

The previous essay addressed issues of Mental Health in light of recent events, this time there will be a focus on guns themselves. In a recent forum, I briefly expressed some opinions and want to expound on them a little more. Guns and their place in our society needs to be addressed and some people need to take a good long look in the mirror about what they think is proper.

First thing to tackle is the gospel scripture viewpoint some people take with the Second Amendment. They treat this amendment more than any other as being inviolate, god-given and unrestricted in practice. This is an absolute corruption of the Constitution on par with the corruption of the same document by our own government.

At the time of the Constitution, the only weapons of a firearm nature available to the public were muzzle-loaded muskets and pistols. There may or may not have been bayonets attached. Even cannons and warships were not available to the public. But these days firearms can include grenade launchers, mortars and automatic weapons capable of firing hundreds of rounds a second. The fear people have is one man (or woman) single handily waging war against an innocent public. Or our government fears the same individual overthrowing the government.

One the face of it this is a legitimate concern and at the same time how can our government support rebellions across the globe but prevent the same here in their own country. There is a secular religion in the United States of guns being a god-given blessed object of worship and how dare anyone try to take them away from true patriots that seek to destroy their own government.

Patriotism isn't developing an arsenal to destroy a government whose laws enabled you to build that arsenal in the first place. The flag and Constitution are cloaks used to wrap violence, racism (in some cases) and blood-lust in the mantle of loyalty and patriotism to fraudulent politicians and social leaders. This is a form of Fascism and not a form of patriotism. They view themselves as the new Spartans.

The above religious fervor gives rise to Gun Porn. In Japan, where the samurai culture is romanticized and depicted in numerous films, games or other elements of drama and culture; it is referred to as Sword Porn.

In the US, we have done the same with cowboys, veterans, military and action flicks or video games. We are obsessed with Gun Porn. We no longer observe what a weapon really is or even acknowledge the primary purpose of weapons. To paraphrase Asian culture and a certain film; we practice the 'Way of the Gun'. We do this without any understanding of what that means or how to actually practice any such discipline.

We still view the cowboy in romantic terms as a true American way of life without understanding the thug that the cowboy was. We hold up the soldier as GI Joe, the true American Hero; despite our military used to push government and corporate agendas. We utter the phrase 'Thank you for your service' like it is 'Amen' in a church service. We pray at the altar of patriotism and loyalty; a false religion established by the extreme edges of our political institutions.

This faith does not have golden chalices or radiant artwork; it has divine swords and the glow of the atom bomb.

In Japan, there is a modern definition of samurai and those who do not find a place in modern society are seen as Ronin, master-less samurai that are drifters and viewed with disdain not the romantic images conjured up by the faithful of the Sword Porn.

In the United States, we have the same but instead of treating these militant gun hoarding nut jobs as the Ronin social rejects that they are; we view them in the same romantic terms as the Cowboy/Ronin in our Gun Porn culture. Even our greatest Westerns are rebuilt from Samurai films (Seven Samurai = Magnificent Seven; Yojimbo = For a Few Dollars More)

Weapons of any kind, not limited to guns, do only one thing; kill. Well technically that is not quite true. Swords, knives and blades do only one thing, cut. Guns do only one thing, fire a projectile.

This is lost on those who use weapons and is lost on those who try to regulate them. A blade can be used to kill; it can also be used to prepare food, materials for manufacture and remove victims from seat-belts in car crashes.

A gun can fire a projectile into another human being; or it can also fire a projectile into a deer for food or a target for sport.

A weapon is not a weapon, it is a tool. When a tool is used for violence it is a weapon. There are no restrictions on the purchase of hammers, wrenches and other tools that have been used for murder and violence in the past. Where are the Hammer Control lobbies or the Power Drill Control lobbies? Why do we not try to hold Craftsman or Black & Decker responsible for violence done with their tools. Do we hold the local liquor board responsible for Molotov Cocktails?

What will the shooters do (active or otherwise) when their weapon of choice is removed? Will they not just go to their local Ace hardware for some other implements of construction? Destruction? Demolition? Whatever.

This is what our society needs to come to terms with, to stop dramatizing the issue and face the fact that we built our society this way.

So what do I want to do ?

First, I briefly mentioned in the forum but couldn't finish due to time limits; that I want to hold sales on firearms while we figure this out.

Not a permanent ban or prohibition just a pause while the matter is debated.

Second, hold hearings and meetings consulting social elements involved in this issue. This includes but not limited to police, EMS, hospitals, schools and victims. But I would also want evidence from the criminals themselves and the justice system over which weapons were used and why.

Third, I want to establish real ordinances for local control efforts to address any place Carroll County has in this debate and issue. After this, gun sales could resume according to the established local laws and State or Federal where they are more restrictive.

Here are some ideas of what I mean.

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While debating the issue; the only firearms for sale will be restricted to :

Single-action Revolver

Bolt-action Rifle

Lever-action Rifle

Single-barrel Breechloader

Each can hold a maximum of six rounds if possible (either internally or with the use of a magazine).

Each must have a safety mechanism to prevent firing.

This will cover the firearm use in the three most common areas discussed; self-defense, hunting and sportsmanship.

The use of shotguns, semi-automatic weapons and any form of grenade launcher has no place in those areas. If you notice, the permitted weapons are the same used in the Cowboy Gun Porn culture of the Old West Shows.

For issues of safety, black powder rifles and front-loading muskets are banned. Antique or historical weapons may be preserved for educational purposes but are not to be used as described above.

Archery and bow-hunting are permitted and not addressed here.

To purchase a firearm:

- Have valid photo ID (does not have to be a driver's license)

- Have required permits

- Passed required checks

- Passed education courses

- Resident of Carroll County (pro-local business, local firearms have to be purchased locally)

- Licenses/Permits must be kept up to date.

 - 5 year permit for sports.

 - 3 year permit for hunting.

 - 1 year permit for self-defense.

 - 6 month otherwise (for employment, ie security)

- Hunting permit is for firearm use only and has no bearing on hunting seasons or amount/animal that can be killed. Trophy hunting is prohibited.

To sell a firearm:

- Any required State licenses

- Any required Federal licenses

- Create local business license for firearm sales.

- Licenses must be kept up to date.

 - Annual for firearms mentioned earlier

 - 6 months otherwise (when selling out-of-county or selling unapproved weapons to valid out-of-county areas)

- Firearms are to be securely stored, unloaded, at all times except for property transfers after sale. Firearms are never to be loaded except when in use.

- Ammunition can only be sold in lots of six up to thirty-six.

- Local vendors may sell out-of-county, local laws of import location must be followed.

- Licensed vendors may sell to one another.

- Vendors may sell parts for maintenance.

Private Sales:

- Are prohibited with the following exceptions:

 - Estate sales; family are permitted to sell property through appropriate vendors.

 - Remits; private property can be sold to a licensed vendor.

 - Internal Sales; family may sell property to another licensed family member. Sale must be observed/approved by licensed vendor.

 - 'Grandfather' Clause; existing property may not have new paperwork. Sales are permitted if paperwork legal at the time of purchase and is sold as outlined above.

Private ownership:

A licensed individual may own up to:

One rifle (any type listed earlier)

If Breechloader, may have one additional rifle of any type.

Two small arms

Have up to two reserve magazines for each.

No restriction of accessories such as scopes/laser pointers and any cosmetic-only modifications.

No bayonets are allowed on small arms.

No bayonets are allowed on long guns.

No restrictions on safety-modifications.

Any modification that changes a firearms function is prohibited.

No restriction on parts for firearm maintenance, provided the parts match the firearm being repaired.

Open-carry permits only; firearms cannot be hidden. Storing a firearm in locked containers for safety is not considered hidden for this purpose.

Non-conforming weapons:

Ownership is not a crime if firearms was legal at time of purchase by licensed individual. (Grandfathered)

All Grandfathered firearms, by-nonconforming or Estate, are recommended to be sold to vendors or destroyed after implementing new ordinances.

After 6 years, private sales (internal) will be prohibited.

After 12 years Estate sales will also be prohibited.

Remits to vendors and destroying non-conforming weapons will not be prohibited.

Weapons for destruction must be collected by police and destroyed in approved facilities.

Weapons slated for destruction may be dismantled for valid maintenance parts before destruction of remainder.

For these hearings I'd like to meet with:

- Police, National Guard and NRA for meaning of Self-Defense and regulated Militia's.
- Wildlife experts, MD Dept of Parks and Ag bureaus for meaning of hunting and resource management.
- Sports Assoc., Leagues and Ranges for meaning of sportsmanship and education.
- Victims, doctors and hospitals for violence and healthcare of gun violence as a disease or social conditions.
- District and State's Attorneys as well as the criminals themselves to learn judicial efforts and why criminals are using guns or specific guns as a choice to engage these crimes.
- Schools, churches and employers of shooting sites (or other venues) to determine what grievances, if any, weren't addressed that led to a shootout at their facilities. Also why non-student/non-employee shooters target the facilities.
- Finally one last hearing to assemble all the testimony/evidence and hear from the public.

Then develop ordinances that are built from that information to keep firearms out of criminal hands and used properly in society. To ascertain what place guns have in society and the laws and regulations in place to ensure that is upheld.

But this is important.

Society must then **Accept These Decisions**. There will be a chance to be heard but at the end of the day everyone must agree to follow these policies and regulations; from the manufacturer/vendor to the final end-user who is either defending their home/family, hunting or participating in sports.

If we don't do this, then society is line for pain and suffering for years to come. We need to stop being juvenile and mishandling firearms as a nation; or we will be forever shooting ourselves.