore, should clearly be seen as disingenuous.

Efforts to benefit politically from a tragedy such as this one, especially by distorting the truth, should be strongly condemned by everyone — it's simply outrageous that in the wake of a tragedy, anti-freedom activists should attempt to score political points. The facts are still not yet all in, but from what is known so far, neither guns nor the Tea Party and its rhetoric were responsible for this tragedy — a sick individual was.



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.