

LYING BY THE NUMBERS

Whenever there is a serious social problem, the media turn to experts to diagnose it and provide data. As it turns out, many of these persons are not experts at all—they are activists seeking to advance their agenda. Others are simply liars.

The mass shooting in Parkland, Florida is the most recent example of this phenomenon. The media were quick to report that this was the 18th school shooting in 2018. They were wrong. It was the fifth. So where did the figure of 18 come from? It was given to the media by Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun control group. As the *Washington Post* revealed, “Just five of Everytown’s 18 school shootings listed for 2018 happened during school hours and resulted in any physical injury.”

This was not the first time this game has been played. In 2015, Mass Shooting Tracker, a group the media cited as authoritative, said there were 355 mass shootings that year. But the government’s figure was 32. What gives? Upon closer inspection, it was found that in a third of the incidents logged by Mass Shooting Tracker, no one died. Indeed, in 95 percent of the “mass shootings,” there was only *one* fatality.

I did some research a few years back trying to figure out how many abortion deaths actually took place the year before *Roe v. Wade*. The most commonly cited figure was 5,000-10,000. The real number was 39. So where did the big numbers come from? The head of NARAL. He lied about the numbers. How do I know? Because he admitted it. His name is Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a Jewish atheist abortionist who later made a huge pivot: he renounced abortion, became a pro-life activist, and converted to Catholicism.

The abortion industry lies by the numbers all the time. In 1995, Ron Fitzsimmons, the head of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, said that partial-birth abortion was

“rarely used.” Two years later, his conscience got the best of him. He confessed, “I lied through my teeth. It made me physically ill.”

In the mid-1980s, homeless advocate Mitch Snyder testified before a congressional committee. He was asked where he got the figure of three million homeless persons nationwide. He told them he made it up. The actual figure was somewhere between 250,000 and 350,000. Snyder refused to support his own family, yet never stopped lecturing the rest of the country to dish out money for the homeless. Even after he was handsomely paid by Hollywood for a movie that was made about him, he never gave his family a dime.

In 2002, David Lisak, a college professor, claimed there was an epidemic of sexual assault on college campuses. He said that “serial rapists” were responsible for 90 percent of the assaults on campus. Where did he get this figure? He made it up. He also told the media that he interviewed “hundreds” of serial rapists (at other times he said it was “thousands”). As it turns out, he never interviewed even one.

Though Lisak was eventually revealed to be a charlatan, it was not before he did much damage. In 2011, the Department of Education under President Obama warned colleges that they had better institute new policies regarding campus sexual assaults, citing his work. Many did, the result being that the due process rights of men were severely curtailed, leading to a flood of lawsuits.

In March 2018, a “bombshell U.N. dossier” found that United Nations aid workers had raped 60,000 people. I was ready to write something about this but decided not to because I could not verify the figure. Neither could Andrew MacLeod, the author of the dossier. It was soon disclosed that he initially claimed there were “at least 311 victims.” So where did the 60,000 figure come from? He told a reporter that it was a rough guess.

The Catholic Church's sexual abuse scandal has been the subject of incredible exaggeration. We always hear that between 1950 and 2002, 4 percent of the clergy was accused of molesting a minor. Almost never mentioned is the fact that almost half that figure was never substantiated.

Just as important, it is rarely reported that a mere 149 priests—one out of every 750—was responsible for over a quarter of all the allegations. In other words, almost all priests never had anything to do with abusing minors. Even less likely to be reported is the fact that 8 in 10 of the molesters were homosexuals, not pedophiles.

Why all the lies? Part of it has to do with ideology: painting a dark picture of America is what drives the haters. Part of it is servicing a cause: new laws and policies are easier to get if lawmakers are scared. Part of it is ratings: the media love to get the public ginned up. Part of it is money: it's a lot easier to get funds for research when the alarm goes off.

No matter, it's all despicable. So beware of the next "crisis" reported by the media. It may be a lot less threatening than it appears to be.