

What the Assassination of Charlie Kirk Reveals About America

Kirk's ideology was dangerous and rooted in racism. Violence is never the answer, but his assassination does not erase that truth.

by Frances Murphy (Toni) Draper September 11, 2025

Charlie Kirk, the conservative activist and founder of Turning Point USA, was fatally shot in broad daylight while speaking at Utah Valley University on Sept. 10. A sniper fired from a nearby rooftop, and though Kirk was rushed to the hospital, he did not survive.

Murder is wrong. Always. No ideology, no political disagreement, no personal offense can justify extinguishing a human life. Students and staff who witnessed the chaos will carry that trauma forever. Kirk's wife and two young children must live with a grief no family should bear. Assassination is barbaric and indefensible.

But if we stop there, we miss the deeper truth.

Kirk's Record

Charlie Kirk was no martyr for freedom. He was a provocateur whose rhetoric leaned heavily on racist falsehoods. He dismissed diversity, equity, and inclusion programs as "anti-white." He claimed white privilege was a "myth." He denounced the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as a "huge mistake." He even reversed his praise of Martin Luther King Jr., later calling him "awful" and a "mythological anti-racist creation."

Kirk also promoted the so-called "Great Replacement" theory — the white nationalist idea that demographic change in America is an intentional plot to reduce White influence. "The 'Great Replacement' is not a theory, it's a reality," he declared. Those words emboldened prejudice, spread division, and threatened the dignity of millions of Americans.

Kirk's ideology was dangerous and rooted in racism. His assassination does not erase that truth. Violence doesn't end hate; it deepens it, handing extremists a martyr.

A Culture of Contempt

Why does violence keep erupting in America? Look at the tone set from the very top. The sitting president has turned ridicule into a political weapon. He described migrants as "poisoning the blood of the nation," suggested violent behavior is in their "bad genes," and cast immigrants as an invading army.

This isn't policy — it's poison. And it doesn't stop with immigrants. Take my hometown of Baltimore. The president branded the city "disgusting" and "rat and rodent infested," insisting "no human being would want to live there." He even threatened to send in the National Guard, as though Baltimore was enemy territory. Those words weren't aimed at buildings; they were aimed at people — families, communities, and a proud majority-Black city reduced to a national punchline.

Baltimore is not unique. The same contempt shows up in attacks on women, journalists, political opponents, and anyone who dares to challenge his narrative. When cruelty becomes a governing style, it signals to the nation that contempt is strength and that opponents are enemies to be destroyed. He didn't fire the bullet that killed Charlie Kirk. But the climate he nurtured made it easier for someone else to cross that line.

The Problem With Praise

Even more troubling was his response after Kirk's death. He called him a "great guy," "legendary," and a "martyr for truth and freedom." He even ordered flags flown at half-staff.

That praise is part of the problem. When leaders glorify someone who vilified immigrants, denied systemic racism, and undermined civil rights, they normalize extremism. They send the message that tearing others down is not only acceptable but honorable. It's doublespeak — condemning violence in one breath while sanctifying the ideas that help fuel it in the next.

A Call to Conscience

From the slave patrols of the 1800s to Reconstruction massacres, Wilmington in 1898, and the lynchings of Jim Crow, America's history is scarred by bloodshed born of dehumanization. Violence has too often been our answer to disagreement. So why do we act surprised now? When cruelty is rewarded, when ridicule is televised, and when threats are brushed off as "just politics," words inevitably turn into bullets.

Individual shooters may be caught. But the culture that incubates violence cannot be handcuffed. Incivility unchecked, rhetoric divorced from respect, divisions deepened rather than bridged—these are the true accomplices.

Charlie Kirk's death should not make him a poster boy, nor erase the harm of his words. But it must remind us that life is sacred, that violence is always wrong, and that if we cannot learn to disagree without dehumanizing, America will keep turning words into bullets.