

Hazel Roberts

Option One: The Assassination of Charlie Kirk

I wanted to pick only one topic to write about within option one. I really tried. I thought I could choose the simplest one and avoid reopening the wound I have been carrying since September tenth. But the truth is that every topic you listed ties directly to what I have lived through since the day Charlie Kirk was murdered. I have never lost anyone before. My grandparents, my siblings, and my friends, all still alive. I have never stood over the idea of death and felt it stare back at me. Never did I expect that the first death I would encounter would be one where I would watch people celebrate, even my own classmates.

The morning after it happened, I walked into school and felt the air shift. It felt heavier and sharper. Every hallway had a student whispering. Some laughed. Some shared edited videos about his death. Some repeated things they heard online that were not even close to true. When I tried to correct them I was called a liar or a Nazi sympathizer or a brainwashed kid. They said it with smiles like cruelty was a sport. They claimed it was free speech. They acted like the First Amendment protected the right to cheer for a murder.

I remember sitting in class while a boy behind me joked that Charlie got what he deserved. My stomach flipped. Not because I wanted to argue but because I did not even know how to respond. I kept thinking about how social media made this so easy. How it gave people permission to

speak with no filter and no conscience. How it turns violent language into entertainment. How people follow influencers or politicians who encourage this kind of behavior and then hide behind sarcasm when someone gets hurt. It made me understand how quickly words can turn into a match that lights something darker.

I also noticed something else. The same students who made fun of his death were the ones who preached tolerance in every other situation. They wore the flags and spoke the slogans and told everyone to be kind. Yet somehow kindness did not cover me. Or people like me. Or Charlie. It made me think about how politics has become a place where certain groups feel untouchable. How some use their identities as shields so they can treat others with cruelty and face no consequences. It opened my eyes to a level of hypocrisy I did not expect at my age.

It also made school feel unsafe. Not because someone was going to attack me physically but because I realized how quickly hate can grow when no adult is paying attention. I watched teachers glance at the jokes and ignore them. I watched administrators pretend they did not hear what was said. I watched adults tell us to calm down when we brought concerns to them. It felt like everyone was afraid to address anything that involved politics. Nobody wanted to take responsibility. Nobody wanted to risk being accused of bias. So nothing changed. And silence made the situation worse.

During all of this I had to figure out how to stand up for myself. I am seventeen. I am not trained to navigate something like this. But I could not let lies about Charlie spread in front of me. I could not sit still when people justified violence. Speaking up made me a target. Speaking up got me mocked. Speaking up made my hands shake more times than I can count. But I still did it. I

did it because silence would have felt like agreeing and I could not agree with the celebration of a death.

My youth group talked about it too. Not in a political way. They talked about grief. About how Christians should respond when evil things happen. They told me to cling to truth and stay grounded in Scripture and remember that Jesus understands grief better than anyone. They reminded me that the Church should be the first place to confront injustice yet the last place to act with hate. It was the only place where I felt understood during those first days.

As all of this unfolded I kept wondering whether civil political conversations can even exist anymore. I want to believe they can. I want to believe two people can disagree strongly yet still listen and still care. But when someone is murdered and people cheer it becomes harder to imagine dialogue at all. It makes me look at the federal government and question why certain violence is ignored while imaginary threats are exaggerated. It makes me wonder why political leaders speak so softly when violence comes from one side yet speak so loudly when it comes from the other. It made me learn a term I had never heard before. Anarchy tyranny. The idea that the government ignores real chaos while punishing normal people for minor things. I finally understood what it meant because I saw what was ignored and what was not.

In the middle of all this someone asked me what laws I think should change. I still do not know all the answers but I know this. When violent threats increase people deserve the right to protect themselves. The Second Amendment exists for moments when society becomes unstable. People should not lose that right. People should not have to depend on a system that is afraid to speak up.

And then someone asked me if private Christian schools were different from public schools. I think they are. Not because public schools are bad but because Christian schools talk about dignity in a way public schools cannot. They talk about life with a seriousness that does not get laughed at. They hold students accountable for cruelty instead of pretending not to see it. That difference matters.

For weeks I kept telling myself that I would pick only one of these questions to write about. I thought I would choose the easy one and leave the rest untouched. But then I remembered who Charlie was to me. I remembered the way he encouraged young people to speak truth boldly and to refuse to back down when culture demanded it. I remembered the way he told us to think deeper and hold the line.

So I changed my mind.

I wrote about every single topic.

I hid each answer inside my story.

I put it all together because grief gave me no choice.

And I did it in honor of the man who taught me that silence helps no one.

If you read this closely you will see that all the questions were answered.

But if you read it with your heart you will see that it is not about the questions at all.

It is about a girl who lost a leader and gained a fire she did not have before.