

Silencing Dissent: The Chilling Implications of Charlie Kirk's Assassination

By Victor Davis Hanson

Tragically, [Charlie Kirk](#), a friend of all of ours, was [shot and killed](#) in Utah. This is one of the great losses to the American political and media scene, not just conservatism. I don't think that he will be replaced because I can't think of a figure, Left or Right, under the age of 35 who combines such talent.



What I mean by that is he was an administrator who, from scratch, created an enormous nationwide organization, Turning Point USA. He was not a college graduate. He dropped out after a year. He came from a very different background without an elite education. And in some ways, that was a great advantage.

He connected with people. He had a podcast. He was an extemporaneous speaker. He could ad lib. He wrote columns. He was fearless. He registered voters. He might have been more

responsible for winning key states than any other political activist in the 2024 election.

I don't think anybody in our generation—I'm speaking my generation—could have done what he did. Nobody in his generation could have done what he did.

So, what's tragic is he's lost at such an early age. He had two small children, a wife. And this is a turning point. In the United States, we don't kill media people. They do it in Europe, they do it in Mexico, they do it in Latin America. They don't take out political activists.

This is something new where somebody targets one of the most influential Americans and wants to eliminate them, and with them, that elimination, remove a force for good in which they would say bad.



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Victor Davis Hanson: 'Anti-Fascist' Violence Just Claimed Charlie Kirk. Where Does America Go From Here?

Charlie Kirk shaped modern conservatism and reached youth in ways no one else could—and that's precisely what made him so dangerous to the Left.

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So, it's very scary, and it's not occurring in a vacuum. I know that both sides have extremists, but when you look at the Rep. Steve Scalise shooting—where a former Sen. Bernie Sanders organizer who helped in the campaign tried to take out, deliberately tried to take out, the Republican leadership in the House as a political act. And then you look at two near-successful assassination attempts on [President Donald Trump](#). And then you have these spinoff things.

Brian Thompson, a man of the middle class who worked up the chain of command to be the CEO of UnitedHealth, which offered health insurance that was needed by millions of people. And

he's what? Gunned down and assassinated by Luigi Mangione.

What I'm getting at is the reaction as well.

What was the reaction to Steve Scalise and the Republicans? Was there outrage from the Left? No.

What was the reaction to the near assassination attempts of Donald Trump? Yes, there were principled people on the Left that deplored that, but a couple of polling companies took surveys, and a third of Democrats wished that these assassination attempts had been successful.

What was the reaction to the murder of Brian Thompson by Luigi Mangione? He was the object of a puff piece by Taylor Lorenz, a former Washington Post reporter. He's got an opera named after him. He is a folk hero among the Left. It reminds me of the Tsarnaev brother, who was a mass murderer of the Boston bombings. Rolling Stone put a photogenic picture of him on their cover.

So, what I'm getting at is, when you kill somebody who's involved in politics, and now we've gone to the next level, politics and as a media influencer and as a journalist and as an opinion writer, and there is not widespread condemnation of that—and there was booing even in the House of Representatives just for a simple call for an a minute of prayer on behalf of Charlie—then something is wrong.

And what is that wrong? We are legitimizing political violence.

If you call someone day after day after day, "white, white, white, white, white"; "racist, racist, racist"; "fascist, fascist, fascist"; "Nazi, Nazi, Nazi"—we hear that from Joy Reid. We see it on "The View." We see it on MSNBC. Even just seconds after Charlie died, we had [Matthew Dowd](#) go on and basically said that he got what he deserved because he was an extremist, etc., and he and you "live by the sword, die by the sword"

sort of argument he used.

So, what we're doing is we're legitimizing violence and we're contextualizing it. And when you use hyperbole and you call someone a fascist or an abject racist, what that sends a message to are people in the woodwork of America feel two things. They don't see people getting punished for violent crimes.

And I can direct you to the violent killer, murderer, executioner of our Ukrainian immigrant on a light-rail car in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was let out 14 times. The murder of a young, retired—in my view, she's young-retired, 57-year-old Auburn professor of veterinary medicine killed. The person who killed her: ex-felon out.

And so, when you combine this idea that if you commit a murder, if you commit violence, there might not be swift and immediate and extreme punishment with the idea that many people have celebrated killers in the past, like Mangione, or the people who tried to kill Donald Trump, then out in the woodwork of America creep out people who say, "I can get away with it, or I can at least not face the death penalty, I won't face severe penalties. But more importantly, I will be enshrined in the pantheon of liberal heroes 'cause I took out a fascist, I took out a modern-day Hitler, I took out a transphobe," all of that.

And so, when you look at what's going on in America on [the Left](#)—whether it's the racial Left, whether it is the extremist ideological Left, whether it's the trans Left—what we're seeing is that there is a contextualization, a normalization, an institutionalization, an excuse, an apology for the use of violence as a political means. Doesn't mean that they are doing it themselves, but when they see it happen, they will find ways not to condemn it, and they will create an atmosphere of hatred in which some people will be encouraged by it.

And mark my words: I haven't looked at social media as I'm speaking today, but within 48 hours, there will be people throughout the left-wing blogosphere who will be praising this horrific death of a great American and a great person, Charlie Kirk.

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