

What Do We Owe to Christina Green?

Christina Taylor Green was born on September 11, 2001 as a note of hope and an antidote to the bleakness of that terrible day. A day when all that grit, dust, smoke, mangled steel and pulverized concrete and, acrid soot of jet fuel hung in the air, couldn't possibly fill the emptiness within.

Little we knew then that even on such a fateful day, God's Mercy was in the working. Many of us never knew her until January 8, 2011. At age 9, Christina became the youngest victim along with five others, of the shooting rampage in Tucson in which the congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was shot.

As I read about the emotional farewell to this beautiful child, the uncanny link between destruction and gift on 9/11 began to define itself. I couldn't help but see the poignant irony of the two events. Like that day, on January 8, 2011 too, humanity was attacked, innocence was robbed, dreams were shattered and blood was let. But I wonder, if we Americans have the courage to view and treat the barbaric act of the so-called "media defined" deranged Tucson assailant, as terrorism or not!

Because terror – whether germinated via misguided religious interpretations or nursed, nourished and encouraged by the political hypocrisy – may have different skin tone and diction, it nevertheless aspires to do one thing and one thing alone: stir chaos and terrify the people. And as Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. recently said, we may know them by different names such as Fort Sumner, John Wilkes Booth, Lee Harvey Oswald, James Earl Ray, Sirhan Sirhan, Ted Kaczynski, Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, the 9/11 conspirators and Jared Lee Loughner, they are all terrorists just the same.

In an eerie coincidence, I recently heard another Christina Green - a Melbourne-based musician - from her CD, *Sitting in Saturna*, crooning soulfully about an innocent child from a world far removed from ours:

Ahmad Batebi, held up blood-stained tee shirt high

Calling for freedom, with an unforgettable wordless cry

Be it Beirut, Gaza or Tucson, looks like no child in this world is too far away from Glocks or Smith & Wessons; in fact, being the choicest weapon of the police force in the country and Loughner-like scums, Glock has been called America's Gun!

Little Christina had shown avid interest in politics, the very reason why she was where she was on January 8. Perhaps her last call was for the freedom from venomous gestures and utterances by the political extremists. Perhaps, it was for the freedom of airwaves from the hate-mongering by opinionated radio and talk show hosts. Or perhaps, she was calling for the freedom of decency that the country as a whole seems to have lost in trying to prove each other wrong, incompetent and minuscule.

In his address, the President said, 'we may not have known them personally, but we surely see ourselves in them. All of us – we should do everything we can to make sure this country lives up to our children's expectations.'

The question is, beneath the virulent pall of bitterness and mistrust, *would we?*