

Ted Nugent and His Conservative Media Enablers

✘ Ted Nugent, the gun-toting rocker with a big mouth, has done it again. His latest rant, not surprisingly, is about his favorite target, Barack Obama. This is what he recently told guns.com:

Barack Obama is a “Chicago communist-raised, communist-educated, communist-nurtured subhuman mongrel” and a “gangster.”

Even if you ignore the communist and gangster rhetoric, Nugent called the president of this country a “subhuman mongrel” – the same language, by the way, that Hitler used on the Jews and that slaveholders used to describe their slaves.

So it’s no surprise that liberals in the media jumped on the remark, noting that Nugent has been out campaigning for likely Republican nominee for governor of Texas, state Attorney General Greg Abbott.

On CNN, Wolf Blitzer said, “Nugent’s presence hit a sour note with a lot of people. They say Texans deserve better than a candidate who would align himself with someone like Nugent who offered a hate-filled assessment of the president. Shockingly, Abbott’s campaign brushed aside the criticism, saying they value Nugent’s commitment to the Second Amendment.”

This prompted Newt Gingrich, who’s also on CNN, to complain about the media double standard. “I always love selective media outrage. As the party of Hollywood, the Democrats have lots of donors and supporters who say truly stupid things. Truly outrageous things.”

Newt is right. There is a double standard. But he left out the most important part: Conservatives in the media are just

as guilty.

Here's how it works: If a conservative like Sarah Palin, is slimed by a liberal like Bill Maher conservatives are outraged and liberals couldn't care less. But when a liberal, like Barack Obama is slimed as a "subhuman mongrel," liberals are outraged and conservatives in the media pretty much ignore the story. Rule #1: Don't hold a member of your team accountable – it might give ammo to the enemy.

So when it comes to moral outrage, forgive me, neither liberals nor conservatives in the media have even an ounce of credibility.

As for Nugent, his latest comments are hardly his first. He once went on stage, decked out in his trademark camouflage, toting two machine guns, and told the crowd: "Obama, he's a piece of shit. I told him to suck on my machine gun." And then this, about another Nugent enemy: "Hey Hillary, you might want to ride one of these [machine guns] into the sunset, you worthless bitch."

So how did family values media conservatives respond – those conservatives who tell us they care deeply about civility and decency in our culture? Here's how: They continued to have him on as their guest. They continued treating him as a good guy. And why not? He's their pal. He's a *real* conservative. And he loves guns, too. What a guy!

And while I'm no fan of Ted Nugent, these media hacks really turn my stomach.

To their credit a few prominent Republicans said Nugent was way off base. Texas Governor Rick Perry said, "I got a problem calling the president a mongrel. I do have a problem with that."

And Rand Paul, who has presidential aspirations, went further, tweeting, "Ted Nugent's derogatory description of President

Obama is offensive and has no place in politics. He should apologize.”

After that, Nugent did apologize, sort of. “I do apologize—not necessarily to the President—but on behalf of much better men than myself.” He calls the President of the United States a “subhuman mongrel” and apologizes “not necessarily to the president.”

If Ted Nugent is sorry about anything, it’s only that he put Greg Abbott, the conservative Republican who wants to be governor of Texas, in a bad spot. After one of his rallies, Abbot told reporters, “I don’t know what he [Nugent] may have said or done in his background. What I do know is Ted Nugent stands for the Constitution. He stands against the federal government overreaching and doing what they are doing to harm Texas.”

But when he couldn’t put out the fire his pal Ted Nugent started, Abbott changed his tune. “This is not the kind of language I would use or endorse in any way,” he said before adding: “It’s time to move beyond this.”

Greg Abbott may be able to move beyond this and win the election, but no one will confuse him with a profile in courage. And the same goes for Nugent’s pathetic enablers in the conservative media.

Please let me know what you think by leaving a comment. Memo to Ted Nugent fans: Please, think before you write. And to all, tell your friends to sign up for free updates. Thanks.
Bernie Goldberg

Ted Nugent Shows How Metaphors Can Cross the Line

☒ From time to time, conservatives like myself become irritated with comedians like Jon Stewart who occasionally make truly offensive remarks, then play the “Hey, I’m a comedian” card to deflect criticism away from what they said. I do believe that as a rule of thumb, the rhetoric of people who make audiences laugh for a living probably *should* be taken less seriously than that of other public figures. Still, there are times when the lines of civility are so vilely crossed that the “Hey, I’m a comedian” defense just doesn’t wash. If you’d like some of the more notable examples, simply do a Google search on *Bill Maher and Sarah Palin*, or *David Letterman and Sarah Palin*, or *Louis CK and Sarah Palin*, or any other liberal comedian who has let their derangement with Mrs. Palin morph from humor into downright deviancy.

Comedy isn’t the only fuzzy area out there when it comes to evaluating whether or not rhetoric is genuinely over the top. Another realm sometimes worthy of critique is that of the *metaphor*. Metaphors are typically mundane – an easy way of presenting a point in perspective. And yes, they’re sometimes prone to silly, disingenuous interpretation at the expense of the people who use them. We see this sort of reaction in the world of politics all the time, where people accuse ideological opponents of making outrageous statements when in reality, they’re merely using a metaphor to make a contextual point.

One of my favorite examples of this came right after a speech former Democratic Senator Zell Miller delivered in 2004. Miller broke ranks with his party and spoke at the Republican National Convention in support of then president, George W. Bush. The speech was comprised of stinging criticisms that Miller directed at Bush’s opponent, Senator John Kerry, for

Kerry's numerous attempts to cut military spending. After Miller listed all of the weapon systems Kerry had voted against, he said, "This is the man who wants to be the commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces? U.S. forces armed with what, spit balls?"

Later that night, Miller appeared on MSNBC where he was interviewed by *Hardball* host, Chris Matthews. In one of the goofy on-air statements that Matthews has become known for, he asked Miller multiple times if he believed, "truthfully, that John Kerry wants to defend the country with spit balls." The insinuation, of course, was that Miller was a crack-pot.

Miller angrily blasted Matthews for the game he was playing, and even challenged the host to a *duel* over the feigned ignorance he was displaying toward a remark that clearly wasn't meant to be taken literally. It was an entertaining segment to say the least.

A more malicious example came in the wake of the Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords shooting in Tucson, Arizona. The liberal media repeatedly tried to tie Sarah Palin to the violence by pointing out her metaphorical and symbolic use of the commonly-used term, *targeted districts*, which was featured on one of Palin's websites. The website included Giffords' district on a map of the United States with a cross-hairs symbol over it. Somehow, in the minds of the media elite, that was enough evidence to suggest that Palin might have been a motivational co-conspirator to the shooter – an assertion that was nothing short of asinine.

With all of that being said, there *is* indeed a line that can be crossed when using metaphors, much in the same way that comedians can cross a line when they interchange humor with vile social commentary. And when that happens, it's not wrong for people to take exception and react seriously to such rhetoric.

I believe that rock star, Ted Nugent, crossed that line with comments he made recently about President Obama.

A fierce Second Amendment advocate, Nugent was speaking at the National Rifle Association last weekend when he made the following remarks regarding President Obama's 2008 election victory: "It isn't the enemy that ruined America. It's good people who bent over and let the enemy in. If the coyote's in your living room pissing on your couch, it's not the coyote's fault. It's your fault for not shooting him." He also stated, "If Barack Obama becomes the president in November, I will either be dead or in jail by this time next year."

The incident got the attention of the Secret Service who opened an investigation into Nugent, much to the anger of many conservatives who are standing behind the rock star and declaring the investigation to be politically-motivated.

I'm not one of those people. Nugent was wrong in saying what he did.

My opinion certainly doesn't stem from anything personal. I'm a fan of Ted Nugent's work. I think *Stranglehold* is one of the coolest sounding Rock anthems ever. When I was a teenager, I caught one of his guitar picks that he threw out to the crowd at a *Damn Yankees* concert, and I rubbed it in my friends' faces for the rest of the night.

I think it's important in situations like the Nugent incident that people use the *The Mirror Test* and ask themselves if they'd feel differently if the situation was reversed. For the conservatives who are backing Nugent, how would you feel if it was Bruce Springsteen who made these same comments regarding President George W. Bush? Be honest.

Now, I don't believe for a second that Ted Nugent poses any kind of physical threat to the president, but I do believe that the Secret Service has an obligation to investigate potentially dangerous rhetoric targeted at the President of

the United States. In my opinion, comparing the president to an animal being shot, even in a metaphorical context, *should* send up a red flag. And by adding that he'll either be "dead or in jail" if the president is re-elected, without clearly elaborating on his meaning, Nugent pretty much invited an investigation upon himself. He doesn't get to play the *metaphor card* on this one.

I don't see the investigation as politically-motivated in any way. The Secret Service has a very difficult job to do. Their longstanding history of looking into violent rhetoric obviously supersedes the Obama administration.

In the end, I'm sure the "investigation" will amount to little more than an amicable conversation between the Secret Service and Ted Nugent. The incident itself, however, has become political ammunition for liberals to paint Obama's opposition, once again, as gun-toting, irrational extremists who are fueling hatred against our president.

If Ted Nugent truly believes that the key to preserving our country's freedom is to unseat Obama in November, which I have no doubt that he does, he should choose his words more carefully. The ones he chose last weekend only hurt that cause.