

Word count: 1039

Last edited by Pam on September 13, 2025 at 6:47 am

The news of Charlie Kirk's assassination on Wednesday at Utah Valley University is devastating. He left behind a young wife and two small children, who were very clearly the center of his world. While much of the online commentary about him has been respectful and positive, it is hard to escape the online celebrations of his death—gleeful posts blaming the victim because of his political beliefs, excusing the lack of compassion for his family because of his views. Many acknowledge that, of course, it was wrong for the gunman to murder Kirk, but still seem relieved that a person they saw as a threat to their worldview is no longer around.

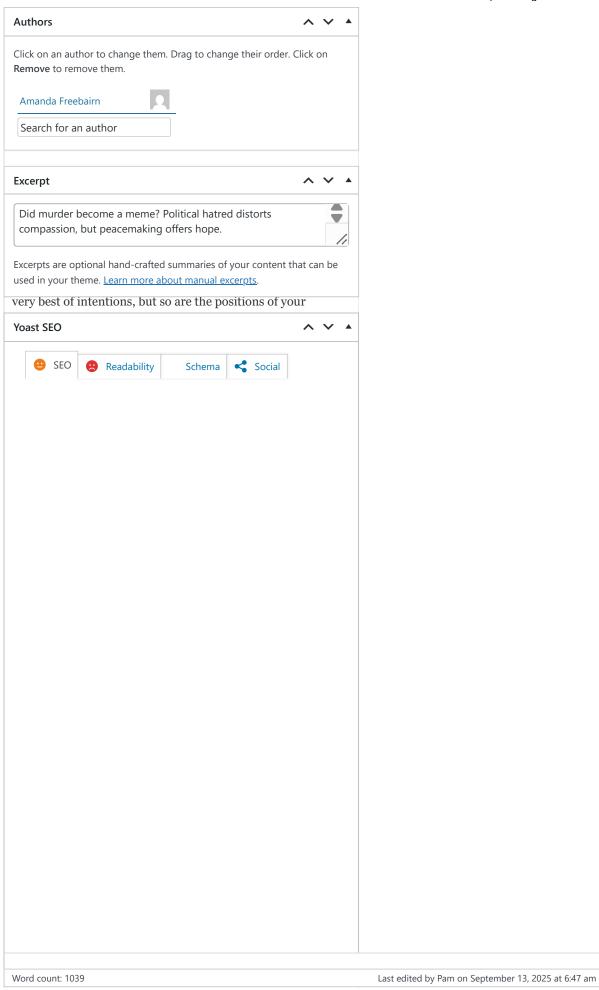
I am, unfortunately, all too familiar with those feelings, having once lived them myself.

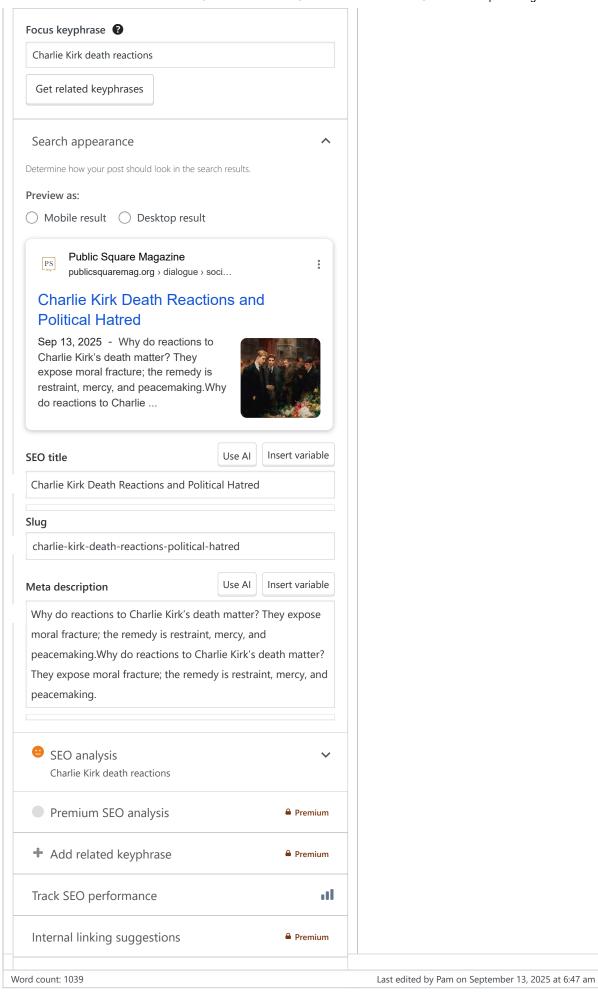
From a young age, I believed the political left held the moral high ground. I knew that there were a few good and smart right-leaning people—my parents and neighbors among them —but I also assumed that they were the exceptions. In my eyes, the vast majority of people on the right were evil, dumb, selfish, or worse. Why else would anyone oppose the party of women's rights, civil rights, and workers' rights? [perfectpullquote align="right" bordertop="false" cite="" link="" color="" class="" size=""]It is hard to escape the online celebrations of his death.[/perfectpullquote]The year I turned 18, I proudly cast my vote for President Barack Obama. I was certain the problems of the world were finally on their way to being solved. Eight years later, when President Donald Trump was elected for the first time, I was equally certain that democracy in the United States would end.

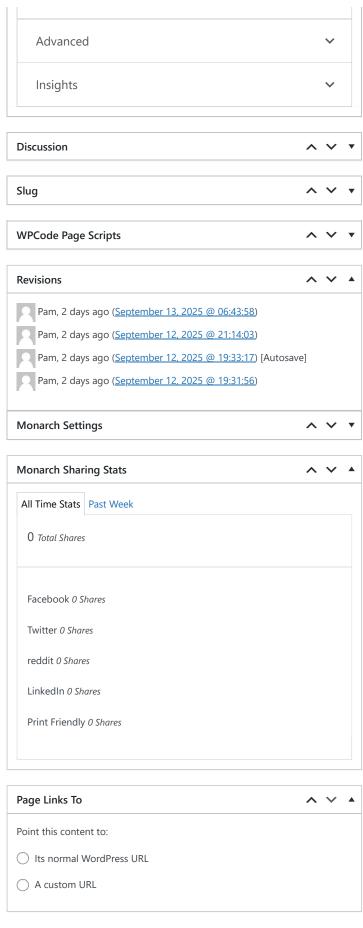
But over time, things began to change. I married and had three young children. I wrestled with my faith. I found myself questioning whether issues were as simple as I had once assumed. In 2020, like many people, I spent more time online —and to my surprise, I was exposed to ideas I had once rejected out of hand. Slowly, my moral intuitions shifted. I no longer felt my political home was on the left.

What startled me most was realizing how many people I had dismissed as "bigots" were simply people who thought as I now did. I carried real regret for the way politics had shaped my view of people I knew and loved. At the same time, the world became much lighter, knowing that the country was not divided into good guys and bad guys, but both sides were filled with mostly very good and earnest people, endowed with the light of Christ, trying to make the best for the world we could.

My shift in beliefs did not lead me to see people on the left as I had seen people on the right. Like a growing number of Americans, I am quite politically homeless, perhaps leaning more conservative, but with serious criticisms of the right. I







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