



POLITICS 06.20.14



Josh Rogin

Exclusive: 'Hillary Clinton Took Me Through Hell,' Rape Victim Says

The woman at the center of the scandal over Hillary Clinton's de of an alleged child rapist speaks out in depth for the first time.

who says she was raped as a 12-year-old in Arkansas doesn't think Hilla deserves that honor. This woman says Hillary smeared her and used dis tactics to successfully get her attacker off with a light sentence—even th she claims, Clinton knew he was guilty.

The victim in the 1975 sexual abuse case that became Clinton's first crim defense case as a 27-year-old lawyer has only spoken to the media once her attack, a contested, short interaction with a reporter in 2008, during Clinton's last presidential campaign run. Now 52, she wants to speak ou hearing Clinton talk about her case on [newly discovered audio recording](#) the 1980s, unearthed by the Washington Free Beacon and [made public](#) 1 week.

In a long, emotional interview with The Daily Beast, she accused Clinton intentionally lying about her in court documents, going to extraordinary lengths to discredit evidence of the rape, and later callously acknowledg and laughing about her attackers' guilt on the recordings.

"Hillary Clinton took me through Hell," the victim said. The Daily Beast to withhold her name out of concern for her privacy as a victim of sexual assault.

The victim said if she saw Clinton today, she would call her out for what sees as the hypocrisy of Clinton's current campaign to fight for women's compared to her actions regarding this rape case so long ago.

"I would say [to Clinton], 'You took a case of mine in '75, you lied on me realize the truth now, the heart of what you've done to me. And you are supposed to be for women? You call that [being] for women, what you d me? And I hear you on tape laughing.'"

a May 1975 court affidavit written by Clinton on behalf of Thomas Alfred

Taylor, one of the two alleged attackers, whom Clinton agreed to defend after being asked by the prosecutor. Taylor had specifically requested a female attorney.

“I have been informed that the complainant is emotionally unstable with a tendency to seek out older men and engage in fantasizing,” Clinton, then named Hillary D. Rodham, wrote in the affidavit. “I have also been informed that she has in the past made false accusations about persons, claiming they had attacked her body. Also that she exhibits an unusual stubbornness and temper when she does not get her way.”

Clinton also wrote that a child psychologist told her that children in early adolescence “tend to exaggerate or romanticize sexual experiences,” especially when they come from “disorganized families, such as the complainant.”

The victim vigorously denied Clinton’s accusations and said there has never been any explanation of what Clinton was referring to in that affidavit. She claims she never accused anyone of attacking her before her rape.

“I’ve never said that about anyone. I don’t know why she said that. I have never made false allegations. I know she was lying,” she said. “I definitely didn’t see older men. I don’t know why Hillary put that in there and it makes me plumb mad.”

The victim’s second main grievance with Clinton stems from the newly revealed audio recordings, which were taped in a series of interviews of Clinton with Arkansas reporter Roy Reed, who was researching an article on the Clintons that was ultimately never published. The Free Beacon found the tapes archived at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, amidst thousands

“She lied like a dog on me. I think she was trying to do whatever she could do to make herself look good at the time.”

being periodically released for public consumption.

On the tapes, Clinton, who speaks in a Southern drawl, appears to acknowledge that she was aware of her client’s guilt, brags about successfully getting the only piece of physical evidence thrown out of court, and laughs about it all whimsically.

“He took a lie detector test. I had him take a polygraph, which he passed, which forever destroyed my faith in polygraphs,” Clinton says on the recording, failing to hold back some chuckles.

She then describes how she discovered that investigators had cut out and lost a section of the suspect’s underwear that they said contained the victim’s blood. Clinton brought the remaining underwear segment to a Nobel Prize-winning blood expert in Brooklyn, NY, she explained, in order to convince him to lend his heavyweight reputation and influence to her defense case.

“And so the, sort of the story through the grapevine was, if you get him interested in the case, then you know you had the foremost expert in the world willing to testify so that it came out the way you wanted it to come out,” Clinton said.

Clinton told the judge that the famous expert was willing to testify. Instead of

lesser charge: unlawful fondling of a child. According to the Free Beacon, Taylor was sentenced to one year behind bars, with two months reduced for time served. The second attacker was never charged.

“Oh, he plea bargained. Got him off with time served in the county jail, he’d been in the county jail about two months,” Clinton said on the recording, apparently not remembering the sentence accurately.

For the victim, the tapes prove that while Clinton was arguing in the affidavit that the victim could have some culpability in her own attack, she actually believed that her client was guilty. Taylor’s light sentence was a miscarriage of justice, the victim said.

“It’s proven fact, with all the tapes [now revealed], she lied like a dog on me. I think she was trying to do whatever she could do to make herself look good at the time.... She wanted it to look good, she didn’t care if those guys did it or not,” she said. “Them two guys should have got a lot longer time. I do not think justice was served at all.”

The office of Hillary Clinton did not respond to a request for comment. In a [2008 article](#) in Newsday written by Glenn Thrush, now at Politico, Clinton spokesperson Howard Wolfson defended her conduct in the case.

“As she wrote in her book, ‘Living History,’ Senator Clinton was appointed by the Circuit Court of Washington County, Arkansas to represent Mr. Taylor in this matter,” he said. “As an attorney and an officer of the court, she had an ethical and legal obligation to defend him to the fullest extent of the law. To act otherwise would have constituted a breach of her professional responsibilities.”

In that book, Clinton gave vague details about her actions in the case and said

“If she becomes president, is she gonna be telling the world the truth? No.”

up Arkansas’s first rape hotline.

According to Thrush’s article, the victim didn’t fault Clinton for her defense of the attacker during their 2008 interview, which took place in the prison where the victim was serving time for drug-related offenses, in the presence of the warden. “I’m sure Hillary was just doing her job,” he quoted the victim as saying. After all, everyone has a right to be defended in court. And 1975 was a lifetime ago.

But the victim now claims she was misquoted. She didn’t even know Clinton was the lawyer who defended

her attacker until Thrush showed her Clinton’s book and she had no other information about what had happened behind closed doors in that courtroom when Thrush approached her, she said. Thrush declined to comment.

“If I had known that day what I know now I would have told him exactly what I’m telling y’all today,” she said.

After she was released from prison in 2008, the victim read more about Clinton’s involvement in her case, but she never planned to confront Clinton about it.

“I started seeing where I had really been stomped in the ground. I didn’t really know what to do about it. I just figured life would have to go on and I would

But after hearing the newly revealed tapes of Clinton boasting about the case, the victim said she couldn't hold her tongue any longer and wanted to tell her side of the story to the public.

“When I heard that tape I was pretty upset, I went back to the room and was talking to my two cousins and I cried a little bit. I ain't gonna lie, some of this has got me pretty down,” she said. “But I thought to myself, ‘I'm going to stand up to her. I'm going to stand up for what I've got to stand up for, you know?’”

In her interview with The Daily Beast, she recounted the details of her attack in 1975 at age 12 and the consequences it had for both her childhood and adult life. A virgin before the assault, she spent five days afterwards in a coma, months recovering from the beating that accompanied the rape, and over 10 years in therapy. The doctors told her she would probably never be able to have children.

The victim was put through several forensic procedures, including a lie detector test. At first, she failed the lie detector test; she said that was because she didn't understand one of the specific sex-related questions. Once that question was explained to her, she passed, she said. The victim positively identified her two attackers through one-way glass and they were arrested. But that wasn't the end of her ordeal.

She described being afraid of men for years and dealing with anger issues well into her adulthood. At one point, she turned to drugs, a path that ultimately led her to prison. Now 52, she has never married or had children. She said she has been sober for several years and has achieved a level of stability, although she remains unemployed and living on disability assistance.

“I'm living life in Arkansas, I go to Church sometimes, and I'm doing good...”

doing really well,” she said. “[Clinton] owes me a big apology, [but] I’ll probably never get anything from her.”

The victim doesn’t remember ever meeting Clinton in 1975; she says her memories from that ordeal are spotty. But she does recall feeling exasperated by the law enforcement and legal proceedings to the point where she told her mother she just wanted it to be over so she could try to resume her childhood.

“I had been through so much stuff I finally told them to do whatever,” she remembered. “They had scared me so bad that I was tired of being put through it all. I finally said I was done... I thought they had both gotten long-term sentences, I didn’t realize they got off with hardly nothing.”

Whether or not Clinton was just doing her duty as a defense lawyer, for the victim, Clinton’s behavior speaks to her character, her ambition, and her suitability to be a role model for women or president of the United States.

“I think she wants to be a role model being who she is, to look good, but I don’t think she’s a role model at all... If she had have been, she would have helped me at the time, being a 12-year-old girl who was raped by two guys,” she said. “She did that to look good and she told lies on that. How many other lies has she told to get where she’s at today? If she becomes president, is she gonna be telling the world the truth? No. She’s going to be telling lies out there, what the world wants to hear.”

The victim is concerned that speaking out will make her a target for attacks, but she no longer feels she is able to stay silent.

“I’m a little scared of her... When this all comes about, I’m a little worried she might try to hurt me, I hope not,” she said. “They can lie all they want, say all they want, I know what’s true.”



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WORLD NEWS 06.21.14



Leslie H. Gelb

A Winning Strategy for Iraq and Sy

It's time for the U.S. to form an alliance between Baghdad, Damascus, Tehran, and Moscow—and divide Iraq and Syria into semi-autonomous ethnic regions.

President Obama's response to the jihadi deluge in Iraq is perfectly Obamaesque. Sensibly, he foreswears big military reimmersion. This will displease only hawks who pray for large scale U.S. air attacks plus lots o

profoundly political and religious underpinnings of what's happening in Iraq.

Yet, Obama might take some of these military actions anyway just to deflect political pressures at home. Meantime, he'll dispatch 350 troops to target jihadis and train Iraqis. Say what? Didn't we already have tens of thousands of U.S. trainers training almost one million Iraqi forces for nearly 10 years only to have them abandon their U.S. arms and uniforms at the sounds of distant gunfire? And wouldn't U.S. drones certainly acquire better targets far more readily? Give me a break! Also, behind the scenes, Obama is trying to get rid of Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki, the bad guy in the story. If Obama manages to install his guys in Baghdad, these "successors" will have large claims on the White House. In sum, the Obama plan avoids the worst, the costly futility of military overreach, but offers no strategy to stem and turn the perilous jihadi tide.

There's only one strategy with a decent chance of winning: forge a military and political coalition with the power to stifle the jihadis in both Iraq and Syria. This means partnering with Iran, Russia, and President Assad of Syria. This would be a very tricky arrangement among unfriendly and non-trusting partners, but the overriding point is that they all have common interests. All regard the jihadis as the overwhelming threat, and all would be willing to take tough joint action. And with this fighting arrangement in place, the "partners" could start seriously fixing the underlying political snake pits in Damascus and Baghdad.

Now, don't start firing rockets at me just yet. Hear me out. First, every state, even the United States, works with bad guys, adversaries and enemies whenever the need is great, whenever it suits reality. Don't forget, Iran helped us protect the western border of Afghanistan for almost the first two years of America's war effort there. Tehran didn't like the Taliban and neither did we.

A federal or decentralized power system is the only means to get the non-jihadi warring parties to live in peace with one another.

President George W. Bush threatened to overthrow the Ayatollah's regime with his "axis of evil" speech.

Consider as well that Russia and states over which it has great influence remain to this day a main waystation for moving U.S. troops and supplies in and out of Afghanistan. To some degree, Washington colludes with China to tamp down the nuclear threat from North Korea. Moscow has been helpful in dealing with Iranian nuclear problems. Moscow and Washington continue to share intelligence to fight terrorists worldwide, despite the Ukraine crisis. And stare at this one:

Vietnam—the country we fought in one way and another for 20 years—cooperates with us against China on South China Sea conflicts. Finally, always hold in mind that America's toughest tough guys—Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, James Baker, et al.—not only contained Russia and China, but negotiated major treaties and agreements with them. All this is common sense realism opposed only by political hacks and ideological quacks.

I'm certainly not saying that Assad is a good guy and that we should abandon pursuing his eventual departure, or that we can now trust Russia and Iran. Washington has and will have serious problems with all these countries. And most certainly, the U.S. will have to stay on its guard. But the fact is that there is common ground with Moscow and Tehran to combat the biggest threat to all

making joint cause with Muslim extremists in Russia; it's Moscow's number one security issue. Iran worries greatly about the Sunni jihadis torturing and killing Shiites in Syria and Iraq. There's nothing more frightening in the world today than these religious fanatics.

President Putin will not stop [giving us a pain in Ukraine](#) and asserting what he sees as his rights and interests on his borders. But he doesn't want to burn bridges entirely with the U.S. because he doesn't want to suffer the full economic consequences of all-out confrontation with the West. So Putin would have an incentive to work seriously with Washington against the common opponent in Syria, i.e., to show that Russia can still be of value to American diplomacy. There's also good reason to believe that Iran would be helpful in both Syria and Iraq as a path to relieving its internal economic hell. To me, this is Tehran's central strategic motivation behind the nuclear talks with the West. Above all, it wants relief from the international economic sanctions. And to reinforce this, President Obama should tell President Rouhani of Iran that genuine cooperation on Syria and Iraq would help increase political receptivity in Washington towards reducing those sanctions. (This is not to say the U.S. should make concessions in the nuclear talks to gain Iran's help in the Mideast. It shouldn't.)

Iran is already said to have [dispatched small military units to Baghdad](#). These need to be increased significantly to levels agreed upon between Tehran and Baghdad, with the U.S. being part of that conversation. Iranian troops should not go into territories predominantly inhabited by Sunnis, but the Iraqis need strong and immediate help and better it comes from Iran than from the United States. And to be blunt, the Iraqis can't put much together quickly on the battlefield, and the Iranians can. American hawks and neocons have never been able to understand that Middle Easterners always rely too much on the

Trying to deal with this massive Iraqi-Syrian upheaval with U.S. fighters and drones would be laughable if it were not so potentially costly to both Americans and Middle Eastern friends. Nothing works there or in any other part of the world unless our friends and allies stand up for themselves and fight for themselves. America's hawks will never learn this lesson.

In sum, President Obama must start addressing the jihadi threat not just in Iraq, but in Iraq and Syria. Second, he has to fashion strategic alliances with Iran, Russia and Assad to deal with the threat effectively and immediately. Third, that doesn't mean no military role for the U.S.; it means U.S. military aid in various forms in the context of that broader alliance. Fourth, with all this moving into place, Washington can then focus on the necessary political changes first in Baghdad and ultimately in Damascus. For the time being, Assad is needed to fight the bad guys. Over time he can be eased out—as long as his Alawite people are protected in some kind of federal Syria. Hopefully, Iraqis will maneuver Maliki out of power much more quickly and try to restore political support and some degree of unity under a federal banner as well.

A federal or decentralized power system is the only means to get the non-jihadi warring parties to live in peace with one another. In a federal system, the minority Syrian Alawites (who belong to a branch of Shiism) can protect themselves against the majority of Syrian Sunnis; and in Iraq, the minority Sunnis can have a wall against the majority Shiites. This approach was universally rejected when I first proposed it ten years ago [in a *New York Times* op-ed](#), and then subsequently [with then-Senator Joe Biden](#). Now, it's pretty clear that if anything could avoid partition in both countries and thus perpetual warfare, it would be a federal division of power.

Above all, this is not the time to blunder into horrendous religious and civil wars with direct and extensive U.S. military force. Our only chance to stop the

who can and will fight now to check the common and dangerous foe.



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NEW ENERGY ECONOMY 05.27.14

The Bond Market Goes Green

Companies are increasingly offering 'green bonds' in order to raise money for sustainable projects—and to appeal to socially conscious investors.

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Debt is referred to as red ink. But a bunch of companies that are raising money to spur the adoption of renewable energy and more intelligent energy use are turning the red ink into green.

Earlier this week, Regency Centers, a shopping center developer, **sold \$250 million** in so-called green bonds. The company will use the funds to construct, buy, or redevelop energy-sipping projects that meet the standards of the Green Building Council.

Regency's offering is part of a larger trend. In January, a group of investment banks banded together to establish criteria for green bonds. In the first quarter of 2014, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, some \$7.4 billion in green bonds were sold by companies—to finance the purchase of hybrid vehicles, and the construction of super-efficient new factories.

Green bonds, as the *Wall Street Journal* reports, got started with non-profit lenders like the World Bank. In May 2013, the first private-sector green bond was issued by **PNE Wind**, a German company that builds and runs wind farms.

To a degree, green bonds are an exercise in public relations. The first U.S. offering came last fall, when Bank of America **issued** \$500 million in green bonds. The giant bank, which has been under regulatory assault since the financial crisis, is seeking to burnish its image by aggressively backing clean energy projects. Bank of America said it would use the funds to back green projects ranging from renewable energy power plants to better insulation in buildings.

money controlled by endowments and other institutions are establishing socially conscious criteria for their investments. Stanford University, for example, recently **decided** to sell its shares in coal companies. Green bonds allow companies like banks and automakers to offer investment products to a pool of investors that may otherwise avoid them.

They often bear lower interest rates than comparable non-green bonds, meaning they are a better credit risk.

Green bonds often provide dedicated funds to specific projects. The Anglo/Dutch consumer products giant **Unilever** in March 2014 sold 250 million pounds (about \$400 million) of green bonds that will be used to fund efforts that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 50 percent (for new projects) and 30 percent (for retrofitted factories.) The projects to be financed included a laundry powder factory in China and an ice cream factory in South Africa. One of the biggest single green bond offerings has been from Toyota, which in March **sold** \$1.75 billion in green bonds. The money raised will be put to use to

finance the sale and leases of Toyota and Lexus hybrids.

Green bonds don't necessarily pay a higher return than conventional bonds. In fact, they often bear lower interest rates than comparable non-green bonds, meaning they are a better credit risk. Here's why. Energy saving technologies and hybrid cars may cost more than conventional ones to purchase. But they

other, with the same mortgage payment. But one has a solar system on the roof that cuts the monthly electricity bill by \$75. In theory, the owner of the home with the solar panel system will be a better credit risk because her monthly expenses are lower. The same holds true for owners of hybrid cars, who spend less on gas than owners of similarly priced conventional vehicles.

The *Wall Street Journal* noted that the green bonds issued by Regency Centers had an interest rate of 3.75 percent—significantly lower than the rate on recent plain vanilla bonds issued by comparable real estate companies.

When it comes to issuing debt, green bonds can help put companies into the black.

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The Crash and Churn of Lawrence O'Donnell

In an exclusive interview, the MSNBC anchor Lawrence O'Donnell reveals how he survived a head-on car crash, and why afterward cut himself off from the negative litany of the news cycle.

“What a stupid way to die,” Lawrence O'Donnell thought to himself.

had been gazing down at a map on his iPhone, following the progress of his taxi, a Chevy van, as he and his older brother Michael rode to dinner on the resort island of Tortola. It was around 7:45 p.m., Saturday, April 12, the start of what promised to be a lovely vacation in the British Virgin Islands with his big brother, a Boston lawyer.

The vacation didn't happen. Instead, O'Donnell, 62, underwent a life-altering crucible that he's still trying to make sense of, while figuring out how to explain it to viewers when he returns to his show on Monday night after two-and-a-half months off the air.

A former Senate staffer who subscribes to the truism that politics ain't beanbag while displaying a decidedly jaundiced view of America's fearless leaders, O'Donnell has a well-earned reputation for bared fangs and sharp claws (just ask some of his on-camera victims, like Herman Cain, Eric Cantor or Anthony Weiner). But after his brush with death, O'Donnell describes himself as newly empathetic, freshly sensitized to the world around him, and determined, more than ever, to accentuate the positive.

“Lucky to be alive’—what does that mean? It’s a cliché,” he tells me. “But because it’s a cliché, it is so profoundly true that it should rule most of the emotions of our day. Our day should begin with ‘Lucky to be alive.’ You should feel that feeling in the middle of the day, even after you have that argument with your boss. Guess what? You’re still lucky to be alive.”

It's hard to see how O'Donnell could feel otherwise since the events of last April in Tortola. It was already very dark outside as the van threaded its way along a busy mountain road, the island's main artery, doing 30 miles an hour. Michael O'Donnell was seated behind Lawrence in the third row of seats. Lawrence was right behind the driver. Neither man wore a seatbelt. Although

van was configured for American roads, with the steering column on the left-hand side.

O'Donnell barely had time to look up from his iPhone when they were hit head-on by an oncoming car.

“I have no idea what speed the other car was doing—he was probably the fastest driver on the island at that moment,” O'Donnell tells me in his first detailed interview about the incident. “He was out of control and jumped the lane...I was just overwhelmed by the noise of this crash, and all I could see was the light of the radio in the center of the dashboard, that was coming closer and closer—because the vehicle was getting crushed. It seemed like it was going on forever.”

Here O'Donnell pauses. At several points during his narrative, he has to stop to regain his composure. It's as if he's reliving his ordeal.

“When something happens that is such a shocking experience, your brain slows it down. Your brain tries to examine--What is this? What do I have to do? What is going on?”

“When something happens that is such a shocking experience, your brain slows it down,” he continues. “Your brain tries to examine—What is this? What do I have to do? What is going on? And this crash felt like it went on for 20 seconds, which is impossible, but it might have gone on for a few.

“The vehicles hit and we continued to roll down the road, kind of Indianapolis 500-style. It felt like we were in a roll-over, but the van was

that radio come closer and closer and that dashboard get crushed, I had what seemed an extremely long time to think about dying in this taxicab, and to think about my daughter [20-year-old Elizabeth, from his former marriage to actress Kathryn Harrold]. Then suddenly the radio stopped moving.”

O'Donnell was wedged in, leaning on his right side and trapped by the driver's seat, unable to extricate himself but apparently not seriously injured—at least that's what he believed at first.

The taxi driver was miraculously unscathed, as was the driver of the other vehicle, a drunken islander who, because of superficial bleeding that he sustained when his airbag deployed, was rushed off to the hospital in the first ambulance to the scene. Lawrence attributes the drivers' good luck to the fact that they were in American cars on British roads, with their seats on the outside edge of the collision, and thus spared the full brunt of the impact. Michael O'Donnell was not so fortunate.

“The second the noise stopped I saw that my brother had somehow been flipped ahead of me to the front,” Lawrence says. “He immediately and correctly self-diagnosed himself as having a broken femur. He was absolutely right and in a tremendous amount of pain.”

Lawrence, though immobile, quickly took charge, telling his brother to give him his wallet and his keys, thinking that he would be the aggressive patient advocate supervising Michael's medical care once they got to the hospital.

Michael “is a very tough guy and a real stoic,” his brother says. “He's a military veteran and was the tough guy of my neighborhood when I was growing up, so

leaned into the taxi and asked how many injured are there, I said, 'One.' ”

O'Donnell softly cries at the memory.

The emergency medical technicians pulled Michael out of the van, cut off his trousers to assess the damage, and carried him on a stretcher to a second ambulance. “That’s when I tried to pull myself out of the taxicab, and I find that I’ve got something that’s really bad on my left hip,” Lawrence says. “I’ve got a real problem. After a couple of attempts, I realize, ‘Oh, I can’t move.’”

He had a broken hip, fractured in several places as he was crushed against the driver’s seat. He had also suffered several knife-like flesh wounds on his legs. But if he positioned himself a certain way, he found he could avoid excruciating agony.

“I think I need an ambulance, too,” he told one of Tortola’s first responders, who explained that he’d have to wait till one of the other ambulances returned; there were only two available on the island. It would likely be a long wait because the accident had caused an island-wide traffic jam. So O’Donnell looked around for the iPhone he’d just been holding; it had flown out of his hands on impact. He had to get in touch with his colleagues at MSNBC.

“It was so dark. I couldn’t see anything,” he says. “But then I looked down at my left foot and I happened to see an outline of an iPhone. For reasons I still don’t understand the floor was covered in about five inches of water, and the phone was under water. And I just reached down beside my left foot—which is something I cannot do to this day, by the way—picked up the phone, which was soaking wet, did that slide thing, punched in the code, and it was on.”

Within a few minutes, he was texting with various MSNBC producers, and within the hour—even before the ambulance arrived—MSNBC President Phil

News Group, were arranging for separate private jets to medevac O'Donnell and his brother back to the United States—Lawrence to New York and Michael to Boston—and had lined up Dr. David Helfet, a renowned orthopedic trauma surgeon at Manhattan's Hospital for Special Surgery, to operate on Lawrence.

The brothers arrived at their respective destinations at midnight Sunday. Michael was in the OR the following morning and Lawrence went under the knife on Tuesday, April 15, for a meticulous repair of his shattered hip using surgical nails; the flesh wounds were more challenging to treat and didn't close up and begin healing in earnest until last week, O'Donnell says.

He lived for two weeks on the ward, having never spent a single night in a hospital up until that time. After being released, he stayed for a month in New York, mostly indoors, trying to get used to his crutches. On May 20, he finally boarded a plane back home to Los Angeles, where he has been undergoing daily physical therapy and making incremental improvement—at a faster clip than his brother, who was more grievously injured and is several years his senior.

This past week, in what he describes as a “miraculous” development, O'Donnell started using only a single crutch, to prop up his left side, and his wounds have healed to the point where he can start relearning to walk in the swimming pool at his physical therapy center in Santa Monica.

Through it all, O'Donnell has noticed several profound changes in himself and the way he experiences daily life.

“When I left New York, I was in an SUV on the way to JFK, and as it emerged from the tunnel and got up to 50 miles per hour I was terrified, completely terrified, because I know that anything can happen at any minute,” he says. “I

It's very real.”

In addition, for much of his recovery, O'Donnell discovered that it was best not to expose himself to newspapers or television, or media of any kind, lest he have to digest bad news that would set him back psychologically; he was a quivering mass of raw nerve endings and no longer possessed the ordinary human defense mechanisms that prevent most of us in the modern world from feeling too deeply the tragedies of others. That is, O'Donnell found that his optimal state was to live in the cultural equivalent of a sensory deprivation tank.

“I couldn't bear any negative news,” he says. “When I started to hear some negative stuff about what was happening with my brother, I listened to it and went ‘OK’ and hung up and tried to get it out of my head. I just wanted to isolate myself completely from any negative information of any kind. So when I first turned on the TV after several weeks, I saw there was some crazy guy in Nevada and all these people aiming rifles at cops because they don't want to pay for the land. I consumed about 39 seconds of that and I turned it off, because I didn't want to consume all the ugliness.”

He adds: “I became one of those people who I've met from time to time who say they don't watch the news. Too many bad stories. I never understood those people. Now I get them completely.”

O'Donnell acknowledges that his new aversion to negativity is not necessarily helpful to someone who anchors a nightly news and opinion program on cable television. “One thing I really want to do, as an experiment,” he says, “is have a segment every night that I will call ‘And now for the *good* news!’”

It might just work.



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Why Is Colorado's Governor Now Bashing His Own Gun-Control Law

John Hickenlooper, who a year ago pushed through meaningful gun-control laws after horrible mass shootings, recently denour his measures before a rural sheriffs group. Why now?

How dire is the political situation for supporters of gun control?

past 20 years, and in response, passed meaningful gun-control legislation last year.

But last week, Colorado Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper, who made those measures a centerpiece of his first term, backed swiftly away from them in a meeting with a group of county sheriffs.

Hickenlooper told the biennial meeting of the County Sheriffs of Colorado, who represent rural communities in the state and who vociferously opposed the measures, that he regrets signing the bills, and would not have done so had he known more.

“I’ll tell you the funny story, and it is a weird... I think we screwed that up,” Hickenlooper said, according to a videotape of the remarks that one sheriff in attendance posted online.

“So we were performing legislation without basic facts, which I think is a bad idea in every case. It took almost a month to get the facts. By that time I had pissed you guys off... There was passed legislation that I had said I was going to sign.”

“I apologize. I don’t think we did a good job on any of that stuff,” Hickenlooper added.

When pressed by one member of the audience, Larimer County Sheriff Justin Smith, Hickenlooper worked blue.

“What the fuck?” the governor said. “I apologized!”

The governor’s office told reporters that Hickenlooper was joking, but Smith wrote on his Facebook page that he did not find the matter funny.

foreign to me—but I found that type of attitude and response to be well below the dignity of the office of governor,” Smith wrote. “This was a sitting governor, in a public meeting, [responding to another elected official.](#)”

The measures that Colorado passed in 2013 limited the sale of high-capacity magazine clips of the kind that made the violence and destruction at the Aurora movie-theater shooting much worse than it ordinarily would have been. The bills also included increased background checks on gun purchases and a limit of sales to people convicted of domestic violence.

Mauser noted that the governor hailed the measures while signing them, and suggested that perhaps the governor was just playing to his audience. “I am just confused,” he said.

To the sheriffs, the governor expressed doubt that the high-capacity magazine ban could be enforced, and said that the only reason he pushed for it was because a staff member had said he would, and the governor then felt obligated.

At the time of the passage, Hickenlooper was hailed by gun-control activists, especially New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg’s Mayors Against Illegal Guns group. Hickenlooper told the sheriffs, however, that Bloomberg had nothing to do with what happened in Colorado.

Conservative news outlets revealed this week that in fact phone logs from the governor’s office showed that Hickenlooper had several conversations with the New York mayor.

television station.

“The governor often jokes about his ability to put his foot in his mouth, because he does,” said Eric Brown, the spokesman. “It is well established that Gov. Hickenlooper spoke with Mayor Bloomberg, as well as NRA President [David] Keene and many other stakeholders in the gun-safety debate. In fact, the governor released phone records on this matter.”

“When the governor told an audience of sheriffs that he had not talked to Bloomberg, the governor was attempting to convey he never had a conversation with Bloomberg that influenced the decision he made,” Brown added. “In no way did the governor intend to mislead the sheriffs or anyone else.”

After the gun-control bills were signed into law last year, Colorado became ground zero for the fight over gun safety, with gun-rights activists pushing for the recall of two state lawmakers who supported the measures. Both lawmakers were defeated, despite a major infusion of resources from Bloomberg and other gun-control supporters.

Hickenlooper is up for reelection in 2014 in a state that remains deeply divided politically. Yet most political prognosticators do not think he is likely to lose this November.

Perhaps for that reason, even some of Colorado’s most ardent advocates for gun control were muted into their criticism of the governor.

“I don’t know what to make of it,” said Tom Mauser, whose son, Daniel, was murdered in the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, and who has met with President Obama to push for more gun-safety laws. “It is certainly a very contentious issue. I think that for the average person they think there should

limitations on guns. But in the political world, there is so much hand-wringing. It is tough to get things done.”

He noted that the governor hailed the measures while signing them, and suggested that perhaps the governor was just playing to his audience. “I am just confused,” he said.

Eileen McCarron, the president of Ceasefire Colorado, the state’s leading gun-control group, criticized the sheriffs for saying that they were not involved in the planning and drafting of the bills, but declined to criticize Hickenlooper for not standing behind his previous actions and words.

“These comments were largely about process issues,” she said. “This was a conversation between the governor and the sheriffs and we don’t have a comment on it.”

The National Rifle Association, meanwhile, seized on the comments as proof that Hickenlooper is tailoring his gun message to his audience, calling the remarks part of a “desperate tap dance.”

“By doing one thing as governor and then saying another on the campaign trail, Hickenlooper is clearly demonstrating that he has no credibility when it comes to protecting our Second Amendment freedoms,” said Catherine Mortensen, spokesperson for the NRA.

But perhaps another errant remark by Hickenlooper recorded at the meeting sums up the whole imbroglio best.

“If we had known that this was going to divide the state so intensely,” Hickenlooper said. “I think we would have thought about it twice.”

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