

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks on the Shooting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and an Exchange With Reporters Upon Arrival in Murphysboro, Illinois
October 27, 2018

The President. Hello, everybody.

Q. Mr. President.

The President. So we just left the Future Farmers of America, and we're now in Illinois. And I've just been thinking about it today, I remember what Dick Grasso did with the New York Stock Exchange and what happened on September 11. And I said, you can't let these evil people change your life, change your schedules, change anything. It's too important. What you do has to stay that way and you cannot let them become important. You just can't do it.

And we cannot let our schedules or our lives change. It's very—I mean, it's just the way it is. No matter how you look at it, you just can't let them get away with it. They're evil. They're bad. This was an anti-Semitic act, which is incredible in this day and age that something like that can happen, but it happened.

So I guess you're going to follow me, but hopefully, we're going to have an interesting period of time. People are feeling—the country feels terribly. This is just a horrible, horrible event.

And it's very interesting, because over the years, as I was growing older and doing business, and you'd see attacks like this, and you'd say, "Terrible." As President, it's a level of terribleness and horror that you can't even believe. It's hard to believe. It's just—you stand as President, and you do what people say is a good job. What I say—you just do the absolute best. You say something like this, and you see something like this, and you say, "How can it happen?"

As President, as bad as you felt before, you feel worse. And I just—I just find it hard to believe. You know what's going on; it's at least 11 people are dead; police officers very badly wounded, three and probably four very, very badly wounded. But sounds like they'll be okay. They were unbelievable. The law enforcement was unbelievable. And we'll be getting a full report in about an hour from now.

So we're in Illinois, and we will make the best of it. Thank you all very much.

Shooting in Pittsburgh, PA

Q. Is a political rally the best way to find way to find unity right now?

Q. Mr. Trump, the suspected gunman tied many of his——

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Does a political rally help with unity? You talked about uniting the country.

The President. Yes, go ahead.

Q. The suspected gunman tied many of his anti-Semitic tweets, social media postings to support for you, to "Make America Great Again."

The President. No, no, no.

Q. He did. I mean——

The President. This was no support for me. This was somebody that actually was—he was no supporter of mine. And his anti-Semitic tweets—people have seen them—very anti-Semitic man. And what he—his thought process is sick.

And I said it before, and I'll say it again: We have to bring back the death penalty for people like this. People that do this, you have to bring back the death penalty. This is the worst form of terror. This is so terrible. And it has to be brought back. They have to pay the ultimate sacrifice, okay? Thank you.

Shooting in Pennsylvania, PA/2018 Congressional Election

Q. Mr. President, you said that this hurts even more when you're President. Do you feel any more—

The President. You feel differently when you're President and you're in charge, and you see something like this. The level of pain is incredible.

Q. Is that—how does that affect your feelings about your responsibility to set a tone?

The President. Again, tone is very important. We want to win, and we're going to win. And we're fighting to win, and that's what you have to do. And you have to lead your life. You can't let these people change—you can't—you want to change. You have to go out, and you have to do what's right, but you can't let—it's just too important what you're doing.

We're doing something so important right now, right smack in the middle of an election. And this one, I've heard you say it often, "This is one of the most important elections." This may be the most important midterm election that anybody can remember for, you know, for a big period of time.

And you want to go out, and you're enthused, and you're doing well, and then a thing like this happens, or something happens yesterday with the pipe bombs. It's so terrible.

But what happened here, this whole situation: the level of death, the level of evil, the level of sickness. I mean, he's a sick person. And really, these people have to be brought to trial rapidly, not over a 10-year period. And they have to have the ultimate sacrifice, which is their life. You have to get back to the death penalty. This is a case for the death penalty.

Okay? Thank you very much.

Shooting in Pittsburgh, PA

Q. Mr. President, will you go to Pittsburgh? Will you be going to Pittsburgh?

The President. I don't hear you.

Q. Will you be going to Pittsburgh?

The President. I will be going to Pittsburgh, yes. And I've been in touch with the Governor, and I've been in touch with the mayor.

Yes.

Q. When are you going to—

The President's Rhetoric/News Media

Q. Do you plan to change your messaging or your tone tonight or—[inaudible]?

The President. Yes, I will. I'll have a very much different tone tonight.

Q. How so?

The President. I would like to be able to have the tone that I have, because I feel very strongly about it. And I'd have a much different tone, frankly, if the press was evenhanded. If the press was fair, I'd have a much different tone all the time. But I'm fighting the media. I'm fighting the—the media is not being honest.

And I'm fighting that lack of honesty, so I have to have that tone. Otherwise, I'll never get my points across; we'll never get what we have to get across. And we are making America great again. And it's happening. But you'll never get your points across, because we have a media that's very biased against certain opinion and, frankly, against me.

So I—you know, it's the way it is. And I can soft-coat it any way you want, but that's the bottom line. But tonight I will absolutely change my tone.

But I thought it was important to be here; otherwise, he becomes too important. When he makes you change things and schedules, then he becomes too important, and we can't let that happen. We can never let that happen. Dick Grasso did a great job with the New York Stock Exchange years ago on September 11. We can't let that happen. We can't let these people become important.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, when will——

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. on the tarmac at the Southern Illinois Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Richard A. Grasso, former chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange LLC; Robert D. Bowers, suspected gunman in the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, on October 27; Gov. Thomas W. Wolf of Pennsylvania; and Mayor William M. Peduto of Pittsburgh.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Shooting in Pittsburgh, PA; Interviews With the News Media : Exchange with reporters :: Murphysboro, IL.

Locations: Murphysboro, IL.

Names: Bowers, Robert D.; Grasso, Richard A.; Peduto, William M.; Savoc, Cesar A., Jr.; Wolf, Thomas W.

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