



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on October 11, 2013

Scalia's Expression of Faith Elicits Mockery From Mainstream Media

There is much to be learned about the biases of the mainstream media from the things they consider shocking.

A recent example of this unwitting confession is found in the much-hyped [interview with Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia](#) published in *New York* magazine.

In a one-on-one question and answer session that took place in the Supreme Court's East Conference Room, New York's Jennifer Senior covered a broad landscape of legal, personal, religious, and moral issues with the iconic judge.



Early in the conversation, Senior asked Scalia when he began to embrace constitutional originalism. Originalism is a theory of constitutional interpretation calling for the viewing of that document through the lens ground by the Founders rather than through contemporary optics. Scalia's answer reveals much of what informs his jurisprudence.

I don't know when I came to that view. I've always had it, as far as I know. Words have meaning. And their meaning doesn't change. I mean, the notion that the Constitution should simply, by decree of the Court, mean something that it didn't mean when the people voted for it — frankly, you should ask the other side the question! How did they ever get there?

Scalia's berating of the activist bench echoes a similar point made by Thomas Jefferson. In a letter to Thomas Ritchie in 1820, Jefferson called the federal judiciary "a subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working underground to undermine the foundations of our confederated republic."

The self-professed "contrarian" says it's an "embarrassment" that so many of his colleagues on the Supreme Court fail to understand the limitations on their power to interpret the Constitution.

In following up on his opinion of the proper purpose of the Supreme Court's constitutional interpretations, Scalia slides into a discussion of federalism, the relationship between states and the federal government.

Describing his conversion from "fainthearted" to "stouthearted" originalist, Justice Scalia says that his earlier softness came about when he was asked whether it would be constitutional for a state to enact a flogging statute. Whereas once he believed such a statute would be unconstitutional, he now repudiates that position, explaining, "If a state enacted a law permitting flogging, it is immensely stupid, but it is not unconstitutional. A lot of stuff that's stupid is not unconstitutional."

Again, in this Scalia stands on sound constitutional ground, ground occupied by the Father of the Constitution, James Madison, who famously wrote, "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the Federal Government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State Governments



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are numerous and indefinite.”

Coverage of the interview in the mainstream media has focused chiefly on the “[controversial](#)” answers given by Scalia to Senior’s questions. It is this preoccupation with what it finds frightening that most clearly reveals the moral gulf between the ruling class and its official mouthpieces and the majority of Americans.

One such response that has elicited the ridiculous ridicule of the establishment press is that given by the judge when asked the ways in which he believed society had coarsened over the years. Scalia said:

One of the things that upsets me about modern society is the coarseness of manners. You can’t go to a movie — or watch a television show for that matter — without hearing the constant use of the F-word — including, you know, ladies using it.

Many media outlets mocked Scalia for holding women to a higher standard of decorum. The online [Huffington Post](#), [for example](#), called this response one of the “weirdest things” learned from the Scalia interview. Notably, the entire tone of the Huffington Post report is sarcastic and insulting.

Readers of *The New American*, however, will appreciate the wisdom of Scalia’s warnings regarding the debasing of manners in modern society and the effect such a slouch will ultimately have on civilization. Consider this assessment of the rudeness of popular culture:

And you can’t have a movie or a television show without a nude sex scene, very often having no relation to the plot. I don’t mind it when it is essential to the plot, as it sometimes is. But, my goodness! The society that watches that becomes a coarse society.

Rather than set aside its sarcastic sharpness and dispassionately examine the evidence of the truth of Scalia’s position, the Huffington Post and others prefer to ignore the awful situation in which we find ourselves, focusing instead on condemning the 77-year-old’s “quaintness.”

Next, much has been made of what [Slate called](#) Scalia’s “tortured justification for his gay right’s jurisprudence.”

In the *New York* magazine interview, Justice Scalia remains faithful to his Roman Catholic faith, refusing to “run down the pope” and declaring that although he has friends that he suspects are homosexuals, he aligns himself with the church’s teaching that homosexuality is “wrong.” He also insists that he is “not a hater of homosexuals at all.”

He takes heat from the libertine lobby in the press corps for writing in an opinion that Americans are justified in “protecting themselves and their families from a lifestyle that they believe to be immoral and destructive.”

This, Scalia, adds in response to a question about that opinion, does not mean that he believes homosexuality to be destructive, but that “Americans have a right to feel that way.”

He admits that perhaps America is moving toward wider acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle. He believes that any such accommodation must come in the form of legislation, not as a result of Supreme Court decrees.

At this point in the interview, the reporter decides to expose Scalia’s inanity by talking religion.

“Do you believe in heaven and hell?” Senior asks.

“Oh, of course I do. Don’t you believe in heaven and hell?” he asks in return.



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“No,” she responds tersely.

“Oh my,” Scalia says.

Then, after musing on his interviewer’s ultimate eternal fate, Scalia informs her that he even believes in the Devil. You can imagine how this went over with the sceptic Senior.

After baiting the practicing Catholic to get himself or his faith caught in some sort of trap of inconsistency, Senior asks Scalia whether it isn’t “terribly frightening to believe in the Devil.” Scalia lowers the boom, saying what so many readers were no doubt thinking:

You’re looking at me as though I’m weird. My God! Are you so out of touch with most of America, most of which believes in the Devil? I mean, Jesus Christ believed in the Devil! It’s in the Gospels! You travel in circles that are so, so removed from mainstream America that you are appalled that anybody would believe in the Devil! Most of mankind has believed in the Devil, for all of history. Many more intelligent people than you or me have believed in the Devil.

Is he right? Do most Americans believe in the Devil? Yes.

The results of a survey conducted in [September 2013 by YouGov](#) reveal that 57 percent of those polled believe in the Devil. A majority (51 percent) respond that they believe people are still occasionally possessed by the Devil.

Of course, poll numbers and the opinions of “mainstream America” likely matters very little to Jennifer Senior or the rest of the 91 percent of the national press who responded to a [Pew Center poll](#) that it is not necessary to believe in God to be a moral person.

When it comes to Jennifer Senior’s reaction to the frank admission of faith from a learned man such as Scalia, the real story — the story that the national media will never see with their heads tossed back in derisive laughter — is that so many believers receive their news and their analysis of the news from people who consider their faith foolish.

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