



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 16, 2015

Activists Want to Lynch University President for Saying Instructors “Should be Shot”

“If they bring a knife to the fight, we bring a gun,” said Barack Obama at a 2008 fundraiser. No one troubled over that comment, but the same cannot be said of an utterance by another president, who, according to some, shot his mouth off.

University of Iowa’s new president, Bruce Harreld (shown, in sport jacket), is in hot water for using a time-honored metaphor. In fact, some agitators want his scalp. Reports the [Iowa City Press-Citizen](#):



The University of Iowa’s new president has apologized to an employee who chastised him for saying publicly that instructors who aren’t ready to teach their classes should be shot. The employee has accepted the apology, but critics on campus are calling on the president to resign in light of the incident.

Bruce Harreld told librarian Lisa Gardinier in an email that his statement to the UI Staff Council last week was “an unfortunate off-the-cuff remark.” He said he didn’t mean to offend anyone or imply that he supports gun violence, according to email correspondence Gardinier first shared with the Associated Press.

“Frankly, I have used the comment in many, many forums and this is the first time anyone has objected to it,” Harreld wrote. “I apologize and appreciate your calling my attention to it,” Harreld wrote.

Does Harreld really “appreciate” this political correctness? Or is he just trying to avoid the long knives?

Really, though, the future doesn’t look promising for satirical websites. For truth was perhaps always stranger than fiction, but now it’s getting sillier, too. As *American Thinker’s* Thomas Lifson [asks](#), “Is there any person with an IQ above 60 who believes Harreld was actually inciting violence?”

Apparently the answer is yes — if the words of the president’s critics can be taken at face value. Gardinier opined that coming in the wake of the San Bernardino terrorist shooting, Harreld’s comment is “horrifying and unacceptable.” And while Gardinier did later accept the president’s apology, the same cannot be said for COGS, UE Local 896, the union representing UI’s 2,300 graduate employees; it “issued a statement Tuesday calling on Harreld to ‘forfeit his position’ after ‘promoting violence and threatening the University’s workforce,’” writes the *Press-Citizen*.

Of course, one could wonder about ulterior motives: Gardinier had opposed the hiring of Harreld, a former IBM executive. And if COGS shares her biases, it could be that his statement is just a convenient cudgel with which to hammer him.

And situational taking of offense is the norm. Critics condemned Sarah Palin in 2011 for using crosshairs imagery when identifying Democrat politicians who should be targeted for defeat, with the *NY Daily News’* Michael Daly [writing](#), anyone “knows that violent language can incite actual violence,



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that metaphor can incite murder.” Wonderful alliteration that is, but it’s no substitute for consistency. Did these critics object to Obama’s “bring a gun” sentiment? Did they agonize about overheated political rhetoric when a leftist — carrying 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches and nearly 100 rounds of ammo (seriously) — [attempted](#) a mass shooting at the Family Research Council headquarters in 2013?

Sillier still, some Harreld critics justified their offensiveness claim by citing not just the national spotlight on “gun violence,” but also a mass shooting that occurred on the UI campus in 1991. Wow. An event occurring before virtually all the school’s undergraduates were even born, and which practically no one remembers, factors into this equation? Is there no social statute of limitations on how long descriptives relating to a crime are prohibited for metaphorical usage? Must we refrain from using the word “lynched” because a century ago some people were hanged unjustly?

Apparently so. After I used the word in a 2009 column to describe what befell radio giant Rush Limbaugh when he was prevented from buying into the NFL’s St. Louis Rams, the far-left Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) tried to lynch me. In fact, they [informed](#) on their “HateWatch” page, this Duke fella’ used “lynch,” or a variation thereof, three times. Oh, the humanity!

Interestingly, the SPLC lynch piece was written by one Larry Keller, whom I’d named not long before [in an exposé](#) on how the SPLC was using deceit and propaganda to raise money. Coincidences never end.

As for the larger issue, conversation without metaphorical speech would be dry and dull. Can someone getting drunk no longer be described as “bombed”? Is “campaign” now verboten in politics because it originally applied only to military operations in the field? Is it offensive to call bulging biceps “guns”? Are we all supposed to become Mr. Spock now?

Spock, though, had courage if not color. It’s hard to imagine his having apologized when he was right, which is what Harreld and so many others do today. And what effect does this have? Gardinier called Harreld’s concession a “teachable moment” (should be “teaching,” actually), and she was correct — but not in the way she meant.

When a person in the right apologizes, it’s not just an (incorrect) admission he’s wrong, but that what’s right is wrong. This is how civilization descends into a state where good is called bad and bad is called good. You also sacrifice any substantial support you might have had.

After all, what makes a hero? A hero is one who stands up for what’s right and doesn’t back down, even in the face of steep odds. Just consider one reason Donald Trump sits atop the GOP field even after making politically incorrect comments sufficient to sink anyone else.

He doesn’t apologize.

Love him or hate him, he goes rhetorically where no American politician has gone before. And when the powers-that-be try to cow him, he says “In your face!” The result? A large silent minority — and maybe even a majority (we’ll see) — have his back. And it’s just common sense: An army assuredly will surrender if its leader does. Why would people stand up for you if you won’t stand up for yourself?

While this spirit is mostly dead in academia, one startling example of it came to light recently. Addressing obscene political correctness on his campus, Oklahoma Wesleyan University president Dr. Everett Piper penned a letter to students entitled “This is Not a Day Care. It’s a University!” He [wrote](#), in part, “If you’re more interested in playing the ‘hater’ card than you are in confessing your own hate; if you want to arrogantly lecture, rather than humbly learn; if you don’t want to feel guilt in your soul when you are guilty of sin; if you want to be enabled rather than confronted, there are many



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universities across the land ... that will give you exactly what you want, but Oklahoma Wesleyan isn't one of them."

Now that's how to use a teaching moment, demonstrated by a teacher who could teach the teachers. The question is, will any of them stop apologizing long enough to listen?

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