

Off the Cuff: When Even Liberals Get Sick of Political Correctness



I've long argued that too many liberals have forgotten *how* to be liberal. They've become authoritarian. They want to shut down ideas they don't like. Even *some* liberals have gotten sick of it, Piers Morgan among them.

That's the topic of my new **"Off the Cuff"** audio commentary.

Here's a short intro from me (clicking on the *play* (arrow) button to listen), and then watch the interview I refer to below it:

<http://bernardgoldberg.com/wp-content/uploads/otcMorganIntro.m4a>

Piers Morgan talks to Ben Shapiro about "the liberals getting it terribly wrong":

Side note: If you're a Premium Interactive member (the \$4 tier), and have a question for this Friday's Q&A, make sure to get it to me before Wednesday night at midnight. You can use this form on my website.

Piers Morgan's Insulting Anti-Gun Crusade

☒ Like 99.9% of the U.S. population, I don't watch Piers Morgan's ratings-starved show on CNN. However, when the snarky Brit occasionally manages to earn himself a headline on *The Drudge Report* through an asinine comment or chaotic interview segment, I'll find myself checking out the video on *YouTube* like everyone else. I'm only human, after all.

Morgan's been showing up on *Drudge* quite a bit lately due to his outspoken, on-air anti-gun crusade which began after the terrible Sandy Hook shooting. To the surprise of many, however, the segments have been widely praised as informative and productive breaths of fresh air which have offered thoughtful representations of both sides of the gun control issue.

Just kidding! They've been nothing more than mindless, embarrassing farces.

Seemingly taking the advice of Rahm "Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste" Emanuel, Morgan has used the Sandy Hook tragedy as a ratings ploy to turn what should be a serious national debate – about how to best protect our children in the classrooms – into a shameless, self-serving, media-circus sideshow.

From reviewing the segments, the regular routine seems to be for Morgan to invite on a gun-rights advocate, pretend to listen to what they have to say for about thirty seconds, then erupt into a blistering and sanctimonious diatribe on how the guest is an ignorant, heartless monster who couldn't care less about dead children.

The animated displays would be amusing if the premise for the dialogue wasn't so heartbreaking.

In the early days following the shooting, Morgan took on notable representatives from gun-rights groups. However, he seemed to realize pretty quickly that his arguments didn't hold up particularly well against informed rebuttals. "You're an unbelievably stupid man, aren't you?" a frustrated Morgan resorted to saying to Larry Pratt, executive director of Gun Owners of America, when Pratt called into question Morgan's proclaimed moral high-ground on the issue.

Thus, the pro-gun guest list has been pared down to twangy gun store owners wearing cowboy hats with rims wider than the top of my kitchen table, and this week, a 9/11 conspiracy theorist who couldn't manage to fly to New York for the interview without getting into an altercation with TSA agents at the airport.

I must admit that I couldn't have even told you who the aforementioned conspiracy nut, Alex Jones, was until his viral appearance with Morgan on Monday – this despite the insistence of some of the liberals who comment on my columns that he's an *influential conservative voice*. As I watched Jones performing a self-unaware impersonation of Chris Farley while angrily ranting about the forthcoming American revolution, you could read the realization in Morgan's eyes that he truly was scraping the bottom of the barrel in his own fruitless search for personal relevance. You have to know your argument is pretty shallow when the only person you can win a debate against is an obnoxious man-child who won't let you speak.

While I don't doubt that Morgan, as a run of the mill lefty, probably *does* support crippling gun restrictions in this country, his daytime trash-TV approach to the topic reveals his real motivation behind the silly rants. CNN was obviously hoping for a big payoff from their Piers Morgan experiment two years ago, but things just haven't panned out. His show has been a ratings disaster. I have no problem with him trying creative things to capture an audience, but I don't at all like that he's doing it under the guise of paying homage to the Sandy Hook victims. That's just classless.

At least when Maury Povich reveals the results of DNA tests to identify the fathers of children, he doesn't claim to be doing so in the interest of *bringing families together*.

CNN's Failed Piers Morgan Experiment

✘ In September of 2010, CNN announced that British television personality, Piers Morgan would be taking over the retiring Larry King's television spot. King was winding down his long and prestigious broadcast career on a bit of a low note at CNN. His ratings had declined significantly in a time-slot that pitted him up against fiery, ideologically-driven programs on the other cable news networks. The evolution of the genre had left King behind. His mundane and incurious interview style still attracted A-list guests but it no longer attracted viewership.

The decision to bring Piers Morgan aboard demonstrated a conscious effort by CNN to try and catch the wave of fast-paced, often combative programming that the competition was

enjoying success with. American audiences had become familiar with the crass Brit from his role as a judge on the reality television series, *America's Got Talent*. The show let him promote a blunt-speaking, pretentious persona that mirrored that of *American Idol's* Simon Cowell. The clear hope was that Morgan would bring with him a cross-over audience.

Piers Morgan Tonight kept the same interview format that King had used but the CNN marketing department was quick to point out how Morgan's blazing personality and verbal brazenness would essentially cast him as the anti-King. Words like "unpredictable", "lively", and "challenging" were used in advertisements for the show with an animation of a smug Morgan crossing his arms and exuding confidence from every pore.

Things didn't go exactly as CNN had hoped they would.

Less than a year and a half after the debut of *Piers Morgan Tonight*, CNN's prime-time line-up just delivered its lowest rated month in two years. Morgan is earning roughly a third of the viewership that his predecessor Larry King was bringing in toward the end of his run, and *Hannity*, which airs at the same time on the FOX News Channel, routinely more than quadruples Morgan's ratings. Even FOX News' 3am show, *Red Eye with Greg Gutfeld*, consistently attracts a larger audience than Morgan.

The Piers Morgan Experiment has clearly failed, and it's just a matter of time before CNN is forced to go back to the drawing board. When they do, I hope they learn from what went wrong. In case they have some trouble figuring it out, maybe I can be of a little help...

In preserving the sit-down, one-on-one interview format, Morgan's producers should have known that viewers might actually want to hear what guests on the other side of the table have to say. Instead, the standard configuration of the show has been for Morgan to ask a provocative question to his guest, then eagerly interrupt them half way through the first

sentence of their answer to explain how he, himself feels about the topic. I can only guess that the justification for the irritating practice was a page borrowed from Bill O'Reilly's 'No Spin' playbook, but guests on Morgan's show typically aren't spinning or even debating the host. They're just trying to complete a thought... and he rarely lets them.

The result is a guest-oriented show that's all about the host. Thus, when viewers tune in to listen to the advertised guest, they instead are subjected to the imposing personal views of someone they don't find particularly interesting or thought-provoking. Let's face it... Even as sharp-tongued as Morgan is, he's essentially a run of the mill, lockstep liberal who rarely offers any unique insight. There's already an abundance of cable news personalities who parrot DNC talking points under the guise of moral responsibility. The market's saturated with them.

CNN clearly felt that Piers Morgan would bring something unique to their network... an edginess factor that they believed they were lacking. It always amuses me what the liberal media considers to be *edgy*. To them, edginess is the presentation of liberal viewpoints in a louder, more brazen manner than audiences are used to. They think Bill Maher is edgy. They think Joy Behar is edgy. Real edginess would be doing something outside of their own ideological comfort zone.

Imagine if CNN had the guts to fill that time spot with a show hosted by a fresh-faced conservative thinker like a Michele Malkin or even a Mary Katharine Ham – someone they could build a new audience off of. THAT would be an edgy move, but I'm certain CNN would simply laugh off such a notion, even at a time when they've got nothing left to lose. In addition to their prime time ratings being at a two year low, their network as a whole is suffering from its lowest overall viewership in ten years.

The one thing CNN has going for them is that they haven't

permanently tarnished their brand with the same broad stroke of hardcore, left-wing activism that MSNBC has. They're very much a part of the liberal media, but they also have a chance to show potential viewers that they're willing to offer up something different. For their own sake, they should consider doing that... and fast!