



Video: Man Ordered To Leave Televised Q&A For Expressing Wrongthink On Russia

Description

UKRAINE/RUSSIA: A Russian-Australian man was told to leave a television studio after he asked a 'rogue' question and pointed out that there is an alternative narrative to be considered surrounding the conflict in Ukraine.

The audience member Sasha Gillies-Lekakis was speaking on a live Australian debate show when he expressed support for Russia's actions in Ukraine, angering other audience members and surprising the host of the show, Stan Grant.

"As someone who comes from the Russian community here in Australia, I've been pretty outraged by the narrative depicted by our media, with Ukraine as the good guy and Russia as the bad guy," Gillies-Lekakis said.

"Believe it or not, there are a lot of Russians here and around the world that support what Putin's doing in Ukraine, myself included," he added before claiming that Ukraine has previously "besieged" the Russian populations in Donetsk and Luhansk, killing thousands of people.

Other audience members heckled him and yelled 'propaganda' and 'lies', while the host Grant moved the program on.

Around twenty minutes later Grant returned to Gillies-Lekakis and said he had 'thought about it' and wasn't comfortable allowing him to stay in the studio.

"Something has been bothering me," Grant said, adding "people here have been talking about family who are suffering and people who are dying. Can I just say – I'm just not comfortable with you being here. Could you please leave?"

"You can ask a question, but we cannot advocate violence. I should have asked you to leave then. It's been playing on my mind and, I'm sorry, but I have to ask you to leave," the host added.

Watch:

Here is the question with the panel of guests reacting, before Grant asked Gillies-Lekakis to leave:

Grant later stated “we can’t have anyone who is sanctioning, supporting, violence and killing of people. So I’m sorry for the disruption. It was not a vetted question. It was a rogue question. It’s not good.”

In a now removed Facebook post, Gillies-Lekakis explained that he “supports Putin’s grievances regarding the breaking of the Minsk Peace Agreement by Ukraine and the ensuing loss of life, particularly in the Russian-populated areas of the Donbas”.

He added, “My question, furthermore, sought to question why these Russian deaths were seemingly less important compared to Ukrainian casualties in our media coverage, and whether the panellists thought there was any hypocrisy in their positions as a result.”

“This is reflected in my question as published on the Q+A website. Unfortunately, I was unable to fully finish asking my question nor clarify myself despite trying, and so believe that my words were misrepresented and incomplete,” he further wrote.

Gillies-Lekakis further noted that his question was not ‘rogue’ and was submitted to the show’s producers beforehand, adding that he wasn’t able to ask it in full before being interrupted.

“The only addition I made to my question when actually delivering it was my reference to the Azhov Battalion (7-8 words roughly), and some sentences were left out towards the end as I was interrupted,” he said.

He added, “If this small change to my question amounts to it being ‘rogue’, as was claimed, once again I apologise. However, I find this difficult to reconcile with the fact that other guests were given the chance to speak at length, off-script, on the Russia-Ukraine situation.”

He said the Q+A host was “disappointing and unprofessional” and accused the network ABC of “questionable conduct” during the night.

“I am genuinely sorry that things took the turn they did ... if my question was not appropriate for the show after being vetted and edited, I wonder why I was invited at all,” he noted, adding “I would like to say that I had no intention whatsoever of offending anyone, and so would like to sincerely apologise for any distress my comments may have caused.”

The incident has unsurprisingly caused division on social media, with some arguing these questions and opinions must be debated, while others proclaimed to do so is to support the bombardment and murder of innocent people:

I don’t agree with kicking him out. It goes against freedom of speech if it doesn’t

suit your narrative. I'm fully behind [#Ukraine](#) but having these conversations is a necessity.

— Kristie Soto (@KristieSoto80) [March 3, 2022](#)

I don't support war in any form. This was a low in QandA's history. Opinions offered on QandA, have been varied over time. Some offensive. None have resulted in eviction until tonight.

He was asked to comment. You didn't like it.

Shouldn't he get to have his say in a democracy?

— LouiseTaylor (@LouiseTay48) [March 3, 2022](#)

should have let this guy finish his question in full without cutting him off. Thought the idea of a QandA was to here different points of view even if you disagree with them.

— Byron (@Peyote_TheForce) [March 3, 2022](#)

Well done Stan for telling him to leave. He was supporting the murder of civilians and children

— Karen Monk (@KM12094068) [March 3, 2022](#)

Get absolutely f*d with this clickbait garbage. Putin invaded a peaceful Democratic neighbour that posed no threat to Russia. His forces have murdered civilians, including children. There are not 2 sides to this story. [#auspol](#)

— Brian Mitchell MP (@BrianMitchellMP) [March 3, 2022](#)

[#IStandWithUkraine](#) & despise that Putin has manipulated the narrative. However, we need to allow ppl to engage in conversation so that facts can be discussed & fiction proved nonsense. To silence opposing views can be dangerous, as those ppl can use this to support their claims.

— kayd (@jckmac7) [March 3, 2022](#)

When one side of the debate controls the narrative by kicking out anyone with a different opinion, then claims the other side of the debate is all just propaganda, you know there is more to the story.

— Lita Gillies (@LitaGillies) [March 3, 2022](#)

What “right” are you talking about? Australia doesn’t have a “freedom of speech” right in our constitution. This isn’t America. Plus what he was saying was extremely false. He was stating stuff as if it was fact, not just “his opinion”.

— Luke (@goldstein85) [March 3, 2022](#)

I am 100% against what Russia is doing and I am 100% against the way qanda responded to this person’s opinion and ejected him.

— Rod Barnett (@salientrod) [March 3, 2022](#)

Stan Grant advocated for MORE war, then kicked out a Russian-Aust saying the guy advocated for violence

All I see is that it’s Stan & Olga are the ONLY people on the Panel advocating for violence

Olga:"we don't negotiate with Russia,it's a terrorist state". Non-milit solution?

— Rudolphreindeer (@Rudolphreinde19) [March 3, 2022](#)

by Steve Watson

Category

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