

July 14, 2016 - LYIN' KATIE COURIC

The [Washington Post's Erik Wemple](#) provides a good example of lying leftist liberals in the media in his post on Katie Couric's recent documentary on guns. *It looks as though Katie Couric stunned her interviewees. Knocked them out with a bombshell inquiry: "Let me ask you another question: If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?" prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?" Now check out the blank stares.*

Nearly 10 seconds of silence, as if no one has an answer to Couric's rather straightforward question. The scene comes from "Under the Gun," a film written, produced and directed by Stephanie Soechtig and narrated by Couric, the global anchor for Yahoo News; Couric also serves as executive producer. The session depicted in the video above features Couric and members of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, a group whose motto is "Defending Your Right to Defend Yourself."

And to hear the VCDL tell the story, those awkward seconds are a fabrication, a byproduct of deceptive editing. To prove the point, VCDL President Philip Van Cleave has released an audiotape of the session, which is available on the site of the Washington Free Beacon as part of a story by Stephen Gutowski. In that recording, the question from Couric is a bit different from the one in the video. She says, "If there are no background checks, how do you prevent — I know how you all are going to answer this, but I'm going to ask it anyway. If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from walking into, say, a licensed gun dealer and purchasing a gun?"

On the audiotape, a reply comes immediately from one of the VCDL members: "Well, one — if you're not in jail, you should still have your basic rights." More chatter follows.

In an interview with the Erik Wemple Blog, Van Cleave said, "My teeth fell out of my head when I saw that." The result of the editing, he says, is that folks who view the documentary are "going to say these people are idiots. It affects all the gun owners." Other scenes in the documentary, says Van Cleave, "accurately" represent the input of his fellow gun owners. But not the exchange on background checks. "This was beyond the pale." Van Cleave says he has audio of the entire interview with Couric — a backstop against bogus editing that he learned from his dealings with the media. "I do that as a matter of course when I'm doing things like that," says Van Cleave. "It has saved me a few times." ...

... Moments ago, the film's people released this statement from Soechtig:

"There are a wide range of views expressed in the film. My intention was to provide a pause for the viewer to have a moment to consider this important question before presenting the facts on Americans' opinions on background checks. I never intended to make anyone look bad and I apologize if anyone felt that way."

Here at the Erik Wemple Blog we stroke our gray beard and reflect: In the years we've covered and watched media organizations, we've scarcely seen a thinner, more weaselly excuse than the one in the block above. ...

Mollie Hemingway has a good memory. She notes Couric defended Planned Parenthood with claims of doctored footage, then does the exact same thing. And by the way, independent reviews showed the PP film was not edited with intended malice. Which is what Katie did.

... This willful and malicious doctoring of evidence to support an agenda is so unconscionable that even CNN, The Washington Post, The New York Times, and other media outlets made note of it.

Couric should have disclaimed the documentary and publicly acknowledge her error. Instead, the film's director Stephanie Soechtig indirectly admitted she spliced in false footage when she issued the following statement:

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This mealy mouthed mush was described as an apology at CNN while The Washington Post openly mocked the "apologize if" construction of the response. Erik Wemple of the Post added that he'd never seen a "thinner, more weaselly excuse" than the one proffered by Soechtig. For her part, Couric said "I support Stephanie's statement and am very proud of the film." ...

*... Indeed, when Katie Couric ran interference for Cecile Richards (**Head of Planned Parenthood**), doing a lengthy sit-down puffball interview and a tour of an abortion clinic where she didn't once mention, uh, abortion, she twice decried the videos as "edited." Couric is a long-time pro-abortion activist, not just using the mainstream media to advocate it, but having marched in support of the right to end unborn human lives. Last week on David Axelrod's podcast, she said that her parents were major influences on her, specifically citing her mother's volunteer work for Planned Parenthood and the fact that her mother invested in Trojan condoms when she learned about the AIDS crisis. Classy!*

An accompanying [write-up of the Cecile Richards interview](#) falsely stated:

The videos, some of which were edited together in a way to depict Planned Parenthood employees talking about selling fetal tissue, which is illegal, rocked the organization.

The media have straight-up adopted Planned Parenthood's false "deceptively edited" talking points and carried the water for Planned Parenthood's campaign against the Center for Medical Progress. Here, one of their perky own in the mainstream media is caught red-handed actually deceptively editing in the service of gun control, and the most outrage The New York Times can muster is the headline, "[Audio of Katie Couric interview shows editing slant in documentary, site claims](#)." What a joke our mainstream media are.

Tim Carney says you can blame Couric and her ilk for Donald Trump.

Donald Trump tells us that journalists "are the most dishonest people" and are "sleaze." This is silly.

But if my fellow journalists wonder why he gets away with his attacks and obfuscation towards the media, Katie Couric provides a good explanation.

Couric, who spent three decades as a supposedly straight-news reporter, this year narrated an anti-gun documentary. As a fig-leaf of balance, she included in the documentary an interview with Virginia Citizens Defense League. She used this as an occasion to "demolish" the gun nuts.

Reviewers got the message. The Hollywood Reporter wrote: "A group of blustery members of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, however, suddenly remain painfully quiet when Couric asks them the hard questions."

Indeed it's painful to watch, or glorious to watch, depending on your perspective. The topic was background checks. Under current law, gun stores cannot sell a gun without conducting a background check on the buyer. If a gun owner sells his gun, however, he is not required to conduct background checks. Some gun-rights defenders oppose any mandatory background checks. No matter what, though, felons may not own guns.

"Let me ask you another question," Couric says, as the gun-rights supporters look on, "if there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?"

One gun-defender blinks, an uncomfortable grimace on his face, as he looks to a compatriot at the table. The camera cuts to another man, quietly staring down at the table. A third man, bearded, glares without saying a word before turning his eyes down. Eight seconds of awkward silence greet Couric's question.

Devastating.

But of course, that's not what happened. Couric's victims produced the audio from the meeting and published it online last week. In real life, Couric prefaces the question with "I know how you all are going to answer this, but I'm going to ask it anyway."

Once she finishes her question, one participant immediately lays out the argument that felons, when they complete their prison sentences, should have their gun rights restored. ...

... After first standing behind the filmmaker's transparently false defense, Couric has apologized for approving the misleading edit. But her week-late, second-try apology isn't commensurate to the crime.

On Amazon and on iTunes Thursday, you could still download the lying video. The Hollywood Reporter review is still out there, uncorrected. The film was scheduled to screen in Danbury, Conn., Thursday night, June 2.

The lying anti-gun film needs to be pulled from distribution until the lying scene is removed. Only pressure from the center-left mainstream media will make that happen. Some journalists probably hope the Couric flap can be ignored, but that would be the worst thing for a free press.

A free country requires a free press in order to hold accountable those in power — that includes the press itself.

No cartoons today. There's nothing funny about Lyin' Katie Couric.

Washington Post

[Audiotape: Katie Couric documentary falsely depicts gun supporters as 'idiots'](#)

by Erik Wimple

It looks as though Katie Couric stunned her interviewees. Knocked them out with a bombshell inquiry: "Let me ask you another question: If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?" prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?" Now check out the blank stares:

Nearly 10 seconds of silence, as if no one has an answer to Couric's rather straightforward question. The scene comes from "Under the Gun," a [film written, produced and directed by Stephanie Soechtig and narrated by Couric](#), the global anchor for Yahoo News; Couric also serves as executive producer. The session depicted in the video above features Couric and members of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, a group whose motto is "[Defending Your Right to Defend Yourself](#)."

And to hear the VCDL tell the story, those awkward seconds are a fabrication, a byproduct of deceptive editing. To prove the point, VCDL President Philip Van Cleave has released an audiotape of the session, which is available on the site of the [Washington Free Beacon as part of a story by Stephen Gutowski](#). In that recording, the question from Couric is a bit different from the one in the video. She says, "If there are no background checks, how do you prevent — I know how you all are going to answer this, but I'm going to ask it anyway. If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from walking into, say, a licensed gun dealer and purchasing a gun?"

On the audiotape, a reply comes immediately from one of the VCDL members: "Well, one — if you're not in jail, you should still have your basic rights." More chatter follows.

In an interview with the Erik Wemple Blog, Van Cleave said, "My teeth fell out of my head when I saw that." The result of the editing, he says, is that folks who view the documentary are "going to say these people are idiots. It affects all the gun owners." Other scenes in the documentary, says Van Cleave, "accurately" represent the input of his fellow gun owners. But not the exchange on background checks. "This was beyond the pale." Van Cleave says he has audio of the entire interview with Couric — a backstop against bogus editing that he learned from his dealings with the media. "I do that as a matter of course when I'm doing things like that," says Van Cleave. "It has saved me a few times."

After he saw the finished product, Van Cleave emailed his concerns to Kristin Lazure, a producer at Atlas Films. "Well, that was interesting. So a 'balanced' piece gives 15 minutes to the pro-gun side and 1-1/2 hours to the opposition? I had no idea that was the definition of 'balanced,' when I was approached about this."

Then he bored into the integrity matter:

On the question where our members were asked, "So without background checks, how do you keep guns out of the hands of felons?": it shows our members just sitting there and then one looking down. The editors merged some "b-roll" of our members sitting quietly between questions, followed by Katie asking the felon question. I have the audio of that entire interview and I know for an absolute fact that our members immediately jumped in to answer the question and did NOT just sit there quietly. To the person watching the video, it gave the intentionally false appearance of no one in our group having an answer. Am I supposed to think that is good journalism, Kristin? I hope that in your heart of hearts that you are at least thinking to yourself, "no, it is not."

Here's how Lazure handled that concern: "I'm truly sorry to hear you were disappointed with the final product. We knew when we set out to make a film on such a divisive issue that we weren't going to make everybody happy. However, we have heard from many gun owners following our screenings and the television premiere who felt we gave the issue a balanced look and reflected their views accurately." That response, of course, doesn't address the issue raised by Van Cleave, which he noted forcefully in his reply: "It's not a 'feeling' – the 8 seconds of silence from gun owners shown after the question about felons is inexcusable. Within 1 or 2 seconds members responded to that question – like I said I have the proof. That edit actually changed the answer members gave to the question. Worse, that deception was intentional."

This brand of defensiveness appears widespread among those associated with the documentary. Moments ago, the film's people released this statement from Soechtig:

"There are a wide range of views expressed in the film. My intention was to provide a pause for the viewer to have a moment to consider this important question before presenting the facts on Americans' opinions on background checks. I never intended to make anyone look bad and I apologize if anyone felt that way."

Here at the the Erik Wemple Blog we stroke our gray beard and reflect: In the years we've covered and watched media organizations, we've scarcely seen a thinner, more weaselly excuse than the one in the block above. For starters, it appears to count as an admission that this segment of the documentary was edited. The artistic "pause" provides the viewer not a "moment to consider this important question"; it provides viewers a moment to lower their estimation of gun owners. That's it. As far as the rest of the statement, adults in 2016 may no longer write the phrase "apologize if anyone felt that way" and preserve their standing as professionals. To compound matters, here's the accompanying statement from Couric:

"I support Stephanie's statement and am very proud of the film."

That, from the Katie Couric of Yahoo News, of "CBS Evening News," of "60 Minutes," of the "Today" show and so on.

Many of those who sampled the discrepancy between the video and the audiotape were already enraged by the depiction of these gun owners. The statements from Soechtig and Couric will surely intensify the backlash, as well they should. An apology, retraction, re-editing, whatever it is that filmmakers do to make amends — all of it needs to happen here.

The Federalist

[Katie Couric Decried 'Edited' Planned Parenthood Footage, Then Doctored A Gun Owner Interview](#)

When the Planned Parenthood videos broke, Katie Couric jumped on the campaign to discredit them as 'edited.' Her new gun control documentary is inexcusable.

by Mollie Hemingway

A new Katie Couric documentary advocating gun control was [deceptively edited](#) to make Second Amendment supporters look foolish, audio released by the supporters shows.

In "[Under the Gun](#)," Couric asks a group of gun rights supporters, "If there are no background checks for gun purchasers, how do you prevent felons or terrorists from purchasing a gun?" The documentary filmmakers spliced in footage of the activists sitting silently for nine seconds. One man looks down, seemingly uncomfortable, during the awkward silence. The documentary then moves on to the next scene of a cylinder on a revolver being closed.

Couric documentarians fabricated this moment, using footage from a session that was unrelated to the question asked. In fact, according to audio of Couric's interview provided by the gun rights activists, they all rushed to respond to Couric, providing answers based on principle and practical concerns. "Well, one — if you're not in jail, you should still have your basic rights," said one of the gun owners. Others responded as well.

You can watch the offending section — and hear the actual audio that was spliced out — [here](#). It's a stunning betrayal of journalistic ethics.

This willful and malicious doctored evidence to support an agenda is so unconscionable that even [CNN](#), [The Washington Post](#), [The New York Times](#), and other media outlets made note of it.

Couric should have disclaimed the documentary and publicly acknowledge her error. Instead, the film's director Stephanie Soechtig indirectly admitted she spliced in false footage when she issued the following statement:

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This mealy mouthed mush was described as an [apology at CNN](#) while [The Washington Post](#) [openly mocked](#) the "apologize if" construction of the response. Erik Wemple of the *Post* added that he'd never seen a "thinner, more weaselly excuse" than the one proffered by Soechtig. For her part, Couric said "I support Stephanie's statement and am very proud of the film."

Wemple says that's nowhere near good enough and concludes, "An apology, retraction, re-editing, whatever it is that filmmakers do to make amends — all of it needs to happen here."

Of course, this type of cut-and-splice "journalism" is common these days. Journalists have been praising "The Daily Show's" use of deceptively edited interviews for as long as "The Daily Show" has deceptively edited them. Pretty much every time we hear that some cable comedian has "destroyed" some outgroup or the views the outgroup holds, that's thanks to deceptive editing.

A few other things are worth noting here. One is how media outlets praised this faux-documentary prior to this particularly egregious example of manipulation. The AP's story by Lynn Elber was headlined, "[Gun violence gets more nuanced, probing coverage](#)." I'd hate to see something non-nuanced or non-probing! The article goes on to say the documentary "examines why those on opposite sides of stricter gun laws can't find common ground."

On Media Treatment of 'Edited' Videos

You know where this is going. Beginning last July, the Center for Medical Progress began releasing videos showing Planned Parenthood officials discussing the trafficking of human body parts obtained from abortions performed in clinics. The videos were shocking. Planned Parenthood began robotically issuing talking points calling the videos "edited" or "deceptively edited," in an attempt to protect its organization from a public relations nightmare.

That Planned Parenthood would respond to these videos in such a way is not surprising. But our entire media industrial complex attempted to circumvent the findings of the Center for Medical Progress' videos by calling them "edited" or "deceptively edited" as well. If they said it once, they said it eleventy billion times.

It is true that all video journalism is edited. One hundred-freaking-percent of it. Every single video package you watch on the nightly news is edited. None of these videos are called "edited," of course, but they are. In the same way that all other video journalism is edited, yes, the Center for Medical Progress' was, too.

But unlike every other documentary team, the Center for Medical Progress did something telling. They released, along with their mini-documentaries, the full unedited footage they obtained in their undercover journalistic efforts.

Planned Parenthood paid for an audit of the videos from a left-wing Democratic opposition research firm called Fusion — an audit that the media were happy [to accept and spread](#) — to support the talking point that the videos were edited. Even so, that audit admitted "[no widespread evidence of substantive video manipulation](#)."

An independent audit and forensic analysis of the videos likewise said that they were "[authentic and show no evidence of manipulation](#)." As I wrote on Twitter: (Mollie (@MZHemingway) [May 25, 2016](#))

Indeed, when Katie Couric ran interference for Cecile Richards, doing a lengthy sit-down puffball interview and a tour of an abortion clinic where she didn't once mention, uh, abortion, she twice decried the videos as "[edited](#)." Couric is a long-time pro-abortion activist, not just using the mainstream media to advocate it, but having marched in support of the right to end unborn human lives. Last week on David Axelrod's podcast, she said that her parents were major influences on her, specifically citing her mother's volunteer work for Planned Parenthood and the fact that her mother invested in Trojan condoms when she learned about the AIDS crisis. *Classy!*

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Washington Examiner

[Blame Katie Couric for Donald Trump](#)

When Trump says the media lies, is it any wonder people believe him?

by Timothy P. Carney

Donald Trump tells us that journalists "are the most dishonest people" and are "sleaze." This is silly.

But if my fellow journalists wonder why he gets away with his attacks and obfuscation towards the media, Katie Couric provides a good explanation.

Couric, who spent three decades as a supposedly straight-news reporter, this year narrated an anti-gun documentary. As a fig-leaf of balance, she included in the documentary an interview with Virginia Citizens Defense League. She used this as an occasion to "demolish" the gun nuts.

Reviewers got the message. The Hollywood Reporter [wrote](#): "A group of blustery members of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, however, suddenly remain painfully quiet when Couric asks them the hard questions."

Indeed it's painful to watch, or glorious to watch, depending on your perspective. The topic was background checks. Under current law, gun stores cannot sell a gun without conducting a background check on the buyer. If a gun owner sells his gun, however, he is not required to conduct background checks. Some gun-rights defenders oppose any mandatory background checks. No matter what, though, felons may not own guns.

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But of course, that's not what happened. Couric's victims produced the audio from the meeting and published it online last week. In real life, Couric prefaces the question with "I know how you all are going to answer this, but I'm going to ask it anyway."

Once she finishes her question, one participant immediately lays out the argument that felons, when they complete their prison sentences, should have their gun rights restored. A second participant adds nuance to Couric's question, pointing out that other classes besides terrorists and felons are barred from gun ownership. He then notes "what we're really asking about is a question of prior restraint" and points out that the Constitution, in many cases, doesn't allow prior restraint. Others pipe in, with other arguments, from other perspectives.

The eight seconds of silence in the video? That was B-roll: footage filmmakers use to add interest to voice-overs, or to show interlocutors listening. In effect, they filmed people listening to other people talk, and then plugged that footage — and some ambient noise — into the film after Couric's question.

Countless journalists have taken a subject's words out of context. But Couric deliberately took her subjects' *silence* out of context. And it was all to aggrandize herself, make ideological enemies look bad, and make her own questioning seem so incisive as to stump all comers.

So when Trump says the media lies, is it any wonder people believe him? And it's dangerous to give Trump credibility on this.

Reporters held Trump accountable on his pledge to give millions of dollars — that he raised in the name of veterans — to veterans' organizations. Only after the mainstream press pointed out Trump's unfulfilled promise did Trump write most of the checks to the vets' groups.

In announcing these gifts, Trump blasted the media for doing their job.

A potential president attacking reporters for doing their job isn't healthy for democracy. The best thing journalists can do to defang Trump's attacks is not to do sleazy dishonest journalism — which most journalists don't — and to demand accountability for colleagues who do.

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