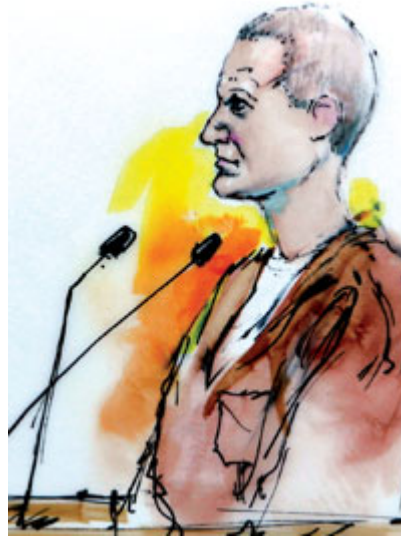




## The Lost Man Behind the Leftist Myth

To be frank, any exposition upon Arizona murderer Jared Lee Loughner's life must start with a certain acknowledgment: He is not a sane man. I don't mean this figuratively in the way public officials might use metaphor, such as when Barack Obama spoke of bringing a gun to a fight with Republicans (language against which his party now rails). No, if Loughner is not authentically insane, it's hard to imagine who is.



Loughner's derangement hit America like a jackhammer on that fateful Saturday, January 8, when he shot Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and others, leaving six dead and 14 wounded. But it had long been apparent to those who knew him — and few knew him very long.

And in recent times, knowing him long wasn't necessary to understand that his mind had gone terribly awry, as now well-known Internet postings attest. For instance, Loughner posted a YouTube video entitled "Introduction" in which he presents a series of bizarre syllogisms such as:

- If B.C.E. years are unable to start then A.D.E. years are unable to begin
- B.C.E. years are unable to start.
- Thus, A.D.E. years are unable to begin.

All the other syllogisms in the video are similarly bizarre and devoid of any rational message.

He didn't hide his irrationality well, either, impressing many around him as a potentially violent individual. This caused him to be suspended from a school he attended from 2005 through fall 2010, Pima Community College (PCC), and prohibited from returning unless a mental-health evaluation indicated that he posed no danger. Attesting to this behavior, third-year PCC instructor Ben McGahee reported, writes the *Washington Post*, "On his first day in class ... Loughner yelled out a random number during a lesson, then asked the instructor a strange question. 'How can you deny math instead of accepting it?'" McGahee feared Loughner, saying, "When I turned my back to write on the board, I would always turn back quickly — to see if he had a gun."

Echoing this is Lynda Sorenson, 52, another McGahee student. She said there was "never a time ... that he [Loughner] was not disruptive" and that she was afraid he'd bring a firearm to class. She said, writes the *Post*, "her only previous contact with someone like that came at [sic] time when she was working in a psychiatric hospital."

The police, too, knew Loughner, having often visited his home, "contacts that ranged from petty



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nuisance complaints to a drug arrest,” writes Fox News. And last year alone he had five contacts with PCC campus police for code-of-conduct violations, run-ins that ended with his aforementioned suspension.

When did all these problems begin? It’s hard to know exactly, but serious issues already had become apparent during his attendance at Mountain View High School (MVHS). Caitie Parker, who attended MVHS and college and played in a band with Loughner, said he had many friends “until he got alcohol poisoning in ’06.” She was referring to an incident so grave that Loughner had to be hospitalized and almost died and after which he dropped out of MVHS. Zach Osler, another MVHS schoolmate and once Loughner’s closest friend, added detail on the January 12 edition of *Good Morning America*. He said that Loughner changed after his girlfriend left him, becoming increasingly angry and commencing abuse of alcohol and drugs — including a hallucinogen called Salvia. Incidentally, this may relate to Loughner’s insanity, as some theorize that drug use can induce schizophrenia in susceptible individuals. And based on what I know about the condition — note that it usually manifests itself during young adulthood (Loughner is 22) — I think the likelihood is great that he’ll be thus diagnosed.

However Loughner’s problems began, we know the tragic ending. He gathered his Glock pistol, bought ammunition, took a cab to the Tucson Safeway outside of which Gabrielle Giffords was appearing, and, Zach Osler says, shot at that thing he was most angry at: “the world.”

And Giffords’ misfortune was being in his world. She did not have, as some suppose, the “wrong” ideology in Loughner’s eyes. He’d long viewed her as a “fake,” and this dislike intensified in 2007 when he appeared at one of her events and asked the nonsensical question, “What is government if words have no meaning?” Moderate Democrat Giffords’ answer displeased him, but one offered by a socialist or a conservative Christian would have also. When you get on an insane person’s radar screen, you always have the wrong ideology.

As for Loughner’s ideology, I wrote recently that “examining [his] political motivations is much like discussing a man who jumped off a roof because he thought he was a bird and pondering how his grasp of aeronautics might have influenced his decision.” But this hasn’t stopped point-scoring politicians and pundits from blaming his actions on Tea Parties and talk radio. Now, this is silly beyond words. Nonetheless, I’ll pick up the gauntlet: If we must characterize a profoundly abnormal man in a preposterously normal way, it’s more accurate to say that Loughner was molded by the Left.

Let’s first address the onus placed on talk radio. There is something oft-forgotten in the Punditsphere: The media world is not the whole world. Media types, whether producers or consumers, operate in a certain universe, and they sometimes forget that those beyond it are often blithely unaware of the names, faces, and places familiar within it. But the sad fact is, many people wouldn’t read a piece of commentary if it were pasted to a stripper.

This disconnect is even more extreme among the young. What percentage of youth even know who Michael Savage, Rush Limbaugh, or Glenn Beck is? (Note: “Talk” is the primary format of only three percent of radio stations, and Loughner’s 18 to 24-year-old age bracket constitutes *only three percent of Talk’s listeners*.) And Loughner was typical in this respect. As Zach Osler said in the earlier-cited interview, “He did not watch TV. He disliked the news. He didn’t listen to political radio.” Loughner was no budding Limbaugh.

Yet Osler also said, “He didn’t take sides. He wasn’t on the left. He wasn’t on the right.” So, in claiming leftist influence in Loughner’s case, am I as biased as those I seek to refute?



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Since everyone has opinions, everyone has a totality of opinions: an ideology. And opinions tend to be shaped by environment. But what shapes environment today? Well, consider that to find right-wing influence, you have to seek it; left-wing influence seeks you. It is today's default. Leftists control the schools and colleges, create the movies and shows youths watch and the music they listen to. And whatever news and documentaries the young are exposed to (e.g., Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* in class) are also almost invariably products of the Left. The young needn't scour radio dials to find liberalism; they are born into it.

The inconvenient truth here is that Loughner wasn't attending Bible classes or Tea Parties. Oh, his views were eclectic, and his reading list ranged from *Peter Pan* to Ayn Rand to *The Communist Manifesto*. But the preponderance of the evidence points to a left-wing foundation. Loughner burned the flag and cast the United States as a terrorist nation. He was a Christophobic atheist who created a satanic altar in his backyard, and one of his favorite bands was the radical leftist punk-rock band Anti-Flag. Moreover, aforementioned ex-classmate Caitie Parker characterized Loughner as "left wing," a "political radical," and a "pot head." Lastly, there is Loughner acquaintance Zane Gutierrez, whom the *New York Times* quotes as saying, "Jared felt nothing existed but his subconscious." Now, if you had to give such solipsism a Left or Right label, which would it be?

Having said this, the above is much ado about the ideology of an insane man, only significant insofar as understanding that our crazy leftist-crafted culture can breed insane men. Whatever Jared Lee Loughner once was or could have been, he is now thoroughly twisted and totally immersed in a world inaccessible to those beyond the only thing he believes exists: his own mind. And thinking he could be a poster boy for gun or speech control is perhaps the only thing crazier than Loughner himself.

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