

**Republican Perspective**  
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**Searching for Motives**

My son picked me up from a too early flight on Sunday, June 12. Had I heard any news that morning? No, I'd been in transit. He told me there had been a terrorist attack in Florida. An attack on a gay nightclub. It was being reported that the attacker was an Islamic terrorist. Twenty dead, as far as was then known---but it would be more. Eventually 49, the largest mass shooting in American history.

(Lest you think America holds the world record, it's not even close. In July 2011, a mass shooting in Norway---strict gun control, even police are unarmed---left 68 dead, 110 more wounded.)

By the time my son delivered me home, more was known. The killer had stopped 20 minutes into his bloodthirsty labors to call 911. In that call (it later turned out there were three calls) he told the dispatcher that he was killing in support of the Islamic State (ISIS). He also took the time to praise the Boston marathon bombers. Perhaps in an effort to facilitate the investigation sure to follow his butchery, or more likely to taunt the police, he had publicly announced his motive. The local 911 answering center, the local police, and the FBI all knew he was a self-described jihadi terrorist.

When I got into my house, California Representative Adam Schiff, top Democrat on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, was on TV describing the killer's 911 pledge of allegiance to ISIS. Well, that does it. Everyone watching TV that morning (there was nothing else on) knew that the killer was an Islamic terrorist. Case closed. Well, maybe.

President Obama would come on TV soon to make a statement to the Nation concerning the terrorist massacre. His message was incrementally delayed. Viewers were assured that he was getting up-to-the-minute updates from the FBI director. Finally, the President appeared.

Since the killer had been thoughtful enough to publicly explain his motivation, imagine my surprise when the President claimed ignorance: "We've reached no definitive judgment on the precise motivations of the killer...we must spare no effort to determine what, if any, inspiration or association the killer may have had with terrorist groups." Wow---the killer says he's a jihadi, but the President is not so sure.

Now correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't the terrorist just tell us all, publicly, that his

motivation was his allegiance to the Islamic State? Was the President not paying attention during his up-to-the-minute briefings from the FBI director? Was he somehow not watching the news coverage on TV with the rest of America? How is it that he did not know of the killer's declaration of allegiance?

Fast-forward to July 7. Another savage opened fire on an apparently peaceful rally in Dallas, where protestors were expressing concern over two recent killings of black men by white police officers in Louisiana and Minnesota. The killer did not fire indiscriminately into the protest. He killed five white police officers and injured more. He also hit two civilians.

The assassin was soon cornered by Dallas police and killed. But not before he explained his motives to negotiators. At a Friday July 8 press conference, Dallas Police Chief David Brown told the world that the killer had said before his death that he was motivated by Black Lives Matter. The Chief said "He wanted to kill officers, and he expressed killing white people. He expressed killing white officers."

Aha! Another open-and-shut case. Another killer has been helpful to explain the motivation for his crime. In his own words, he has told the world his racist motivation.

Our Commander in Chief was at a NATO conference in Poland, but took time out on Sunday, July 9 to comment on this tragedy. His offering was that it is "very hard to untangle the motives" of the killer.

Now remember that the killer himself had explained his motive, and that the Dallas police chief had in turn explained the stated motive to us all in his (by then yesterday) news conference. And the motive was simple. It did not need untangling. The motive was to kill white people---especially white policemen.

Even in Poland, the President must have been receiving news from stateside. Were his staff shielding him from the facts, keeping him away from CNN World? Unlikely.

Now I'm taking a leap of faith, but I do believe that the President of the United States has a staff that keeps him fully updated on significant events, even (or especially) when he's traveling. So how to explain that when all the world knew of the self-confessed motives of the Orlando and the Dallas murderers, our President was left oblivious of their declarations.

Well, in the first case, the motive was jihad. In the second, the motive was racism against whites. Perhaps jihad in America and black racism do not fit the President's world view. Perhaps the President thought some other more palatable motives might somehow emerge.

In any event, in his initial statements he was unable to admit to these publicly-expressed confessions. Or unwilling.