

Max Blumenthal, Hamas Apologist



Max Blumenthal

by Bruce Bawer

One of the most loyal and longest-serving members of the Clinton Mafia is the former Beltway reporter [Sidney Blumenthal](#), now 75, whom even the *New York Times*, in its review of his 2003 book *The Clinton Wars*, described as a “courtier” for Bill and Hillary, and whose many nefarious activities include an intimate involvement in the psychopathically mendacious Clintonista propaganda operation known as Media Matters for America.

Our topic today, however, is not the diabolical Sidney but his equally odious offspring [Max](#), now 46 – who, as it happens, also started out as a more than typically partisan journalist. From the get-go, as I wrote in a 2019 [profile](#) of him for *Commentary*, Max’s approach to his ideological opponents was to try “to discredit them, to tar them with guilt by

association, to paint them (however decent, independent, and mainstream they might be) as extremists, bigots, and tools of nefarious interests, and, not infrequently, to mount extremely personal assaults, complete with unfounded rumors and even outright lies." Like father, like son.

Max's first book, *Republican Gomorrah* (2009), was a takedown of the GOP; his second and third, *Goliath* (2013) and *The 51-Day War* (2014), were all-out attacks on Israel and whitewashes of Hamas. Even for legendary Israel-haters, the Israel-bashing was too much: lefty commentator Eric Alterman quipped that *Goliath* "could have been published by the Hamas Book-of-the-Month Club." In my *Commentary* piece, I noted that after a still-mysterious Kremlin-fund trip to Moscow, Max reversed his position on Bashar al-Assad completely; a month later, he founded his website, Grayzone, where, when not championing the likes of Putin, Assad, and Maduro – or denying that China is committing genocide against the Uyghars – he's busy arguing that events like the 2016 Pulse nightclub massacre and the 2017 Manchester bombing don't count as acts of jihad.

Which may well lead you to ask: good golly, if he's capable of *that*, what does he say about 9/11? Well, at the launch event for his 2019 book *The Management of Savagery*, he employed the same *modus operandi* that's favored by many other apologists for Islam: he got 9/11 out of the way as quickly as possible, then pushed the claim that it inaugurated an era during which the Western world embraced Islamophobia. Of course, the very opposite is the case: since 9/11, the mainstream Western media have gone out of their way to deny any connection between Muslim belief and jihadist terror and to pretend that sharia and honor killing and so on are figments of the far-right imagination. In much of Western Europe, Islam is officially beyond criticism: hundreds of ordinary Brits have been jailed for criticizing Islam online, and prominent citizens such as the Dutch political leader Geert Wilders, the Danish writer Lars Hedegaard, and the

English activist Tommy Robinson have been put on trial for daring to speak home truths about the religion of peace.

Nobody familiar with Max's background as an apologist for Islam will have been surprised by his appalling behavior since October 7. On [October 11](#) and again on [December 6](#), he wrote long articles in which he professed to debunk claims that Hamas had beheaded babies on October 7. It was roughly equivalent to a neo-Nazi arguing that only 5.8 million Jews, not six million, were murdered in the Holocaust; from the tone of these pieces you'd think that Sid's scion had definitively proven the utter innocence of Hamas and the absolute perfidy of Israel.

On October 27, Max [wrote](#) that on October 7, "the Israeli military killed its own citizens as they fought to neutralize Palestinian gunmen." This claim, of course, isn't hard to believe: members of Hamas had entered Israeli homes in order to murder the residents. That's where they were: *in Israeli homes*. If Israel wanted to kill the enemy, it only makes sense for it to target those homes. And it wouldn't be surprising that some Israelis, as a result, died as a tragic consequence of friendly fire. For Max, this is apparently a black mark against the Israelis. No, it's what happens in war. And who started this war? Who's responsible for any friendly-fire deaths? Max's buddies in Hamas (to whom he refers, note well, not as terrorists or murderers but as "gunmen").

On December 7, Max wrote what he described as a "[tribute](#)" to Refaat Alareer. Alareer, a Gazan writer, poet, and professor, was, in Max's words, "murdered by Israeli invaders in Shujaiya, east of Gaza City, on December 6." Max makes it clear what kind of a man Alareer was. "Israel wants us to be closed, isolated—to push us to the extreme," he quotes Alareer as having told him. "It doesn't want us to be educated. It doesn't want us to see ourselves as part of a universal struggle against oppression. They don't want us to be educated or to be educators." To my mind, this is a fascinating case of

projection: while the Palestinians bring up their children to hate Israel – and Jews generally – Israel doesn't bring up its children to hate Palestinians.

On the contrary, it could be argued, in the wake of October 7, that altogether too many Israelis have been raised to be suicidally naive about Islam. Many Israelis, indeed, have dedicated themselves heart and soul to interfaith harmony, the education of Gazan youth, and the improvement of living conditions in Gaza. One of those people was the 74-year-old Vivian Silver, who, [according](#) to the *Guardian*, “spent decades working to foster peace between Israelis and Palestinians,” and who was murdered by Hamas on October 7 “during the assault on Kibbutz Be’eri in southern Israel.” Another prominent peace activist, Maoz Inon, [lost](#) both of his parents on October 7.

But in Alareer's view, such Israelis didn't exist. “In Palestine,” he told Max, “you never come face-to-face with a Jewish person who's not armed to the teeth trying to kill you.” But Alareer, recounts Max, experienced an awakening: during a U.S. book tour, he met plenty of Jews who not only didn't hate Palestinians – they *adored* them. Returning to Gaza, he told his students about these remarkable pro-Palestinian Jews and had them read *The Merchant of Venice*, encouraging them to view Shylock sympathetically. The papers they wrote on Shakespeare's play were gratifying; he stored them “in his desk at Islamic University's English Department like small treasures.” But then what happened to those papers? They were lost in the 2014 Gaza War when Israel bombed the university, “sending those papers up in flames.”

And why did Israel bomb the university? Real answer: because Hamas routinely puts university buildings – as it does hospitals, mosques, private homes, and other buildings – to military use. Alareer's answer: Israel attacked the university because its leaders regard “open-minded Palestinians” as “dangerous.” Max notes that in 2015, as in 2023, Alareer couldn't escape from Gaza into Egypt because it was “almost

hermetically sealed by the Egyptian junta.” And why was that? For the same reason that absolutely every Muslim country refuses to put the welcome mat out for Gazans: even by the usual Islamic standards, they’re twisted out of shape by hate.

On October 11, Max [appeared](#) on Tim Pool’s podcast. The Hamas atrocities had been committed only four days earlier, but already he was full-throated in his defense of Hamas and his disparagement of Israel. Among his assertions: Israel has a policy of targeting civilians; “Palestinian journalists are cool people that you would all like to hang out with”; Palestinians who became suicide bombers did so out of desperation; those who join Hamas do so because, their desire to overcome Israeli oppression, violence is their only option; Hamas took hostages on October 7 only because they want to be able to trade them for Palestinians who are being held hostage by Israel. When podcast regular Phil Labonte pointed out that taking hostages is an act of terrorism, Max countered: “I have watched Israel kidnap children.”

In fact, while patently eager to avoid using the word “terrorists” to describe Hamas, Max called Israelis terrorists (as Labonte pointed out) “several times.” Max also denied that Hamas uses civilians as human shields, denied that it uses non-military buildings for military purposes, denied that Hamas’s October 7 was “unprovoked,” and denied that Hamas would ever commit ISIS-like atrocities. “Hamas is mortally opposed to ISIS and Salafi elements,” Max insisted, but the Israelis “want us to see Hamas as ISIS” so that Israel can “portra[y] itself as a victim.” Far from expressing any empathy for the Israelis who were murdered by Hamas at the Supernova Sukkot Gathering in the desert, Max actually stated: “This is a bonanza for Israel, to be able to show these images of a music festival being attacked.”

Of course, Max doesn’t buy anything that the Israeli government says about Hamas atrocities. Or, for that matter, anything that might be said about those atrocities on a

website like this. But what about the sacred *New York Times*? On December 28, the *Times* ran a long, detailed [article](#), the product of its own investigation, about Hamas's mistreatment of women on October 7, which, the paper reported, "were not isolated events but part of a broader pattern." The article blasted Max's rather benign characterization of Hamas into smithereens. A dead woman found in one kibbutz had had "dozens of nails driven into her thighs and groin." One video showed "two dead Israeli soldiers...who appeared to have been shot directly in their vaginas." One witness saw a Hamas member rape a Israeli woman while also "plung[ing] a knife into her back," saw another woman being raped by one terrorist while "another pulled out a box cutter and sliced off her breast" (which he and a comrade proceeded to "play with" and "throw" until it fell "on the road"), and saw "terrorists carrying the severed heads of three more women."

And so on. Meanwhile, IDF videos have shown that, Max's passionate insistence to the contrary, Hamas tunnels led directly into hospitals, schools, mosques, homes, day-care centers, hotels, and – yes – UNRWA buildings. What, I wonder, does Max have to say about any of this? Because on the Tim Pool podcast, he had an answer for absolutely everything: when confronted with the explicit declaration of genocidal hatred toward Jews spelled out in Hamas's charter, he said that the leaders of Hamas included that language in their charter "so they could negotiate with the outside world" (whatever that is supposed to mean); when confronted with the fact that 1.6 million Palestinian are citizens of Israel and that the country contains hundreds of mosques, he replied – vaguely – that, yes, this was true, but that there are "conflicts" between Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

He also blamed the October 7 attacks on the Abraham Accords – the point of which, he said, "was to go over the heads of the Palestinians, put that whole issue in the icebox forever, let them stay in their cages or wherever, give them a few crumbs,

and then Israel will make peace with all the kingdoms.” But the Palestinians, he said proudly, “will not allow themselves to be ignored.” Ignored! As if Gaza hasn’t benefited from more sympathetic attention – and more aid – from the West than any other place on earth with a population of two million or so. It’s also worth noting that Max is one of those people who in one breath will describe pre-October 7 Gaza as a nightmarish “open prison” – and then, in the next breath, will lament that the IDF, after entering Gaza, set about destroying fairy-tale middle-class neighborhoods full of charming cafes and parks.

One thing is clear: the Blumenthals, father and son, are a couple of thoroughly loathsome men with very, very strong allegiances and equally strong enmities. Is anybody more fiercely loyal to the Clintons than Sid? Does anyone on Earth hate Israel more fervently than Max?

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