



## The New Gonzo Journal

### The Unsolicited Social Media Snuff Film.

*"Put a candle in the window, 'cause I feel I've got to move. Though I'm going, going, I'll be coming home soon, Long as I can see the light..."*

***Long as I See The Light***

***Creedence Clear Water Revival***

Social media is a cancer on the face of society. What was once created to bring us all together, is slowly separating us. The internet was created for it's sole purpose of giving us access to knowledge, of which we at one time could never quite comprehend being possible. Super computers of days gone by, had not even a fifth of the processing power of what we now all carry in our pockets. It's a fascinating and powerful image, to know that the technology we've designed to innovate our lives, and imbue our minds with wisdom from all corners, is actually making us dumber. We were once as a species, sharp as razors, but now we have been dulled and could barely cut an impression with a post... Oh, what a world.

There is one particular cesspool of uncensored debauchery, pain, misery, suffering and propaganda, that takes the crown of being the absolute pinnacle of social media tumour on our psyche, and that is Elon Musk's X. The app was once praised - post his takeover - as being a breeding ground and encouraging space to protect freedom of speech. No longer were the legacy media goons in charge, now you get to be the journalist. A preposterous notion when you consider half of what old Musky is trying to prove here, is that there is more truth on X than there is in the mainstream media, yet X is now potentially the

most unfiltered and prevalent supplier/ dispenser of misinformation across our digital landscape. It certainly has my stomach turning on a regular occurrence. That's not to say that I don't see a benefit to seeing fools get suckered into a "free" to use app, where you need but only make an account, before deciding to spew out opinions that you expect to be validated by at least someone. For some bizarre reason this is the way the world works now - opinions unfettered and shared brazenly, only to be met with an abundance of accolades, from those that are not only sharing the same opinion, but are ready to start kicking back against human decency and just go hell for leather with racism, bigotry, misogyny, etc. etc. When will it end? Certainly not in this past week, where X has shown the best and brightest are to be burdened by the filth and scum of the earth.

It's a shame also, that we haven't realised when there is no product being purchased, then you become the product... a battery for advertising and algorithms, whilst your dopamine is sapped by each click, just to keep some prick rich. But sure, the legacy media is the issue... Oh, what sweet irony, eh?

As most humans do these days, I check in on social media, for a bit of connection and to see what is going on in the world from an 'on the ground perspective' - I then add to this a little context by using established news apps; Sky, BBC and one of my personal favourites, Straight Arrow News (An excellent platform for non-biased news, that prides itself on giving straight facts, but also showing you where stories are being reported in the political spectrum - after all, each and every news outlet is affiliated in some way to a political agenda or party). I found myself doing a quick check on X during the evening of Wednesday the tenth of September. A few of the usual culprits are posting away the usual swill on my follow section, so after I get bored of some of the same old same old, I swipe across left to the 'for you' section and immediately am met with an up close video of a political character I've spent plenty of time listening to and being made aware of. Charlie Kirk is sat in a white t shirt emblazoned with the word **freedom**, with banners above his head saying the usual 'prove me wrong' and I am reminded that his 'The American Comeback Tour' has kicked in. A revisit and revival of his usual campus tours, where he aims to target

generally liberal leaning educational institutions, to debate their students and convince them that Christ is king and that college is a scam, and DEI is the worst thing to happen to industry and that blacks are committing more crimes, whilst demonstrating how out of touch the left are starting to become when the topic of women's rights are discussed - such as the fun time question of asking; what is a woman?

I don't necessarily support all of Kirks views - I doubt anybody genuinely could. I've always had a tough time accepting any political figure that advocates for the exact opposite of a separation of church from state. In my opinion, they must indeed be kept separate - mostly because faith is a personal and individual journey, one that we should all have the right to decide upon and I feel strongly that no government should make you swear on a book, of which contents you don't believe in. That said, I respected Charlies approach to political discourse, even if at times he was a bit crafty with the obvious clipping techniques he would use in a debate, to shut down an argument he wasn't confident he could win and that being cocky, and interrupting would dissipate any risk of looking like a loser. The main part of his platform of 'Turning Point USA' I enjoyed most however, is that he was doing this all with an old school flare. Getting out there and actually entering into the debate space - not hiding behind social media walls or talking into a camera only with no community response or engagement. He exercised free speech with reckless abandon whilst having a blast doing it. The first amendment in pure action on the green of grass politics.

The video continues to progress as Charlie is pressed on how many mass shooters have been trans, Charlie says; "Too many" and then he is asked how many mass shootings have taken place in the US in the last year, Charlie asks; "Including or not including gang violence?" - POP! Within a second of him uttering the last word of this question, he is jolted up in his seat as it's clear something has penetrated his neck on his left side, where blood begins to gush, his arms pull up, fists clenched and he slumps back in his chair, to be caught by his aides and security as screaming and shouting breaks out - the college campus audience screams and scrambles to escape to safety. No more gunshots ensue and all that can be heard now are the screams.

Of course, the algorithm has now identified that I have not taken my eyes off this 43 second (ish) length clip which I have of course watched twice to confirm what I have just seen, so it pushes another video; this time from a different angle, where an attendee is filming now from left of stage. POP! The gunshot rings out and blood spews again from his neck as he slumps back, almost lifeless. The videos keep repeating.

Over.

**Make.**

Over.

**This.**

Over.

Over.

Over.

Over.

## **STOP!**

No matter how many times I reload the feed, or try to get away from this horrific video, it keeps following me across the X interface. I close and restart the app to stop seeing such a painful to watch spectacle.

This isn't like JFK in the sixties, where the live footage was cut immediately - everyone saw what they saw but it was gone from view, only to be in the flash of memory that it was first singed into the hippocampus. No, this is political violence on repeat, like a bad rerun of a comedy no one wants to watch anymore. There are no Friends here. Not now. Someone is out

for blood, and they've got it, with a precise shot. With my military experience, I already know this is a high powered hunting or semi-automatic rifle, either a .22 or .33, at a range of perhaps 200-300 metres judging by the sound and the impact. The posts start to come up different now after several resets of the app.

"Charlie Kirk has been shot!"

"Right-wing Activist Charlie Kirk has been shot and is fighting for his life in hospital. Pray for him."

Despite not knowing Charlie or being affiliated with his ilk, I couldn't believe we had just entered this dark day for western democracy. Instead of someone entering into the arena of ideas with Charlie - of which he so passionately set out and set up, welcome anyone and everyone to debate him - someone has taken the cowards way out of pulling a trigger. Despite all the hope I had for those desperate for Charlie to make it through, it was clear from the footage that both the carotid artery and jugular vein had been severed - especially considering the levels of blood. One poster on X asked a question as to why Charlie didn't react; hold the wound or look in pain - but I knew that the reaction from the arms and the instantaneous appearance of loss of consciousness meant that he had already suffered a brain injury. The size of this particular calibre of round would have hit part of the brain stem, almost certainly meaning he was dying in that video... despite my knowledge of battle medical science I really wanted those that were asking for prayers, to get the outcome they had asked for.

It didn't come. Within the hour, Charlie Kirks death was announced by President Donald Trump, of whom Kirk was a close ally and acolyte, as well as a prominent figure in his MAGA movement - Kirk through 'Turning Point USA', arguably gained Trump the youth vote he may have been lacking and most certainly helped to turn around some of the more prominent democrat states into the Republican parties favour.

At this announcement, it was now clear to me that we hadn't just watched a hideous form of an attack or attempt at someone's life, that would soon be a cautionary video of gun violence in America, pushed for political reasons and perhaps start a healthy debate on gun reform whilst Charlie recovers, rethinking his comeback. No, instead what I, as millions of others had been forced to watch, was a snuff film, the likes that deranged individuals would have to go searching for back in the day by logging into the dark web. The type of video that shouldn't just be simply accessed by an app on your smartphone!

How can this be the future of social media and free expression? Where anyone with a thumb and a spare five minutes, whilst being of a certain age can watch death in 4k with no restrictions at all and then repeat the watch over and over.

I monitored the reactions from people following the presidents confirmation. Upset, heartache, fear, paranoia. Then the worm really started to turn once all those that opposed Kirks views were posting their videos celebrating his death. Say what you want about Kirk, but he broke no laws and committed no violent crimes. He said some heinous words, but words are not violence and as soon as we treat them as such, then the only answer in the minds of some is to act it out, with a hunting rifle from the roof of a college campus, against a thirty one year old man, whose whole life was ahead of him and whose wife and two young children watched from the sidelines as their father bled to death, all for saying something that someone felt the entitlement to believe they shouldn't be hearing, just because they were offended by it. Are people really so arrogant to believe they can go through life and that others should tip toe around them, because they believe one thing and they another, and that we should not disagree on anything? A world with no discourse such as this would be a painful place to exist in and would certainly not be one that allows us to have the freedoms we currently enjoy as part of a democracy.

To add to this, I have a history of PTSD, and although I've never acted victim to it, and I still won't. I also despise trigger warnings because life doesn't give you them and we must learn to cope with what can come out of it, but I certainly don't expect a social media platform to give me such

a relapse as I experienced on this evening. As a new father, I couldn't help that my humanity became engrossed in feeling such sorrow for Kirks family, especially his daughter - who was reported to in the chaos that ensued, fearing what was happening, desperately tried to get to her father for comfort, completely unaware that all of the upset that was felt in the crowd, was because Daddy had been shot and Daddy was dying...

That was it... my breathing took on a rapid pace, the tears began to flow, and I remembered all the suffering and pain I witnessed in the Middle East. Except, it's not over there or somewhere else anymore. The enemies are right in front of you, and they're taking shots at those you may look up to, robbing families of their fathers, brothers and sons, all because they said some words that offended someone. You have a disagreement or a different point of view, then someone in the states is going to be radicalised by all the bad actors on social media, to take up arms and start blasting.

What's worse, is that the state of the platform X, means that the visceral video has now been shared billions of times and is almost near impossible to remove or escape from. Coupled with it are now all the celebration videos from those lacking in any basic humanity. All to be dredged up for years to come, so once Kirks daughter and son come of age, they too can have this snuff film forced upon them... it's one thing to grow up without a parent, it's another to have their last moment broadcast in all it's bloody and tragic glory worldwide, for the pleasure of the sick fucks and the displeasure of the only humans left that are starting to wise up to the dangers and woes of social media platforms such as X.

As a race, we have to do better. I've had enough of social media. I am tired of it being used to stoke hatred, to push these images of pain and suffering to not only those that need to see it to learn a lesson (or so some believe), but to the innocent whose lives will never be the same once this type of media is viewed - just as my life was forever changed by watching the planes fly into the towers that led me to find myself on the frontlines some years later; this bullet hitting Charlies neck is now a defining moment for many others, the JFK moment of their generation.

I fear X is now the bedrock for extremism, misinformation, poor representation and doesn't reflect the world in its true state. It's simply now the cheapest and easiest way to radicalise anyone and everyone.

If you see the video of Charlie, don't watch it... report it and ask them to take it down, for Kirks wife and kids...

For **everyone's** kids...

Elon Musk - You'll probably never read this, but if you do, please realise that there is absolutely no story that has been written where the billionaire turns out to be the good guy. So, look, go for it, keep chucking up your rockets with promises of us living on Mars and whilst you're at it, keep supporting Ukraine with Starlink access so they can fight back and save their sovereignty, I support these. Good on ya. But, if you keep allowing X to remain as it is, all this "saving humanity" talk you keep spouting, will be for naught, because we'll have all seen more of these unsolicited snuff movies have been radicalised by your misinformation, a long with the other bad actors who believe themselves heroes, and have killed each other off due to a dispute of ideas... I'm confident this isn't what you want, especially being the kind of guy that sells electric cars - quite possibly the biggest liberal side hustle one could have whilst playing space man.

The state of social media is just more fat in the fire. A fire that is now burning brighter and higher than ever. Kirk believed there was a God and he may be right, but I hasten to bet any God that does exist, with the flames stoked as they now are from humanities transgressions against one another, is being forced to close his eyes...

Dr. S. P Koutsoumanis