

Are you 'complicit with evil?'

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PICK A SIDE IN RHETORICAL POLITICS

BY IAN VAN ORDEN
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

Fake News. Nazis. Fascists. Are you complicit with evil?

Though extreme political rhetoric has existed since the earliest days of our country, it's hard to deny that we live in an extremely polarized climate today. The last decade has seen a shift towards extreme tribalism, with citizens and voters being pulled to one side of the aisle or the other by the party they belong to. Today, you're either a Republican or a Democrat. You either support President Donald Trump or you're part of the resistance. There's very little room for nuance.

A part of this shift has been the ramping up of speech used on both sides. Many would place the blame for this on the President, who undeniably uses speech that would have previously been considered unbecoming of the office of the president. President Trump constantly derides specific media organizations, such as CNN, for being "fake news."

Supporters of the president elected him for this same rhetoric, exhausted by the shift of those on the left towards ideas like political correctness.

Who's really to blame? Is it President Trump? The "Fake News" media? Liberal or conservative politicians? All of the above.

It's impossible to pinpoint exactly when this process began, when political rhetoric began to ramp up the way it has, but it has certainly accelerated during the President's term. Recent events have made that quite clear.

Just this week, two incidents have been widely reported by various news organizations. The most recent, the shooting at the Tree of Life Congregation Synagogue in Pittsburgh Saturday, took the lives of 11 victims. Six others were injured, including four responding officers. The suspect in the shooting, who was taken into custody after a gunfight with police, is believed to have shouted anti-Semitic comments while initiating the attack.

The second, taking place last week, involved a man sending pipe bombs to various liberal figures, including Hillary Clinton and former President Barack Obama. None of the devices exploded, but the intention was clear.

It didn't take long for the President's rhetoric to be blamed for both attacks.

"You can draw a direct line from all of the vitriol and hate rhetoric about the caravan that's some 2,000 miles away from our border and the gunman in Pittsburgh, who referenced that, and somehow turned it into an attack on Jews," said CNN host

Alisyn Camerota on Monday, referring, in part, to the President's own words about the migrant caravan currently making its way through Mexico.

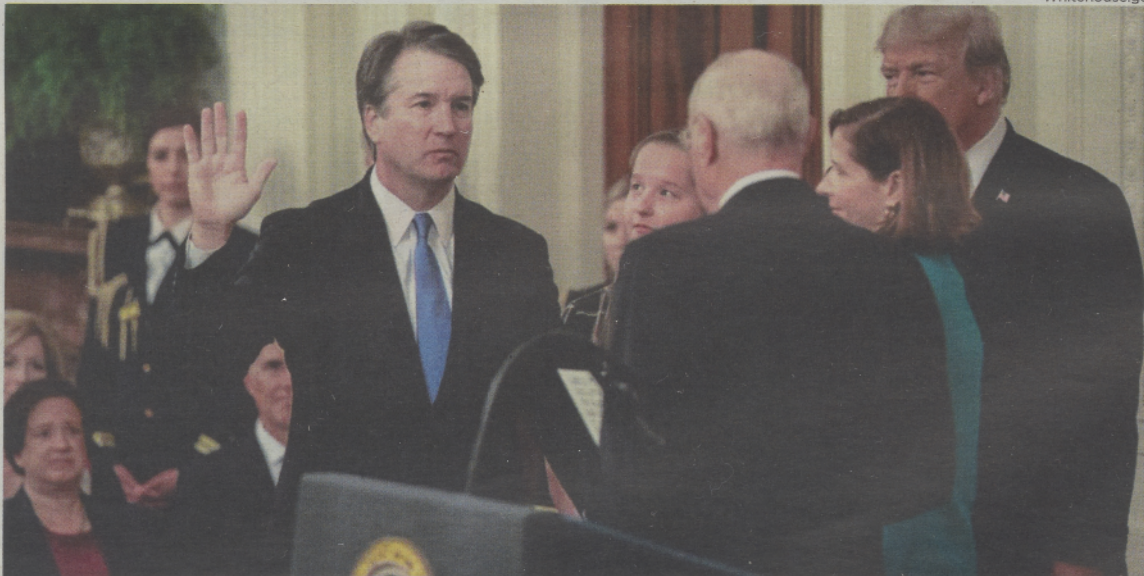
Likewise, in the aftermath of the pipe bomb incident, CNN political analyst John Avlon took the time to list how many times the President had criticized the targets of the pipe bombs, implying that his rhetoric was the reason for the failed bombings.

It isn't, however, reasonable to blame the President for every attack that has taken place over the last few years. Only a few weeks earlier, after all, a Utah resident mailed suspicious envelopes to the President as well as other military leaders, some of which contained ingredients used in the creation of the poison ricin.

2017 saw the shooting of House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, a Republican House Representative from Louisiana while he played baseball with a number of other members of Congress. Scalise was critically injured in the shooting, as was Matt Mika, a Tyson Foods lobbyist, who was shot multiple times.

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Brett Kavanaugh, left, is sworn in as the United State's 114th Supreme Court Justice on Oct. 6. Before the Kavanaugh scandal, U.S. Senator Cory Booker said supporters of Kavanaugh were "complicit with evil." Read more about Booker on our web published article.

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