

# LAS VEGAS KILLING STUMPS MEDIA

Catholic League president Bill Donohue discusses the way the media are explaining the Las Vegas tragedy:

Pundits on both the right and the left cannot understand why there is no apparent political or religious motive involved in the Las Vegas killings. There doesn't have to be: Paddock was socially ill, a loner whose boredom was relieved by taking risks—flying single-engine planes and engaging in high-stakes gambling. Consistent to the end, his life ended in a blaze of excitement.

The media have a hard time thinking outside the box. So when politics and religion are taken off the table, one of the few things left for them to chew on is race. Take the Associated Press story, "Terrorism, Race, Religion: Defining the Las Vegas Shooting."

The AP is impressed that Paddock was "a white gunman" who attacked "a mostly-white country music crowd." So what? Blacks kill each other in the streets of Chicago all the time. If AP has something it wants to impute to Paddock's race, it should say so. But it chose not to, and that's because there is nothing there. However, that didn't stop it from looking at this story through a political lens.

For example, the AP story mentions the role of Islamic extremists in acts of terror, which is undeniable, but then it tries to "balance" the piece by noting Norwegian mass killer Anders Breivik; he is described as a "neo-Nazi" who gunned down 77 people in 2011.

Breivik was never a neo-Nazi. In fact, as Norwegian social scientist Lars Gule said, he was a "national conservative, not a Nazi." Nor was he a Christian, as some said he was: he put

his faith in Odinism. In terms of his politics, the *Jerusalem Post* called him out for his “far-right Zionism.” So what was he? He was a deranged man who was high on drugs when he struck.

The problem with Breivik, like Paddock, was his persona, not his politics. He was initially diagnosed as having paranoid schizophrenia, and shortly thereafter he became increasingly isolated and withdrawn. He was subsequently declared criminally insane.

A second round of psychiatric evaluations said his problem was best understood as an antisocial personality disorder, not a mental illness; he was also diagnosed as having a narcissistic personality disorder.

Those conditions are clearly reflected in the life of Stephen Paddock (click [here](#) to read my account). And just as Paddock had a severely dysfunctional upbringing, so did Breivik. His parents divorced when he was a year old, and his mother brutalized him: she “sexualized” him, beat him, and told him that she “wished that he were dead.”

Obviously, most people raised in a lousy family do not turn out to be mass killers. But when a background like the one Breivik, and Paddock, endured is coupled with other psychological and social factors, it makes a lot more sense to probe these personal experiences than it does to look exclusively at external matters.

There is a whole world out there besides politics, religion, race, sex, and sexual orientation, though this escapes most pundits these days. Unfortunately, those looking to blame anyone or anything but the culprit—“the guns did it”—are totally blind to this reality.

Just as it is important not to simplify complex issues, the temptation to over-analyze must also be resisted. Sometimes the answer is right before our eyes.