

The Atrocity Exhibition

August 6, 2019

News commentary can seem like a race, commentators reacting as if to the crack of the starting-gun, scrambling to make sure they do not come in last.

Yet, in stories like this weekend's round of mass shootings, being last to comment might be something to *aspire* towards.

As I have argued before, mentioning perps' names has a tendency to encourage further mass murders, spree murders. But in cases of outright terrorism — as the El Paso shooting



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was immediately classified — the frenzy to comment is pretty much the same thing as using names.

How?

Well, terrorism is the use of violence to effect political change. The old anarchists and syndicalists called it “propaganda by

the deed.” And, in a mass- and alt-media drenched democratic society, the aim is to get people to go into alarm, in part by getting tongues tapping and keyboards clattering.

Focusing on terrorist murders does feed the idea that terrorism somehow works.

So, when Democrats immediately talk about racism and the need for gun confiscation (both seen on Twitter immediately after the El Paso event, of course) and Republicans leap to the “mental health” issue and . . . video games (as I saw inching across the news chyrons) . . . my urge to comment dissipates dramatically.

But here I am.

Politicians can demand new laws to restrict firearms, or video games, but those laws won't prevent future mass shootings.

Nor do I hold any hope that we can perfectly police against white nationalists like the manifesto-writing El Paso killer or lewd socialists such as the Dayton shooter.

Our best hope is to save kids from growing into angry, disaffected, violent adults.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.