

Michael Moore Abroad

Bash the US, Demonise Republicans, Deny Islam's Violent Links

by Robert Harris (July 2016)



The June 13th episode of RTE's 6.1 News featured an [promote his new documentary](#) "Where to Invade Next". Moore waxed lyrical on Donald Trump, and the Republican party, on which he blamed for the US' ills. He also held the Party's supporters individually responsible for the high homicide rate.

On Orlando

Moore endorsed a whitewash of the Islamist motives behind the Orlando massacre, appearing to argue that Omar Mateen's upbringing in New York is more relevant to the massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. He also argues that the religious faith of Omar Mateen is irrelevant, and simply should not be reported by the media, disagreeing with Donald Trump's stance on the issue:

"And his [Trump's] whole thing today with blaming Muslims and foreigners and Arabs and all this whole thing of his, I just want to state this fact. The killer in Orlando was a New Yorker. He was born and raised in New York City. He's an American, he's a New Yorker. A New Yorker committed mass murder. That's the way you report that. If you want to start reporting

people's religion or whatever when they do things, then we have to go back, lets say, to the Oklahoma City bombing. A Catholic blew up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, and killed a 187 people. But we don't really report it that way, right, because it's not really the Catholic Church that killed a whole bunch of people."

Moore echoes a rather familiar liberal-left talking point by raising the Oklahoma City bombing, instigated by Timothy McVeigh, to assert that religious faith is not responsible for killing. Rather bizarrely, Moore effectively asserts that religious intent is never an issue in terrorist atrocities, because a given act is not sanctioned by religious institutions.

Unlike Mateen however, McVeigh did not profess any religious motivation for the attack, nor affiliate himself with any form of a Christian terrorist group. By contrast, Moore appears unmoved by the widely reported fact that Mateen [called on Muslims](#) to attack the West during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan, and the pledge follows IS' very [reported](#) that Mateen's father endorses anti-American views, and supports the Afghani-Taliban, which aided Osama bin Laden when al Qaeda brought an unprecedented degree of terrorism to US soil. Signs of radicalism have also emanated from the mosque where Mateen worshipped for much of his life.

McVeigh's own religious beliefs seemed to fluctuate through his life. While there are reports that McVeigh possessed some level of religious faith, he also [not wholly alien](#) to Moore's own views on US foreign policy.

On gun-related homicide

At the beginning of the interview, Moore began by responding to a question about the Orlando massacre, which some believe to be an issue appertaining to gun crime, rather than Islamist terror:

"Any sick individual can walk into a store next to a McDonald's and buy an M16, which is called an AR15 in the civilian world, but it's the M16 automatic weapon, and its designed to kill a lot of people, and you can legally buy one, and he did and he passed the background check, and that's the country I live in. We've over 300 million guns in our homes and we had probably close to 30,000 people last year die due to a gun. And I think the UK last year had 32 people die because of gun violence."

Moore appears to have intentionally misrepresented the number of gun-related deaths in the US, by comparing generalised US gun deaths with the more relevant act of gun violence in the UK.

Around 30,000 people die each year due to guns. Moore gave his audience the distinctive impression that the great majority of these deaths are attributable to homicide, but more than 60% are in fact [occurring last year](#). Approximately 2/3rds of these [downward trend since 1993](#).

Moore's contrast with United Kingdom deaths represents a differentiation of 1,000x (30,000 versus 32 deaths). However, the rate of gun associated deaths in the UK is claimed by UNDOC to be [near-four-fold increase in the murder rate](#) (per 100,000: UK 11.68 [2009] and US 42.01 [2010]), rather than an impressive-sounding thousand-fold increase.

It is also worth noting that the UK has a major long-standing issue with high rates of violent crime, which is typically a per-capita multiple of the US. These [semi – automatic rifle](#). The national audience he addressed would not be so advised however.

Bad Americans

Moore presented a very stark caricature of US culture:

“It's a culture of fear that we live in. It's also a culture of ignorance. We have a population that for years now because of the lessening of our schools, our media, the dumbing down of our people. It's the only way you could explain the fact that Donald Trump could be candidate of a major party for president. So you have people that are afraid, they think somebody's going to get them, they gotta have a lot of guns in the house, and you know we're a perpetrator of violence around the world. I made bowling for Columbine in 2002, and six months later we were invading Iraq. And so we both have the state-sponsored violence and we have our personal violence, where we reach for the gun. And it's a sad thing because I think you know we're otherwise a good people. And you know the Irish aren't better than us, the Brits aren't better than us, the Canadians. And yet for some reason you don't shoot a bunch of people when you get angry. And President Obama has wanted the Centres for Disease Control, the CDC, to study this as a disease, as a uniquely American disease, but the

Republicans have prohibited any funding.”

Moore claims that citizens of the United States of America are good people, other than with respect to gun violence but he soon undermines his point by referring to a broad number of societal ills that lead to gun violence. He cites the popularity of the Republican Party and the success of Donald Trump, the Republican Party’s presumptive presidential candidate. He points to fear, paranoia, ignorance, rage, violent impulses, a presumably right-wing dumbed-down media, which not only harms US society but leads to violence all over the world.

Moore echoes a notable European left-wing talking point, by raising the quality of education in the US. While studies vary, depending on methodologies, with some noting a [score in the teens](#) with respect to composite rankings so it is not dramatically worse than the rest of the industrialised world, and excels at Tertiary education.

Partisan politics

It is clear however that Moore understands his broad criticism of American culture as ultimately applying to Republican supporters – particularly Christians. Most remarkably, in the aftermath of an Islamist gun attack, when asked about Trump’s contention that Islamism is at the root of the violence, Moore infers that gun violence was largely the purview of Christian Republicans:

“It [Trump’s claim] resonates only with people who are ignorant. And again when you have a dumbed down population, when you have a Republican party, where the majority of the people of that party believe that Adam and Eve rode on dinosaurs 6,000 years ago, 19% of Republicans believe Obama is quote ‘the Anti-Christ’, that’s what we’re dealing with. And they own guns. So you know, Trump’s success, such as it is, is because he knows how to manipulate that audience. And he’s done quite well with it, and I think people should take him very seriously for November.”

Moore’s attack on the beliefs of some Republican supporters is noteworthy because he ignores the unusual beliefs of Democratic Party supporters. For example, that there is [poll from 2006](#) indicates that Democrats also appear to be 9/11-Truthers, while another [not uncommon](#) amongst Democrat supporters.

Moore claims racism is an elemental part of Republican support, but the periodic

General Social Survey indicates that Republicans are [significant support](#) amongst Democrat supporters.

Michael Moore's work is often criticised for being dishonest and eirael.blogspot.com and lives in Ireland.

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