

Justice Scalia and the Devil Spook the Liberal Media

According to Cenk Uygur, co-host of the *Young Turks* and a self-described fervent agnostic, “We have a lunatic on the court.” He is speaking of Justice Antonin Scalia, who stated in an interview with *New York* magazine that he believes in the existence of the devil. In the words of Uygur, that is “cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs.”

Really?

Uygur admits that “a lot of Americans believe in the devil,” but, he continues, “I hope that it’s a symbolic thing they are talking about and not an actual creature with the horn and a tail. I mean, that would be ridiculous, right?”

Apparently, Uygur didn’t consider the possibility that **Satan** could be a real person without horn and tail, even unknowingly borrowing a page out of C.S. Lewis’ classic book *Screwtape Letters*, in which a senior demon counsels his younger demon to be sure that human beings have an exaggerated picture of **Satan**, one that sounds a lot like Uygur’s Satan: “an actual creature with the horn and a tail. ... He’s got a pitch fork.”

But it’s not enough for Uygur to mock Scalia for believing in the *Young Turks*’ fictional image of **Satan**. He asks a complete *non sequitur*: “How do you make rational decisions when you are a person who is proud of basing your decisions on sheer irrationality?”

Come again?

Yes, Uygur claims that Scalia is “basically saying here the Gospels are what help me decide. The United States Constitution is supposed to help you decide in cases! Not what your insane Gospels say about Lucifer.”

Of course, Scalia said no such thing and, for the record, the Gospels will be here many millennia after the *Young Turks* is long forgotten. But Uygur's remarks are completely off base and irrational because the last thing on Scalia's mind was any connection between the existence of the devil and how he makes his Supreme Court decisions.

To the contrary, in his wide-ranging interview with Jennifer Senior, Scalia described himself as an "honest originalist" (with an exclamation point, at that), explaining, "Words have meaning. And their meaning doesn't change. I mean, the notion that the Constitution should simply, by decree of the Court, mean something that it didn't mean when the people voted for it—frankly, you should ask the other side the question! How did they ever get there?"

Obviously, Scalia seeks to base his decisions on the intent of the Constitution rather than on what the Gospels say about Satan, but why should that stop Uygur from maligning Scalia for his religious beliefs? Or is Uygur alleging that only atheists or Bible-mockers can make decisions based on the Constitution? I imagine the framers of the Constitution would have something to say to him about that.

What, then, of Scalia's personal beliefs?

Senior asked him if he believed in heaven and hell, and he replied, "Oh, of course I do," then asked her, "Don't you believe in heaven and hell?"

When Senior replied, "No," it drew an "Oh, my" from Scalia, which led to further dialog about who goes to heaven and to hell (a dialog in which Scalia the judge was decidedly non-judgmental).

He then admitted (leaning in, in a stage-whisper), "I even believe in the Devil." This led to a fascinating exchange:

Senior: You do?

Scalia: Of course! Yeah, he's a real person. Hey, c'mon, that's standard Catholic doctrine! Every Catholic believes that.

Senior: Every Catholic believes this? There's a wide variety of Catholics out there ...

Scalia: If you are faithful to Catholic dogma, that is certainly a large part of it.

Senior: Have you seen evidence of the Devil lately?

Scalia: You know, it is curious. In the Gospels, the Devil is doing all sorts of things. He's making pigs run off cliffs, he possesses people and whatnot. And that doesn't happen very much anymore.

Senior: No.

Scalia: It's because he's smart.

Senior: So what's he doing now?

Scalia: What he's doing now is getting people not to believe in him or in God. He's much more successful that way.

Senior: That has really painful implications for atheists. Are you sure that's the Devil's work?

Scalia: I didn't say atheists are the Devil's work.

Senior: Well, you're saying the Devil is persuading people to not believe in God. Couldn't there be other reasons to not believe?

Scalia: Well, there certainly can be other reasons. But it certainly favors the Devil's desires. I mean, c'mon, that's the explanation for why there's not demonic possession all over the place. That always puzzled me. What happened to the Devil, you know? He used to be all over the place. He used to be all over the New Testament.

Senior: Right.

Scalia: What happened to him?

Senior: He just got wilier.

Scalia: He got wilier.

Senior: Isn't it terribly frightening to believe in the Devil?

Scalia: You're looking at me as though I'm weird. My God! Are you so out of touch with most of America, most of which believes in the Devil? I mean, Jesus Christ believed in the Devil! It's in the Gospels! You travel in circles that are so, so removed from mainstream America that you are appalled that anybody would believe in the Devil! Most of mankind has believed in the Devil, for all of history. Many more intelligent people than you or me have believed in the Devil.

Senior: I hope you weren't sensing contempt from me. It wasn't your belief that surprised me so much as how boldly you expressed it.

Scalia: I was offended by that. I really was.

Interestingly, when Rick Santorum made some controversial remarks about the devil last year, reported, "Rick Santorum is far from alone in professing a belief in Satan. In fact, most Americans believe in the devil too."

The story noted, "According to a 2007 Gallup poll, seven in 10 Americans said they believe in 'the Devil,' while 8 percent were not sure. Twenty-one percent said they don't believe in the devil."

As for the 21 percent (including Uygur) who are sure that Satan doesn't exist, Scalia has given us the reason why: "He got wilier."

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