[Mark Steyn](http://nationalreview.com/author/1832)

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[TO THE SLAUGHTER](http://nationalreview.com/articles/349308/slaughter)

BRITISH LIONS COME UP LAMBS IN WOOLWICH.



Michael Adebolajo speaks to horrified onlookers after the attack.

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On Wednesday, Drummer Lee Rigby of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, a man who had served Queen and country honorably in the hell of Helmand Province in Afghanistan, emerged from his barracks on Wellington Street, named after the Duke thereof, in southeast London. Minutes later, he was hacked to death in broad daylight and in full view of onlookers by two men with machetes who crowed “Allahu akbar!” as they dumped his carcass in the middle of the street like so much road kill.

As grotesque as this act of savagery was, the aftermath was even more unsettling. The perpetrators did not, as the Tsarnaev brothers did in Boston, attempt to escape. Instead, they held court in the street gloating over their trophy, and flagged down a London bus to demand the passengers record their triumph on film. As the crowd of bystanders swelled, the remarkably urbane savages posed for photographs with the remains of their victim while discoursing on the iniquities of Britain toward the Muslim world. Having killed Drummer Rigby, they were killing time: It took 20 minutes for the somnolent British constabulary to show up. And so television viewers were treated to the spectacle of a young man, speaking in the vowels of south London, chatting calmly with his “fellow Britons” about his geopolitical grievances and apologizing to the ladies present for any discomfort his beheading of Drummer Rigby might have caused them, all while drenched in blood and still wielding his cleaver.

If you’re thinking of getting steamed over all that, don’t. Simon Jenkins, the former editor of the *Times* of London, cautioned against “mass hysteria” over “mundane acts of violence.”

That’s easy for him to say. Woolwich is an unfashionable part of town, and Sir Simon is unlikely to find himself there of an afternoon stroll. Drummer Rigby had less choice in the matter. Being jumped by barbarians with machetes is certainly “mundane” in Somalia and Sudan, but it’s the sort of thing that would once have been considered somewhat unusual on a sunny afternoon in south London — at least as unusual as, say, blowing up eight-year-old boys at the Boston Marathon. It was “mundane” only in the sense that, as at weddings and kindergarten concerts, the reflexive reaction of everybody present was to get out their cell phones and start filming.

Once, long ago, I was in an altercation where someone pulled a switchblade, and ever since have been mindful of Jimmy Hoffa’s observation that he’d rather jump a gun than a knife. Nevertheless, there is a disturbing passivity to this scene: a street full of able-bodied citizens being lectured to by blood-soaked murderers who have no fear that anyone will be minded to interrupt their diatribes. In fairness to the people of Boston, they were ordered to “shelter in place” by the governor of Massachusetts. In Woolwich, a large crowd of Londoners apparently volunteered to “shelter in place,” instinctively. Consider how that will play when these guys’ jihadist snuff video is being hawked around the bazaars of the Muslim world. Behold the infidels, content to be bystanders in their own fate.

This passivity set the tone for what followed. In London as in Boston, the politico-media class immediately lapsed into the pneumatic multiculti Tourette’s that seems to be a chronic side effect of excess diversity-celebrating: No Islam to see here, nothing to do with Islam, all these body parts in the street are a deplorable misinterpretation of Islam. The BBC’s Nick Robinson accidentally described the men as being “of Muslim appearance,” but quickly walked it back lest impressionable types get the idea that there’s anything “of Muslim appearance” about a guy waving a machete and saying “Allahu akbar.” A man is on TV dripping blood in front of a dead British soldier and swearing “by Almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you,” yet it’s the BBC reporter who’s apologizing for “causing offence.” To David Cameron, Drummer Rigby’s horrific end was “not just an attack on Britain and on the British way of life, it was also a betrayal of Islam. . . . There is nothing in Islam that justifies this truly dreadful act.”

How does he know? He doesn’t seem the most likely Koranic scholar. Appearing on David Letterman’s show a while back, Cameron was unable to translate into English the words “Magna Carta,” which has quite a bit to do with that “British way of life” he’s so keen on. But apparently it’s because he’s been up to his neck in suras and hadiths every night sweating for Sharia 101. So has Scotland Yard’s deputy assistant commissioner, Brian Paddick, who reassured us after the London Tube bombings that “Islam and terrorism don’t go together,” and the mayor of Toronto, David Miller, telling NPR listeners after 19 Muslims were arrested for plotting to behead the Canadian prime minister: “You know, in Islam, if you kill one person you kill everybody,” he said in a somewhat loose paraphrase of Koran 5:32 that manages to leave out some important loopholes. “It’s a very peaceful religion.”

That’s why it fits so harmoniously into famously peaceful societies like, say, Sweden. For the last week Stockholm has been ablaze every night with hundreds of burning cars set alight by “youths.” Any particular kind of “youth”? The Swedish prime minister declined to identify them any more precisely than as “hooligans.” But don’t worry: The “hooligans” and “youths” and men of no Muslim appearance whatsoever can never win because, as David Cameron ringingly declared, “they can never beat the values we hold dear, the belief in freedom, in democracy, in free speech, in our British values, Western values.” Actually, they’ve already gone quite a way toward eroding free speech, as both prime ministers demonstrate. The short version of what happened in Woolwich is that two Muslims butchered a British soldier in the name of Islam and helpfully explained, “The only reason we have done this is because Muslims are dying every day.” But what do they know? They’re only Muslims, not Diversity Outreach Coordinators. So the BBC, in its so-called “Key Points,” declined to mention the “Allahu akbar” bit or the “I”-word at all: Allah who?

Not a lot of Muslims want to go to the trouble of chopping your head off, but when so many Western leaders have so little rattling around up there, they don’t have to. And, as we know from the sob-sister Tsarnaev profiles, most of these excitable lads are perfectly affable, or at least no more than mildly alienated, until the day they set a hundred cars alight, or blow up a school boy, or decapitate some guy. And, if you’re lucky, it’s not you they behead, or your kid they kill, or even your Honda Civic they light up. And so life goes on, and it’s all so “mundane,” in Simon Jenkins’s word, that you barely notice when the Jewish school shuts up, and the gay bar, and the uncovered women no longer take a stroll too late in the day, and the publishing house that gets sent the manuscript for the next *Satanic Verses* decides it’s not worth the trouble. . . . But don’t worry, they’ll never defeat our “free speech” and our “way of life.”

One in ten Britons under 25 is now Muslim. That number will increase, through immigration, disparate birth rates, and conversions like those of the Woolwich killers, British-born and -bred. Metternich liked to say the Balkans began in the Landstrasse, in southeast Vienna. Today, the Dar al-Islam begins in Wellington Street, in southeast London. That’s a “betrayal” all right, but not of Islam.

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