

# The Right's Mockery of a Liberal Journalist's Assault



Yesterday afternoon, *The Guardian's* Ben Jacobs grabbed immediate Internet and media attention when he tweeted, "Greg Gianforte just body slammed me and broke my glasses". Gianforte is a Republican House candidate in today's special election in Montana, a race that has drawn a lot of media coverage.

Other reports quickly came in, corroborating that some type of skirmish had indeed taken place between Gianforte and Jacobs, with Jacobs ending up on a floor at the *Gianforte for Congress* headquarters in Bozeman. Police and paramedics were on the scene, and additional details were developing.

Jacobs soon returned to Twitter, stating that there were witnesses to the assault, and that the altercation had been captured audio, which would be posted soon on *The Guardian's* website. When it was, it painted a pretty damning picture of a politician who inexplicably lost it when asked a simple question about the CBO's new score of the American Health Care Act.

As a conservative who follows a lot of right-leaning thinkers on Twitter, I was taken back by many of the reactions I was reading. While there were some responsible voices out there condemning Gianforte's conduct, there were also many people insisting that Jacobs was lying about the incident, simply because he's a liberal. And when additional evidence came forward (like a Fox News team seeing what had happened, and confirming Jacobs' account), the tweets turned to mockery of Jacobs for being a wimp, and even the excusing of what Gianforte had done.

Of course, there's a ton of over-the-top political rancor on social media these days. Much of it comes from anonymous individuals and political hacks who don't have a lot of integrity to begin with. What really surprised me in this case, however, were how many notable right-leaning journalists were joining in with the chorus.

Tim Graham of *NewsBusters* and the *Media Research Center* (who has done a lot of fine work that has been cited on this very website), tweeted:

**"Let's ask why on Earth a House candidate in Montana should have to answer questions from a reporter for a BRITISH newspaper????"**

It wasn't a joke. Earlier he tweeted:

**"It is wrong, and well, unusual, to apparently hurt a reporter's elbow over a CBO score. But HOW is this a half-hour story on MSNBC???"**

Obviously, the connotations were more serious than a reporter's hurt elbow, and if a journalist had been assaulted by a Democratic politician, it certainly would have received substantial coverage from every conservative news-media outlet, including NewsBusters.

Graham's boss, Bret Bozell, was even less sympathetic to what

had happened to Jacobs, tweeting the next day:

**“Jacobs is an obnoxious, dishonest first class jerk. I’m not surprised he got smacked.”**

Derek Hunter of the *The Daily Caller* and *Townhall* tweeted:

**“Did baby journo get a booboo? Don’t go to Montana if you cry over a bump.”**

and...

**“What kind of a wuss files charges over broken glasses? Someone who wants to influence an outcome, that’s who. #JournalismIsDead.”**

*Townhall’s* Kurt Schlichter initially believed Jacobs to be lying. When the reporter posted the audio of the assault, Schlichter responded with:

**“I’ll go find a breeding kennel if i want to listen to bitches.”**

His take later evolved into:

**“It’s not that I think reporters should be attacked. It’s that I’m not going to care more about them than they do about me.”**

and...

**It’s fair to care as much about liberal journalists getting slugged as liberal journalists care about conservatives getting slugged.**

Laura Ingraham put forth this gem:

**“Did anyone get his lunch money stolen today and then run to tell the recess monitor?”**

Again, these were the thoughts of fellow journalists and news personalities who should know better, not anonymous Internet

trolls.

I get that social media makes it very easy for people to reflexively say things they might later regret. And some of the individuals mentioned above did later explain that they believed Gianforte did the wrong thing. But it's important to recognize from the onset that journalists in this country should be able to ask questions of politicians without having to worry about retaliatory violence.

Now, this isn't an indictment of the conservative media by any means. There were plenty of respected conservatives who were condemning Gianforte and the people excusing him – individuals like Stephen Hayes, Ben Shapiro, Guy Benson, Rick Wilson, and Jim Treacher.

Still, too many went the other way.

Believe me, I understand how much damage the liberal media has caused to this country. I've been writing about it for years. But dismissing the physical assault of a liberal journalist, because of it, only succeeds in validating the Left's age-long stereotypes of the Right.

Some might reply to that previous sentence with "Who cares what the Left says or thinks?" That's certainly the sentiment held by many on the Right these days, having won the presidency with a Republican candidate that shattered the progressive movement's long observed rules of political correctness.

The answer is that we should care, because there's a difference between political correctness and common decency, and we've forfeited enough of the latter.

**Editor's Note (from John): Since the publishing of this column, I've received responses from prominent conservatives telling me that Ben Jacobs is a bad guy, who has taken a number of journalistic cheap-shots at good individuals on the**

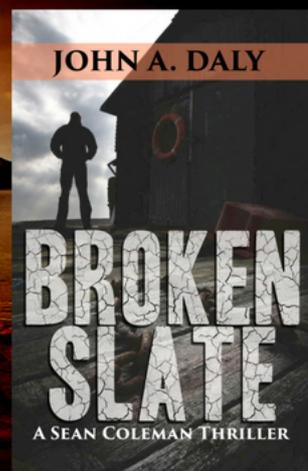
Right. This may well be true. I'm not very familiar with Jacobs. But his personal character is irrelevant to this column. Jacobs was doing his job as a reporter when he was physically assaulted. That's wrong, regardless of political rivalries. My position remains the same.

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