

# WHITLOCK, COSTAS BRAVELY POINT TO ROLE OF GUNS IN PERKINS, BELCHER TRAGEDY

[youtube]http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlijkccD9\_8[/youtube]

In a disgusting demonstration that for the NFL, money dictates that “The Show Must Go On”, the NFL never considered those who, like Dave Zirin, found it astounding that the NFL would encourage the Kansas City Chiefs to go ahead with their game barely 24 hours after Chiefs Coach Romeo Crennel and other Chiefs personnel witnessed Jovan Belcher kill himself with a handgun shortly after he had murdered his girlfriend, the mother of their three month old son daughter. Zirin tweeted throughout the day on the coverage provided by the various networks as they continued broadcasting games, mostly as if the event had never happened.

But then, just at the close of halftime in the nationally televised Sunday night game on NBC, Bob Costas took the microphone for the minute and a half you see in the YouTube above. Costas started by slamming the cliché that the playing of the game somehow began the “healing” process for those affected by the tragedy, giving voice to the sentiment Zirin had stated earlier. But then Costas moved on to confront an even bigger taboo in the national debate, as he quoted this powerful column by Jason Whitlock, who dared to point out the way that our national sickness relating to guns contributed to this tragedy. From Whitlock:

I would argue that your rationalizations speak to how numb we are in this society to gun violence and murder. We’ve come to accept our insanity. We’d prefer to avoid seriously reflecting upon the absurdity of the prevailing notion that

the second amendment somehow enhances our liberty rather than threatens it.

How many young people have to die senselessly? How many lives have to be ruined before we realize the right to bear arms doesn't protect us from a government equipped with stealth bombers, predator drones, tanks and nuclear weapons?

Our current gun culture simply ensures that more and more domestic disputes will end in the ultimate tragedy, and that more convenience-store confrontations over loud music coming from a car will leave more teenage boys bloodied and dead.

In the coming days, Belcher's actions will be analyzed through the lens of concussions and head injuries. Who knows? Maybe brain damage triggered his violent overreaction to a fight with his girlfriend. What I believe is, if he didn't possess/own a gun, he and Kasandra Perkins would both be alive today.

Whitlock deftly destroys so many of the false narratives that our society has forced upon it regarding guns. As he states, this tragedy demonstrates that the second amendment actually threatens our liberty rather than protecting it. He goes on to state that although the second amendment is regarded by many as the last refuge by citizens against a government turned tyrannical, mere guns won't protect against a determined government armed with "stealth bombers, predator drones, tanks and nuclear weapons". Whitlock cleanly demonstrates that the pervasive nature of guns in our sickened society is what enables so many senseless deaths, pointing out that both Perkins and Belcher likely would still be alive if a gun had not been available during Belcher's moment of extreme rage. Whitlock also alluded to the

tragic murder of Jordan Davis in Jacksonville, Florida recently in a case that appears to possibly be headed once again into an invocation of Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law that many see as a license for murder.

Whitlock went directly in the face of the cliché, often pointed out by David Waldman on Twitter, that the immediate aftermath of a tragedy of this magnitude is "too soon" to enter into a discussion on the perils of society's glorification of guns. Others would say that public discussion of guns on a rational basis is no longer possible because of the overwhelming power of the NRA.

The fact is, it is never "too soon" to discuss the role of guns in tragedies because the tragedies come at us so quickly that we would otherwise always be in the quiet period after one gun tragedy or another. But even more importantly, the myth of the power of the NRA has been completely destroyed. In the 2012 elections, Media Matters informs us that the NRA spent just under \$12 million but only 0.42 percent of those funds supported winning candidates and only 0.39 percent opposed losing candidates.

Just as the latest round of elections and the current Kabuki over the "fiscal cliff" is poking a hole in Grover Norquist's power over preventing tax increases, our society may actually be moving toward a more rational discussion on the sickness inherent in our gun culture. I don't harbor any illusions that progress will be fast or that substantive improvements are even still possible, but if changes do finally take place, we may be able to point to the courage shown by Bob Costas last night as the turning point when we finally started a long overdue discussion.