

# Elite Heaven or Real Hell on Earth?



by Victor Davis Hanson

**The horrific murder of Laken Riley** by a repeated felony offender and illegal alien Jose Ibarra, 26, a Venezuelan citizen, was preventable—had federal immigration laws simply been enforced by the Biden administration.

When called out in his recent State of the Union address, President Biden referenced the deceased Ms. Riley. But Biden misidentified her as “Lincoln Riley”—the USC football coach!

Biden only accurately noted that she “was killed by an “illegal.””

True—but almost immediately the left was infuriated over

Biden's accurate use of the supposedly insensitive "illegal" for the murderer Ibarra.

Biden soon apologized for correctly identifying her killer as an illegal alien—but not for misidentifying the victim.

He left the callous impression that he was more upset about offending his open-borders base than about the savage beating of a young 22-year-old American nursing student.

Biden's woke open-borders agenda supersedes any worry over the subsequent mounting number of Americans who have fallen victim to foreign gangs and criminals. He seems oblivious to the nearly 100,000 Americans who die from fentanyl imported across open borders.

The same idea of abstract humanity juxtaposed with concrete callousness towards humans characterizes much of the current leftist agenda.

The Biden administration envisions mandating the use of electric vehicles and banning natural gas appliances. These measures will supposedly help "save" the planet—even as they make life far more expensive and dangerous for the middle class and poor in the here and now.

We are told that biologically born males who transition to females have a civil right to compete in female sports.

Such transgender activism may sound compassionate in the abstract. Yet in the concrete, thousands of women are put in danger by competing against the much larger musculoskeletal frames and natural strength of transitioning males.

Moreover, tens of thousands of young female athletes are losing opportunities to excel and set records—thus destroying over a half-century of women's efforts to reach parity with men's sports.

In 2021, United Airlines president Scott Kirby bragged that

his company was now devoted to ensuring that fifty percent of all trained pilots would be either people of color or women.

The Federal Aviation Administration had similar diversity, equity, and inclusion mandates for hiring air traffic controllers.

In 2023, Boeing bragged that it was using “inclusion” as a criterion for executive compensation. Pay from now on would be calibrated in large part on the success of hiring new employees on the basis of their race, gender, and sexual orientation.

In the abstract, ensuring that air travel “looks like America” is no doubt a noble goal.

But *if* such subordination of meritocracy is canonized without proper attention to the only criterion that really matters—the safety of the nearly 3 million American airline passengers who take 45,000 flights per day—lives will be needlessly lost.

Some data and recent anecdotal evidence suggest that something has now gone dangerously wrong with the entire airline industry.

In January 2023, thousands of domestic flights were cancelled or delayed because of a series of Federal Aviation Administration computer failures. Over the last ten years, near-crashes and collisions of commercial planes have more than doubled.

Even scarier, in the last two weeks alone, United Airlines suffered numerous near-catastrophic events that may have involved crew lapses, air traffic controller errors, or problems with Boeing jet construction or maintenance—or all three. Specific details have mysteriously been kept from the public.

A United flight from San Francisco to Mexico had to make an

emergency landing due to failing hydraulics. Another United flight bound for San Francisco from Sydney, Australia, had to return around due to a “maintenance issue.” Yet another flight out of Chicago O’Hare International Airport likewise suffered undisclosed “maintenance issues” and returned home.

At Houston’s George Bush Intercontinental Airport, a United plane simply taxied off the runway and got stuck in the grass. Another United flight from San Francisco lost a wheel while taking off!

Yet another United flight from Houston to Florida was forced to make an emergency landing after one of its engines caught fire. At about the same time, a United flight bound for San Francisco from Hawaii experienced an engine failure in mid-flight.

Dozens were injured on a Boeing jet during a Chilean airline flight from Australia to New Zealand due to what officials called “a technical event during the flight which caused a strong movement.”

Anytime ideology and dogma trump merit, logic, and safety, the result is predictably scary and dangerous.

America needs to recalibrate its priorities to protect the lives and aspirations of all its citizens, regardless of their race and gender.

If our elites do not stop playing god and mandating their visions of heaven on earth, then they will surely ensure hell for us all.

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