

Hagedorn marks his 15 minutes of shame

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Hagedorn marks his 15 minutes of shame Marty Trillhaase The Lewiston Tribune | 0 comments

Most people would look at the murder of 22-year-old Kathryn Benoit of Moscow and the suicide of her apparent assailant, former University of Idaho assistant professor Ernesto A. Bustamante, with alarm, concern, empathy and dread.

Not Rep. Marv Hagedorn, R-Meridian.

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For him, it was an opportunity to make political points.

A stage from which to draw attention to himself.

Hagedorn waited less than a day to pounce.

Hagedorn is a co-sponsor of the ill-conceived bill to equip Idaho's college students with concealed firearms on campus - a bill vigorously blocked by college administrators. Since the Benoit shooting occurred at a Moscow residence off-campus, that measure is moot.

No matter.

In a letter to UI President Duane Nellis, Hagedorn suggested that had Bustamante taken a gun safety class, none of this might have happened.

Teaching gun safety "could have possibly served as a deterrent to the shooter had he really understood what the misuse of his gun really meant to her and her family as well as his," Hagedorn wrote.

What would provoke such a response?

Perhaps it was this statement from Nellis: "I am deeply committed to keeping our students safe and preparing them for a bright future. That is certainty."

Countered Hagedorn: "Then I would recommend that instead of running away from the Second Amendment of our nation's Constitution and the Constitution of Idaho, that the U of I use this terrible experience to embrace them both and start teaching gun safety and proper use that ALWAYS includes the ugly side of the misuse of a gun such as has happened in this case. We live in a nation that, like it or not, clearly sites (sic) individual gun rights in our constitutions and the courts have upheld the support of those rights.

"We don't hesitate to teach our children the privilege of driving, yet we continue to hesitate to teach them the responsibilities remitted to them via these founding documents. Proper education could have possibly served as a deterrent to the shooter had he really understood what the misuse of his gun really meant to her and her family as well as his. ... Education is always better than sticking one's head in the sand and hoping people use common sense and unlearned logic to get through life. ... You know this to be true."

That transcends oafishness.

It's beyond ugly.

It exceeds insensitivity.

Inhumane doesn't begin to describe it.

Such talk from anyone is irresponsible. From an elected official charged with writing our laws and embracing our standards of decency, it is nothing short of depraved.

Hagedorn doesn't know all the facts and nuances of this case.

He didn't know details of the relationship between Benoit and Bustamante that just began surfacing Wednesday.

He couldn't have known about any psychological issues Bustamante suffered.

Hagedorn didn't have access to the details of the shooting.

To speak now only exposes the depth of Hagedorn's ignorance and the shallowness of his soul.

If Hagedorn doesn't already regret his knee-jerk outburst, he soon will. - M.T.