

OrovilleMR

Off the record: The Skittles massacre

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I'm a news junkie. I can't help myself. I'm so addicted that I record news from six (yes six) different television stations daily and I read stories from at least another half dozen news sources.

The net result: I'm a mess.

Honestly, the news is so horrifying these days that I asked the doctor for a prescription for Valium.

Not only do I watch and read, I also fact check.

The June 12 mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida where 49 people were killed and another 53 injured was reported, and continues to be reported, by the media as "the worst mass shooting in U.S. history."

I kept thinking "at some point they are going to stop repeating this falsehood and get it right." I was wrong.

So here's a quick history lesson; a fact check if you will.

On Nov. 29, 1864, 675 troops of the Colorado Volunteer Cavalry attacked a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho and killed 160 people; two-thirds of them were women and children. History calls it the Sand Creek Massacre.

Crack a history book and look at what happened 26 years later. On Dec. 29, 1890 the U.S. 7th Cavalry rode onto the Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation under a white flag of peace and killed 300 Native Americans. They call it Wounded Knee.

Between May 31 and June 1 1921, white members of the Greenwood community in Tulsa, Oklahoma killed 39 African-Americans, according to the official count by the Oklahoma Bureau of Vital Statistics. The estimates drawn from eyewitness accounts and other historical materials put the death toll of the Tulsa Race Riots as high as 300.

So yes the mass shooting in Orlando was horrific but it wasn't the "worst mass shooting in U.S. history." It was just the most recent in a too long line of worsts.

The Pulse massacre was not committed by refugees, just like the other three massacres were not.

Perhaps that's why, this week I was so angered, so stunned, so flabbergasted at t-Rump Jr.'s ignorant, fear mongering, racist and bigoted tweet regarding refugees.

His punctuation-challenged tweet read: "If I had a bowl of skittles and I told you three would kill you. Would you take a handful? That's our Syrian refugee problem."

First of all skittles are candy; refugees are human beings running for their lives. To compare the two is abhorrent and disgusting but just to drive home the point let's look at the math and how boy-o got it all wrong.

According to the Cato Institute, the chance of an American being killed in a terror attack by a Syrian refugee is not three out of a couple hundred (which is about how many skittles a bowl full might be), but rather one in 3.46 billion.

That's worth repeating: The chance of an American being killed in a terror attack by a refugee is one in 3.64 billion. (Chance of a U.S. citizen being killed by a U.S. police officer is one in 319,000)

That means that those three dangerous skittles would be more accurately represented in a pool of about 10 billion pieces of candy, or enough skittles to fill one-and-a-half Olympic-size swimming pools.

Sooooooooo, if you grabbed one handful of 50 skittles a minute from the pool and ate them you'd not only be incredibly sick but it would take you 130 years before you'd ingest just one of the poison candies.

This is so not our "Syrian refugee problem." In fact in the 15 years since 9/11 the U.S. has taken in 784,000 refugees, only three of whom have been arrested for terrorist-related activities. Based on this, the odds are that fewer than one of every 10,000 Syrian refugees will be a terrorist. During the same 15 years, U.S. citizens and legal residents have perpetrated 28 deadly domestic terrorist attacks.

If I had a Twitter account I just might tweet this: If I had a bowl of skittles and told you that the orange one called the purple ones racist, wanted to kick the green ones out of the mix altogether, called the yellow ones dogs and insisted the red ones should be stopped and frisked, would you vote for the orange one as your favorite flavor?