

# US Elite Hijack AZ Shootings to take Revenge on Sarah Palin

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On a sunny Saturday morning outside the local Safeway in Tucson, - Arizona, a man pulls out a powerful handgun, opens fire - and engulfs the U.S. in a political -firestorm.

Six people were killed on -Saturday, including a nine-year-old girl. But it was the fact that the target was a -Democratic congresswoman - who is fighting for her life - which has sparked such a furious row, not, as one might expect, over the nature of America's gun laws, but over the vitriolic nature of its politics.

Defenders of gun rights like to say it's not the gun that's dangerous, but the user. Now the argument swirling across the U.S. is whether it's not the user but violent political -rhetoric that may have -ultimately pulled the trigger.

In short, did the killer Jared Loughner - who has a history of mental instability and has made a series of bizarre postings on the internet - go out looking to kill because political voices told him to?

Could the inflammatory -language used by some Right-wing politicians - in -particular, Sarah Palin - have encouraged the killer to act as he did?

That's the question at the heart of a febrile political blame game that started even before the most basic details had emerged about the background and possible motivation of the gunman. Already it has drawn in politicians, commentators, police and even the families of the victims.

Gabrielle Giffords was a Democrat and much - but not all - of the badly spelt, incoherent YouTube jumble that passed for the politics of her attacker was broadly 'Right-wing'.

As a result, many liberal -commentators and establishment figures have leapt at the opportunity to blame conservative politicians.

The rush to make political capital out of a mass shooting shows just how nasty U.S. -politics has become. Under Barack Obama, America is more polarised than it has been for 40 years. Conservatives have come to despise liberals, and vice versa, with an intensity the like of which few can recall. Right-wing anger with the high-spending Obama administration's handling of the financial crisis, a weak economy and high unemployment has prompted thousands of ordinary Americans to break away from conventional two-party politics to support the Tea Party movement with its call for small government.

As the name (a reference to the 1773 Boston Tea Party) implies, Tea Party supporters see their movement as rooted in the rebellion against George III, and the language has -inevitably been full of -military metaphor.

In the fractious lead-up to last November's congressional mid-term elections - which saw a major victory for the Right - there were scuffles outside town halls, occasional brandishing of firearms at -rallies and reports of rising membership of armed militias, 'weekend warriors' training for the day they believe will come when they will have to defend the U.S. Constitution. //T. Leonard, Daily Mail (UK)