



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on January 24, 2019

## Covington's 16-year-old Sandmann Rebuts Media Smear Artists in NBC Interview

"Do you feel, from this experience, that you owe anybody an apology? Do you see your own fault in any way?" Those were the opening questions from NBC *Today* show co-host Savannah Guthrie, in her hardball grilling of 16-year-old Nick Sandmann that aired Wednesday. Sandmann, who is a junior at Kentucky's Covington Catholic High School, is the victim of a Fake News/social media lynching that egregiously violated not only the basics of journalistic due diligence but all the basics of decency, fairness, and ethics as well. In Sandmann's first national interview, NBC's Guthrie seemed intent on continuing to cast him — rather than "Indigenous activist" Nathan Phillips — as the aggressor, in what Guthrie characterized as an "infamous encounter with a Native American elder."



Guthrie asked Sandmann, "Why didn't you walk away?" when Phillips began beating a drum in his face. And she suggested further that "there's something aggressive about standing there, standing your ground." In addition, her questioning suggested that Sandmann and his classmates might be responsible for triggering the "infamous encounter" because they were wearing red, pro-Trump "Make America Great Again" caps. Moreover, she showed she was going to side with the politically correct narrative by pressing Sandmann to explain why he smiled during the ordeal, an expression that his attackers insist on interpreting as a disrespectful "smirk."

Nicholas "Nick" Sandmann, through no intention or planning of his own, suddenly became the face of "racism," "white privilege," "aggression," "hate," "disrespect," and more — all for standing peacefully and smiling in the face of aggression by adult bullies. Disregarding easily available video evidence and the testimony of witnesses, the Fake News media rushed *en masse* to present a false and inflammatory story that quickly went global. Sandmann and his fellow classmates had come to Washington, D.C., for the 47th annual March for Life to voice their stand against the violence of abortion on pre-born children. Unexpectedly, they found themselves victims of a media flash mob that presented them to the world as vicious delinquents.

So, in justice, Guthrie might have opened the program with an apology of her own — for NBC and for all their Fake News brethren that participated in this defamatory attack on Sandmann and Covington Catholic High School. Instead, Guthrie and NBC doubled down and did everything possible to salvage their tattered (or non-existent) credibility by attempting to force Sandmann to say that he was at fault, and cause him to cave, cower, whimper, and beg forgiveness for some perceived crime of which he was



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not guilty. (*The New American's* Selwyn Duke wrote an excellent analysis of the media melee over the Sandmann/Covington/Phillips incident, with videos embedded, [here](#).)

To his immense credit, Nick Sandmann demonstrated extraordinary calm and composure in the face of this one-sided inquiry. His answers to Guthrie's leading and antagonistic questions showed a young man who is intelligent, articulate, sensitive, thoughtful, and humble — and yet, incredibly courageous. Leftist agitators love to quote the "speaking truth to power" trope — and the establishment media are ever ready to present leftist agitators as courageous truth speakers. In this instance, under what had to have been very stressful and intimidating circumstances, the young Mr. Sandmann displayed how to genuinely speak truth to power.

As noted above, Guthrie opens the interview with two questions aimed at reinforcing the false narrative: "Do you feel, from this experience, that you owe anybody an apology?"; and: "Do you see your own fault in any way?"

"As far as standing there, I had every right to do so," Sandmann calmly stated. "I don't — my position is that I was not disrespectful to Mr. Phillips. I respect him; I'd like to talk to him. I mean, in hindsight I wish we could have walked away and avoided the whole thing, but I can't say that I'm sorry for listening to him and standing there."

NBC apparently felt they couldn't get around showing an important part of the incident that was conveniently omitted in most of the earlier media smears. It involves video footage showing the profanity-laced, aggressive taunting of the Covington students by members of the Black Hebrew Israelites, a radical, militant organization that includes branches that have [engaged in racial terrorism, torture, and murder](#).

Most of the initial coverage smearing the students censored the involvement of the aggressive Black Hebrew Israelite antagonists. This omission, obviously, changes the context of the event. Hear is some of the exchange in the NBC interview:

SANDMANN: They started shouting, you know, a bunch of homophobic, racist, derogatory comments at us.

GUTHRIE: What kinds of things did you hear them say?

SANDMANN: I heard them call us incest kids, bigots, racists, they called us [bleep].

NBC then rolled video that is widely available on the Internet, in which one of the Black Hebrew Israelite men is shouting at the Covington students, calling them "A bunch of incest babies. A bunch of child molesting [bleep]."

Guthrie asks, "Did you feel threatened at all?" Sandmann responded: "I definitely felt threatened." Guthrie's follow-up question suggests she doesn't see why he might feel threatened. "There were more of you than them, but you felt like they were stronger?," she asked. "They were a group of adults and I wasn't sure what was gonna happen next," Sandmann answered.

Guthrie then drops into the "objective reporter" mode, feigning inability to decide who is at fault. "It's unclear from the video who actually started the confrontation," she says. "Each side believes it was the first to be taunted. Sandmann [says] his chaperone gave students permission to shout school chants, an attempt, he says, to drown out the Hebrew Israelites."

Yes, the same media sharks who rushed to find fault with, and tear apart, a whole group of youngsters, now profess to be unable to determine any fault. Here's more:



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GUTHRIE: Do you think it was a good idea to start chanting back at the protesters?... Did anyone shout any insults back or any racial slurs back at the group?

SANDMANN: We're a Catholic school and it's not tolerated. They don't tolerate racism, and none of my classmates are racist people.

GUTHRIE: Did anyone say, "Build the wall"?

SANDMANN: I never heard anyone say "Build the wall" and I don't think I've seen it in any videos.

Guthrie then acknowledges that "After a review of the videos, NBC News could not hear anyone shouting that hot-button phrase, but Nathan Phillips claims he heard the teens shout, 'Build the wall.'" Perhaps she should subject Phillips to the same kind of grilling that Sandmann received, rather than the sympathetic media promotionals that have greeted Phillips. Perhaps she could also clarify why the alleged "Build the wall" statement even matters. Are Guthrie and NBC suggesting that if a Covington student had shouted that short sentence then Phillips' behavior was totally justified? Are we to take from this that Guthrie/NBC view the First Amendment's protection of the right to free expression must yield to the aggressive objections of those who disagree?

NBC's Guthrie continues to promote Phillips' version of the event, appearing to give credence to his claim that he was being a peacemaker, trying to "defuse the tense situation" between the Covington students and the Black Hebrew Israelites. "Phillips says he was trying to defuse the tense situation," Guthrie tells viewers. "Sandmann says he was confused about Phillips' motives and why he was there."

What videos of the incident clearly show is that it was Nathan Phillips, a "Native American elder" (and, [apparently a fake Vietnam veteran](#)), who engaged in confrontational, aggressive behavior. It was he who marched up to Sandmann and noisily chanted and pounded his drum in Sandmann's face. Yet Guthrie puts the onus on the 16-year-old. She even suggests that Phillips and his group — who went out of their way to confront Sandmann and the Covington students — may have felt *threatened*. Her questions show she is still taking sides, while pretending to be neutral:

GUTHRIE: Why didn't you walk away?...

GUTHRIE: The center of the firestorm, what critics characterize as a smirk, some saying it was an attempt to stare down Phillips. What do you think that looks like?...

GUTHRIE: What some people see is a young kid with a smirk on his face....

GUTHRIE: What would you say for people who see that and are making a judgment about who you are?

SANDMANN: Well, people judge me based on one expression — which I wasn't smirking, but people have assumed that's what I have — and they've gone from there to titling me and labeling me as a racist person, someone that's disrespectful to adults. Which they've had to assume so many things to get there without consulting anyone that can give them the opposite story.

Guthrie's questioning is all the more amazing (and upsetting) since Sandmann reacted with extraordinary equanimity toward Phillips, responding peacefully with a smile, as the aggressive activist got in his space and in his face. None of the critics who have engaged in pop psychology to turn his peaceful smile into a "smirk" have likewise examined the facial expressions of Nathan Phillips, which any fair-minded observer would admit could certainly be seen as threatening and scary — especially when only inches away from one's own face. And, even if Sandmann did indeed "smirk" at Phillips — so what? He is a neophyte and has probably never been in such a situation before. As such, Sandmann



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reacted with exemplary aplomb. Phillips, on the other hand, is a professional activist; he has been engaged in political demonstrations and confrontations for years. Why would a smirk by a teenager bestow on Phillips the right to get in the teen's face and attempt to intimidate him with drum thumping? More from NBC's interview:

GUTHRIE: Have you looked at that video and thought about how it felt from the other's perspective? In other words, there were a lot of you, a handful of the others. Do you think they might have felt threatened by a bunch of young men kind of beating their chests?

GUTHRIE: There's something aggressive about standing there, standing your ground, you both stood your ground, and it was like a stare-down. What do you think of that moment?

SANDMANN: I would say Mr. Phillips had his right to come up to me. I had my right to stay there. Our school was slandered by the African-Americans who had called us all sort of things.

The NBC host then asks a question that seems to suggest Sandmann and some of his fellow students may be responsible for triggering the confrontation by the mere act of wearing red Make America Great Again hats. "Do you think if you weren't wearing that hat, this might not have happened or it might have been different?" she asks. Sandmann provided an excellent response. "That's possible," he answered, "but I would have to assume what Mr. Phillips was thinking and I would rather have him speak to why he came up to us."

"What's this been like for you and for your family?" Guthrie asked. "It's been terrible," Sandmann responded. "People have threatened our lives." Tellingly — but not surprisingly — Guthrie let the matter drop there. There was no follow-up question about the threats and no follow-through condemnation of the death threats or any expression of sympathy for the Sandmann family and Covington Catholic High School from Guthrie or her NBC co-hosts. Contrast this unsympathetic treatment with the slobbering love bombs and rock-star treatment the media elites have lavished on [David Hogg](#), the truculent, sanctimonious student activist who has ridden the Parkland school shooting to fame and glory. Claims that he was the recipient of nasty tweets and death threats provided excuses for media condemnation of the NRA and gun owners, as well as media sermons on civility. Likewise, contrast the media treatment of Sandmann/Covington with the media credulity for every "hate crime" claim, even [though hundreds of these stories that have received massive media coverage have turned out to be fake](#).

Guthrie ends the *Today* program by announcing that they will be having Nathan Phillips on again — for the fourth time — tomorrow. Typical of what we have come to expect from the "mainstream" media, the NBC interview with Nicholas Sandmann offered no media *mea culpas*, no admissions of bias, no apologies for flagrantly smearing Sandmann and the Covington Catholic students.

In her closing statement, Guthrie lamely intones: "Well, it's one of those situations where you actually have video, so people are certainly free to make their own judgments about what they think happened here."

It is likely that millions of Americans have already viewed those videos and not only have made "their own judgments about what they think happened here," but also have seen the ongoing media mayhem and dishonesty in this instance as still more reinforcement of the validity of President Trump's "Fake News" charge against much of the major media. And, undoubtedly, millions of Americans are cheering Nick Sandmann for speaking truth to power with courage and grace.



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*Photo at top: Screen-grab from [NBC News "Today" interview](#)*

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