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Jason Sokol: Expert Comment Available on History of Gun Control Act

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2018/03/20/JASON-SOKOL-EXPERT-COMMENT-AVAILABLE-HISTORY-GUN-CONTROL-ACT)

DURHAM, N.H. – As the anti-gun rally “March for Our Lives” grows closer, Jason Sokol, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, and author of “THE HEAVENS MIGHT CRACK: The Death and Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.,” is available to comment on the tragic and fateful events that ultimately helped push through gun control legislation in 1968.

Sokol reminds us that the shooting death of Martin Luther King, Jr. played a crucial role in the history of gun control politics. He writes, “King’s assassination set in motion a dynamic that ultimately led to the passage of the Gun Control Act later in 1968.” Sokol outlines how the murder of King, together with the murder of Robert F. Kennedy two months later, pushed Congress to pass the first major piece of



JASON SOKOL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, HAS WRITTEN A BOOK, “THE HEAVENS MIGHT CRACK: THE DEATH AND LEGACY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.”, WHICH GIVES CONTEXT TO HOW AMERICANS, AND OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD, GRAPPLED WITH KING’S DEATH IN THE DAYS, WEEKS, AND MONTHS AFTERWARDS.

gun control legislation since the 1930s.

Sokol can discuss the parallels between today’s tragedies and the violent times of 1968. He can talk about how the assassination of King helped change the larger political environment and created a platform for Robert Kennedy’s anti-violence message to resonate. He can outline the earlier gun control groundwork laid by Senator Thomas Dodd and challenged by many others like Senator Eugene McCarthy, and finally, ironically, how Kennedy’s own assassination would help to spur the passage of an even more expansive gun control legislation.

“In the end,” Sokol writes, “the King and Kennedy assassinations, together with the urban riots, established gun control as an issue of broad public concern – one on which Congress needed to act.”

Sokol can be reached at Jason.Sokol@unh.edu (mailto:Jason.Sokol@unh.edu) or (603) 862-3024. He is available for on camera and radio interviews in UNH’s ReadyCam studio (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.videolinktv.com_products-2Dservices_readycam_&d=DwMFaQ&c=c6MrceVCY5m5A_KAUkrdoA&r=43nhFYk7Lgb9QdQ_EwZ2RfOaAn9EEDYK05BGcXFWdG0&m=q4ysTvOehPRGgc9jklJI2iOQDj9j).

Photo and video:

VIDEO: https://media.unh.edu/media/t/1_m3b2pv68 (https://media.unh.edu/media/t/1_m3b2pv68)

A Q&A video interview with Jason Sokol, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, about his book “*THE HEAVENS MIGHT CRACK: The Death and Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.*”

PHOTO: https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/sokol-the_heavens_003.jpg (https://www.unh.edu/unhtoday/sites/default/files/media/sokol-the_heavens_003.jpg)

CAPTION: Jason Sokol, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, has written a book, “*THE HEAVENS MIGHT CRACK: The Death and Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.*”, which gives context to how Americans, and others around the world, grappled with King’s death in the days, weeks, and months afterwards.

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