

Connecting the Dots – Part 2

✘ Imagine that there are anti-poverty demonstrations all over the country. Imagine that speakers get up at podiums and address big crowds, telling them that it's morally wrong to have so many poor people in America; that poverty is unjust; that poverty must end in America.

Imagine that they march with signs to stamp out poverty. And imagine that they talk to news reporters who run their sound bites on the evening news: "Poverty is un-American. It must be wiped out."

Imagine, too, that the demonstrators are peaceful. They don't throw rocks. They don't attack folks who disagree with them.

Now imagine that a poor man in, say, Cleveland, decides that he is tired of being poor. So he goes into a 7-11, sticks a gun in the clerk's face, shoots the clerk in the head and walks out with \$75.

Now try to imagine one more thing: that so-called mainstream news organizations play connect the dots. They write stories about how the gunman in Cleveland and the anti-poverty movement "share core beliefs," that both are against poverty.

There are stories in the Washington Post and Time magazine and New York magazine all pretty much saying the same thing: the gunman in Cleveland told police he was tired of being poor, that he felt it a grave injustice that other Americans had money and that he didn't. And then, they all add one more observation: the gunman in Cleveland was pretty much saying what all those anti-poverty movement people have been saying.

Forgive me for stating the obvious: It would never happen. Nor should it ever happen. To connect those dots would amount to journalistic malpractice. No honest reporter would ever do such a thing. Unless ...

Unless he was so biased and so detested the kind of people who went to those anti-poverty demonstrations – and was out to smear *by innuendo* the whole anti-poverty movement.

Unless you replace the words “anti-poverty movement” with “tea party movement.”

Unless you replace “Cleveland gunman” with “Austin pilot.”

From the Washington Post: the pilot’s “alienation is similar to that we’re hearing from the extreme elements of the Tea Party movement.”

From New York magazine: the pilot’s rhetoric “could have been taken directly from a handwritten sign at a tea party rally.”

From Time magazine: a link, in bright red letters, right in the middle of the Austin plane crash story ... taking the reader to another story – about tea parties.

All those things I just mentioned really happened, they all appeared in so-called mainstream publications, even though the kamikaze pilot never attended a tea party demonstration in his life. You think, just maybe, those reporters and their editors were out to smear *by innuendo* the Tea Party movement?

Connect the dots.