White conservatives don't love their children

Nato Green

November 12, 2017

The murder trial of Jose Ines Garcia Zarate for the 2015 death of Kate Steinle has provided an occasion for right-wingers from coast to coast to demand vengeance on anyone who might look like an undocumented immigrant.

Garcia Zarate is an undocumented homeless man who apparently had been deported five times and previously arrested. The conservative Washington Times called him "something of an illegal immigration artist," which is the new "my boyfriend says he's a DJ." He was also called a "career criminal" because of a four-year prison sentence — although it was only for illegal re-entry — and had an outstanding marijuana charge.

Conservative press "demands justice." Conservative Twitter is outraged that the accused is represented at taxpayer expense, apparently unaware of the Constitutional right to representation and to be considered innocent until proven guilty.

To cheers from President Donald Trump, Republicans in Congress passed Kate's Law to increase penalties for illegal re-entry, although it stalled in the Senate. The case fueled the assault on sanctuary cities.

After a hacky Tony Bennett quote, the Washington Times wrote, "providing sanctuary for the lawless is a betrayal of all those immigrants who came to these shores playing by the rules, arriving with demonstrated respect for the law." (My ancestors didn't demonstrate bupkis when they arrived from the Ukraine.)

Conservatives say that Garcia Zarate is an illegal migrant career criminal, who stole a pistol and intentionally shot Steinle from 90 feet away for no reason, banking the shot off the ground like a stone-cold pool hustler. Two things about this:

First, the U.S. immigration system creates criminals. The Cato Institute, a Libertarian think tank, found that immigrants are less prone to crime than us shifty natives. The main crimes committed by immigrants are immigration crimes. The crime is entry into the country, not being a person who had entered the country illegally. Illegal entry is an infraction, like double-parking. Illegal re-entry is a felony, but harmless compared to other felonies.

Taxpayers waste a fortune arresting, imprisoning and deporting people to serve no other purpose but demonstrating that we, as a nation, will not tolerate people simply walking into the United States like the pilgrims did.

Second, an advocacy organization with a million-dollar budget, called Californians for Population Stabilization a(CAPS), has been hyping the trial on social media: "No parent should have to bury a child who was killed by an illegal immigrant. RT if you agree!"

I think no parent should have to bury a child who was killed. Full stop. For that matter, parents shouldn't have to bury children who died for any reason. Parents shouldn't have to cremate children either.

Killing people is illegal. Would Steinle's death have been less tragic if she had been killed by a citizen? What if it was a star swimmer at Stanford from a rich family? In that case — for CAPS and the Washington Times and Fox News and Paul Ryan — Jim Steinle should have to bury his daughter. Just so long as it's not an illegal immigrant.

A white person dies at the hands of an undocumented immigrant — and it may even have been an accident — and the Right springs into action, passing laws demanding justice. White people gunned down by another white guy at a church in Texas or in Las Vegas or every day in America … nothing. White people die in fires and floods caused by climate change … crickets. White people die in the opioid epidemic … silence. White people die from lack of adequate health care … busy.

If we can discern beliefs from people's deeds, and not their words, the only logical conclusion is that white conservatives don't love their children. I can't figure out how any parent could love guns and oil more than their children. They must not love their children enough to protect them from any threat at all. They don't love their children until they're killed by a person of color.