



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on May 27, 2016

Katie Couric Documentary Has Edited Video to Attack Gun Rights

It's likely that most people suspect that the liberal media distort and slant the news against more conservative positions and personalities. The usual way this is done is by what is called "agenda setting," meaning that liberal media select stories to advance and ones to kill in order to promote the liberal agenda, held by almost all major media.

A recent documentary featuring the well-known liberal TV news personality Katie Couric used creative editing to support the documentary's anti-gun rights message.

In the documentary *Under the Gun*, Couric is shown interviewing members of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, which supports the Second Amendment's protection of an individual's right to keep and bear arms. At one point she asks the members of the group, "If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?"

In the edited video, the activists do not respond to her question, but instead sit silent for nine seconds, giving the impression that they have no answer to Couric's query. After the moment of silence, the documentary proceeds to the next scene.

What viewers of the documentary are not told is that the gun rights activists actually had quite a bit to say in answer to her question — about four minutes' worth of response.

In the uncut version of the film, one member of the Virginia Citizens Defense League responded, "Well one, if you're not in jail, you should still have your basic rights." This was followed by a second member, who added, "The fact is we do have statutes, both at the federal and state level." The activists actually gave reasonable, well-thought out responses, including making the point that once a person has served his time in jail or prison, his rights are restored.

Another important point made by one of the activists (cut out of the final video) was that what Couric was advocating was "prior restraint," meaning curtailing a person's constitutionally protected rights because that person might commit a crime. Seriously, is a known terrorist going to walk into a gun store and submit to a background check?

The Virginia Citizens Defense League reacted to the deception, calling it "unbelievable and extremely unprofessional."

Philip Van Cleave, president of the group, declared, "Katie Couric asked a key question during an interview of some members of our organization. She then intentionally removed their answers and spliced in nine seconds of some prior video of our members sitting quietly and not responding. Viewers are left with the misunderstanding that the members had no answer to her question."

After it became public that the film had been unfairly edited, the documentary's director, Stephanie





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Soechtig, attempted to defend the distorted video. “My intention was to provide a pause for the viewer to have a moment to consider this important question before presenting the facts on Americans’ opinions on background checks. I never intended to make anyone look bad and I apologize if anyone felt that way.” She insisted that, “I don’t think I misrepresented gun owners or the people featured in the film.”

One might ask that if it was Couric’s and Sechtig’s intention to simply ask the question and have the viewers reflect on it, then why even have the Virginia group present? If that were her actual intent, Couric could have asked the question to the video audience, paused for nine seconds, and then said something such as, “Well, I asked this of some gun rights activists, and this is how they responded.” Then she could have shown how they actually did respond. Otherwise, it is obvious this was done to make the gun rights group look bad, and the statement “if anyone felt that way” is duplicitous. How else could any rational person “feel?”

Fox News media analyst Howard Kurtz told his colleague Bill Hemmer, “That kind of distorted editing would be against the rules in any network news division. And that non-apology doesn’t go nearly far enough.”

Couric reportedly called the episode an “unfortunate mistake.” But labeling the editing a “mistake” implies that it was not intentional to distort the views of the activists — a contention very difficult to believe.

The cable channel that is presenting the documentary, EPIX, offered no apology for the editing, but instead announced, “EPIX stands behind Katie Couric, director Stephanie Soechtig, and creative and editorial judgment.” Creative? As in made up?

“We encourage people to watch the film and decide for themselves,” said Nora Ryan, chief of staff for EPIX. Which film? The edited or the unedited version? Perhaps they should run both, back to back, and let the viewer see “for themselves” just how liberal media can slant the news to advance a liberal cause.

Steve Byas is a professor of history at Randall University in Moore, Oklahoma. His book, History’s Greatest Libels, takes several instances in history wherein similar “creative” distortions of history have been used to misrepresent certain events in history.



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