

“Lone Wolf” Terror and the PsyWar on American Public Opinion

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Memory Hole

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image: Prof. James Tracy

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society,” Edward Bernays [observed](#) almost a century ago.

“Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.” Bernays’ insight reflects the view of corporate statists he regularly commissioned with.



Aurora Colorado Theater Shooting, July 20, 2012, [Image Credit: newscom.au]

Intertwined with complex public relations exercises, corporate news media’s role today has far less to do with informing the public than it does with maintaining a perpetual tension and anxiety throughout the body politic. Through such tension the citizenry will further gravitate toward or even consciously advocate for heightened police state measures now peddled a prerequisite for public safety.

Recent quantitative and historically-oriented studies by [USA Today](#) and the [Congressional Research Service](#) (CRS) on mass murder in the United States provide much food for thought especially since they suggest vast public misperceptions concerning massacre events that call out for further inquiry. More than ever, public opinion has been fueled by a corporate news media disproportionately sensationalizing certain mass murders while overlooking others that are at least as serious.

The CRS looked at an array of academic studies and FBI data to find an annual average of 31 mass murders (defined as four or more victims excluding the perpetrator). Importantly, mass shootings have increased only slightly between 2009 and 2013 versus preceding five year periods dating to 1999. Of these, about two thirds involve firearms. If the year 2012 was excluded from the latest 2009-13 timespan that period’s average number of incidents (22.4) and fatalities (116) would have shown a significant decrease versus the previous two five year averages.

Prominent gun rights opponents such as President Obama and Michael Bloomberg have advocated for gun control measures. Their activism has been most vigorous following the

2012 events, in particular the mass shootings at Aurora Colorado and Newtown Connecticut, each of which now appear to have been “false flags” intended to bolster the case for scaling back the Second Amendment (e.g. [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

Despite these poorly understood and vastly propagandized events Aurora and Sandy Hook have been imbued in the public mind on a scale comparable to the September 11, 2001 “terror attacks.” This is the case even though there are now far more contradictions and unanswered questions concerning both events than when they initially transpired.

In the case of Newtown local and state authorities have had difficulty responding to numerous public records requests simply querying on the most fundamental documents to confirm whether the event ever took place as reported by major news media. The very news outlets sensationalizing the massacre have long since moved on to solicit the most recent bloodlettings in Charleston, Chattanooga, and Lafayette.

Corporate news outlets indeed know how the public fears being involved in such an event. According to one nationwide survey of adults highlighted in the CRS study,

Americans’ top fears include 1) walking alone at night, 2) becoming the victim of identity theft, 3) various risks of using the Internet, 4) being the victim of a mass shooting, and 5) public speaking.

Most Americans learn of catastrophic events from television news, and overwhelmingly rely on the video display of news to make sense of their world. The corporate media chieftains and their subordinate producers and editors overseeing the modern consciousness industry thus have free reign to manipulate the thoughts, fears, even the dreams of the populace, thereby shaping the psychic basis for what is deemed desirable public policy. They choose specific stories and gauge the extent of their exposure to craft national public opinion and dismiss others not upholding certain agendas, such as race-based social tension and gun control. As the observations below suggest, Time Warner’s CNN is a central agent in bolstering such perspectives.

A cursory examination of recent broadcast news may prove helpful in demonstrating today’s psywar on the American people. Coverage of the July 18, 2015 shooting at a military recruiting station and base in Chattanooga Tennessee, and the July 23, 2015 massacre in a Lafayette Louisiana movie theater are illustrative. Each incident resulted in profuse media attention, making the events impossible to overlook.

Yet equally tragic and alarming mass murders transpired on these exact dates with comparatively little reportage or commentary from corporate media. For example, on July 18 in Northern California one Martin Martinez was charged with the murders of three young children and two women, one of whom was a practicing physician.

On July 23 two teenage boys were taken into custody in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma as suspects in the brutal stabbing deaths of five family members. The scene was so disturbing that even responding police officers were visibly shaken, a rare story by [NBC News](#) [noted](#). “The crime scene has taken a pretty heavy toll on officers who have come out here,” a Broken Arrow policeman remarked. “It hits close to home, especially when the victims are adults and juveniles. Our officers have a lot to take in.”

Comparing the coverage of these four comparable events that transpired on or around the same dates indexed by the LexisNexis database, one finds the privileged stories chose to impress upon the public mind the alleged problem of “love wolves,” their purported ideological predispositions—in these instances Muslim and Nazi-racist fanaticism—and the apparent ease with which they have obtained firearms.

Chattanooga Marine Base Shooting Coverage in Broadcast News, July 16-23, 2015 via LexisNexis

Total Story Transcript Yield: 389

Various Independent and Network Affiliate Broadcasts — 120

CNN — 119

Fox News — 36

CBS News — 21

ABC News — 19

NBC News — 14

MSNBC — 12

Federal News Service — 10

National Public Radio — 8

Channel News Asia — 6

CNN International — 6

Canadian Television Network — 4

Lou Dobbs Tonight — 4

Congressional Quarterly Transcriptions — 3

Euronews English — 3

PBS NewsHour — 3

ABC Australia — 1

Modesto California Mass Murder Broadcast News Coverage, July 18-25, 2015 via LexisNexis

Total Story Transcript Yield: 22

Various Independent and Network Affiliate Broadcasts — 17

CNN — 1

ABC News — 1

CBS News — 1

NBC News — 1

Canadian Television Network — 1

Lafayette Theater Shooting Broadcast News Coverage, July 23-30, 2015 via LexisNexis

Total Story Transcript Yield: 343

Various Independent and Network Affiliate Broadcasts — 161

CNN — 78

Fox News — 9

CBS News — 22

ABC News — 21

NBC News — 13

MSNBC — 12

Federal News Service — 9
Canadian Television Network — 3
National Public Radio — 2
Congressional Quarterly Transcriptions — 3
Channel News Asia — 2
CNN International — 2
Euronews English — 2
PBS NewsHour — 1
Financial Market Regulatory Wire — 1
Lou Dobbs Tonight — 1



On the same day of the Louisiana movie theater shooting, two teenagers were charged in Oklahoma with the stabbing deaths of five family members. The latter story was largely overlooked by major news media.

Broken Arrow Oklahoma Mass Stabbing Broadcast News Coverage, July 23-30, 2015

Total Story Transcript Yield: 7

Various Independent and Network Affiliate Broadcasts — 4
CNN — 1
ABC — 1
NBC — 1

How can one explain such disparate coverage? It may be attributable to the random nature of editorial decision-making at major news outlets. A more critical analysis, however, suggests a coordinated effort to maneuver public opinion behind the “war on terror” and continued public acceptance of America’s police state.

Can this merely be dismissed as “conspiracy theory”? It is well established that CNN and NPR have collaborated with US military psychological warfare experts in recent years. “CNN had hosted a total of five interns from U.S. Army Psyops, two in television, two in radio, and one in satellite operations,” [Project Censored noted](#) in the early 2000s, citing coverage of the phenomenon in both alternative and mainstream outlets.

The military/CNN personnel belonged to the airmobile Fourth Psychological Operations Group stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One of the main tasks of this group of almost 1,200 soldiers and officers is to spread “selected information.” The propaganda group was involved in the Gulf War, the war in Bosnia, and the crisis in Kosovo.

The military personnel stayed with CNN for at least two weeks “to get to know the company and to broaden their horizons.” Collins maintains that “they didn’t work under the control of the army.” The temporary outplacement of U.S. Army Psyops personnel in various sectors of society began a couple of years ago. Contract periods vary from weeks to one year.

In light of the Sandy Hook and Aurora events, in addition to other sensationalized mass shootings like those referenced above, it is not unreasonable to question whether CNN and other major news outlets are again carrying out such exercises. Given the corporate news media and federal government's accelerating arrogance and lack of accountability, would the public ever be privy to such a scheme?

With the above comparisons in mind one needs to seriously consider the extent to which CNN and other news outlets are again working with intelligence and/or military psywar personnel to essentially "brainwash the American public" on crucial issues such as gun control, as former Attorney General Eric Holder [recommended in 1995](#).

There is an all too apparent intent behind today's terrorist and mass shooting events—an insidious and fraudulent effort to rob people of not only their constitutional freedoms but also their peace of mind and ability to exercise basic free association in their communities. This brings a whole new meaning to the term "terrorism," as well as the real parties actually implicated in the psychic torment of a once free nation.

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James F. Tracy was a tenured Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Florida Atlantic University from 2002 to 2016. He was fired by FAU ostensibly for violating the university's policies imposed on the free speech rights of faculty. Tracy has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the university, with trial set to begin November 27, 2017. Tracy received his PhD from University of Iowa. His work on media history, politics and culture has appeared in a wide variety of academic journals, edited volumes, and alternative news and opinion outlets. Additional information is available at [MemoryHoleBlog.com](#), [TracyLegalDefense.org](#), and [jamesftracy.wordpress.com](#).

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