

The Second Amendment: The Slavery of Our Time

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The recent mass shooting at Umpqua Community College in Oregon (October 1, 2015) marks the 294th mass shooting event in 2015 and the 994th mass shooting event in the last three years. (A mass shooting described as four or more people being involved). At least 1236 people have been killed and countless others wounded in these random acts of gun violence. In this latest incident nine innocent people were killed and nine others were seriously wounded. The death toll continues to climb in America from the dreaded disease of "gun violence" yet we spend more efforts trying to control an obscure disease like Ebola where only one person in the United States has ever died from. Only one person has died from the measles in the last ten years and a panic sets in, yet tens of thousands have been killed by gun violence and we altogether just ignore it.

One must have thought that the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Massachusetts three years back would have turned the tide and something significant would have changed. After all, this time dozens of young children and teachers were randomly murdered in what they had thought was the sanctuary of their own classroom. These deaths just add to the over 30,000 Americans killed by guns each and every year.

But no, nothing has changed and we have become even more violent in our culture. It seems that when there is a mass shooting more and more guns are purchased as more paranoia arises. Some individuals fear that their guns will be taken away from them or that they need to be ready for the next home invasion robbery which they believe is just around the corner.

In America it is legal to own most guns. While there are some guns like assault rifles that have been banned, it is fairly easy for the average citizen to purchase a legal gun. Those who do not qualify for legal gun ownership seem to find an easy way to purchase a weapon at a gun show or through the black market. Americans are protected by their "*Second Amendment* rights" to possess guns. This right was written into the *Constitution of the United States* over two-hundred-and-twenty-five years ago (ratified December 15, 1791) when state militias were a valid counter to a potentially out-of-control federal government or as a deterrent to another invasion by the British to win back their former American colonies. At this time owning a single

shot "blunderbuss" weapon that took a while to load and reload was the norm.

Times have changed. State militias are not needed to watch over the federal government. The British have enough problems of their own and reconcurring the American colonies does not seem like it is in their immediate plans. The modern weapon with automatic and semi-automatic firing, multiple magazine capabilities, bigger bullets, more powerful gun powder and overall more "killing power" is not your grandfather's blunderbuss. Any 16-year-old male can now be his own killing machine with very little effort. Our antiquated permission to own "a gun" was never meant to create a self-styled "Rambo" character. The *Second Amendment* has served its purpose and it is time to eliminate it so that no American citizen is allowed to own a gun of any kind.

America seems so far behind the times in many areas. We have an expensive and archaic health care system where other nations have an efficient national health care delivery system. Many nations of the world have outlawed GMO products (genetically modified organisms) or at least labeled them. In America the government continues to expand its GMO programs as well as creating legislation to prevent the mandatory labeling of a food product as GMO. America has been very far behind Europe in credit card security and is only recently attempting to catch up. We are also far behind in eliminating guns from the hands of private citizens. Most of Europe and all of Australia prohibit or limit most private gun ownership. In fact, Americans own more than 300 million firearms, most people owning several with the average being about 7.8 per gun owner. America, while bolstering its pride and sticking out its chest at how great we are, lags behind the world in many key areas. Gun control is certainly one of those areas.

Removing guns from American households might sound like a pipe dream but if we could only follow the progressive action of the Australian people you will see how easy it can be. On April 28, 1996 there was a massive shooting at the resort town of Port Arthur in Australia where 35 people were murdered and twenty-three more were wounded. The Australian government took immediate action and made it much more difficult for an Australian to purchase and own a gun. A massive gun buy back program ensued and most guns were taken out of the hands of citizens. Polls showed that over 90% of the Australian people favored this action.

Here a crisis really turned into something good. While it is still possible to own a gun in Australia it is very difficult and you must prove that you need it for something other than self-defense. Hence, gun violence has dropped significantly in Australia with a decline in homicides 59% and suicides by 65%. Why are we still stuck here in America? Why is America so arrogant and naive that it cannot learn lessons from other nations?

The NRA (National Rifle Association) seems to be controlling the dialog and setting the national agenda. Politicians seem to cower away from the NRA and very few individuals or groups will challenge the NRA. Money and politics often go together and the NRA is a large donor to political campaigns. What most politicians fear is to express a political platform against the NRA and in favor of more gun control measures. This is where the NRA will use whatever vast resources it might have to change the outcome of an election by bolstering up one political candidate while spending lots of money to defeat another candidate for being "un-American" for wishing to limit the ability for a citizen to own a gun. The NRA has the money, the political clout and the desire to dictate the national agenda on guns. Very few have been willing to take them on and eliminate the *Second Amendment* because it is political suicide and seems like such an uphill battle.

Corporations and other special interest groups own the government of the United States through their lobbying efforts, election donations and the revolving door of infiltration where a member of a corporation works inside a government body for a while to change policies in favor of the corporation. The NRA is a massive lobbying group with vast power to scare people. The NRA is the bully on the political block and will find whatever ways and means to crush you if you oppose them.

Where is the outrage from American citizens that so many are dying from mass shootings and gun violence? People seem to be more outraged when they cannot get into an Apple store to tweak their gadgets or when their favorite cable television show is canceled. In Australia there was outrage across the board at their last mass shooting at Port Arthur and action was taken. In America we first feel a sense of shock that quickly turns to apathy and despair. As the mass shootings and gang violence continue to explode in record numbers we just go back to our corners, resigned in believing that nothing can be done to change it. We sit and wait for the next attack to happen, not really surprised when it comes shortly afterwards. The shooting might take place in a movie theater, mall, school, army base, cruise ship, amusement park or any other public place. We sink into apathy and have very little hope of changing things. Who wants to face the bully (NRA)? Unfortunately this apathy has taken over on a large scale.

Look at what we have changed in the history of our country. Currently, the *Second Amendment* gives Americans the right to own guns. At one time the *United States Constitution* gave Americans the right to own slaves, prevented women from voting, discriminated against people because of the color of their skin, banned inter-racial marriage, prevented gays from joining the military and forbid gay marriage. Look how far we have come. Now is the time to go to the source and eliminate a barrier to our own safety and livelihood. It is

time to abolish the *Second Amendment* just as slavery was abolished and women were granted the right to vote.

If there is a will the American people have always managed to make things happen. It will take the will of the people to remove guns from the American way of life. In the later half of the nineteenth century it was the will of the American people who built a railroad across the country. In the nineteen twenties and thirties bringing electrification to most of the country was thought impossible. Yet America made it happen. In the nineteen fifties and sixties connecting the country by an interstate highway system seemed impossible. Yet the will of the American people made it happen. The American will was able to defeat two enemies (the Nazis and the Japanese) during WWII, a feat that seemed impossible. It was our will that in 1969 America sent a man to the moon and back. We have always shown that when we have the will we make it happen.

Gun violence is a major health issue. At least 30,000 Americans die each year from gun violence (compared to other countries this is an epidemic). The following are the number of gun deaths from a few other countries: Japan: less than 50, Germany, Italy and France: less than 150, Canada: less than 200. This would make gun violence the fifteenth leading cause of death in the United States. Why are we not outraged? America is the laughing stock of the rest of the world when it comes to guns. The rest of the world looks at Americans in disbelief that we still allow guns and continue to suffer enormous public health consequences because of it.

We live in a violent culture. More and more violent sports permeate our lives each day from modern day football, boxing, mixed martial arts and many other sports. We are a culture addicted to violence and it continues to trickle down into our way of life. We are also beginning to become immune to the violence since we see it so much each day. We often associate another school yard shooting with the violence of cage fighting where two men or two women are allowed to beat each other up. The brain often cannot distinguish between life and death violence and "made up" violence.

American is a land stuck in fantasy. We have fantasy football, pornography (sexual fantasy), fantasy amusement parks, movie fantasy from Hollywood, video war games fantasy, paint ball fantasy, and owning a gun is a part of this fantasized reality. Violent movies are called "action movies." Violent video games are labeled as "adult content." Violence and fantasy play a large role in our immunity to violence. Many young men are lured into joining the military because they possess the fantasy of shooting at something or blowing something up. We are just not shocked anymore at a school shooting because we just go back to our couch and blow off the head of an alien in our video game.

A person can hold an emotional trauma deep inside and so can a country which determines a national agenda. For instance, a person

might be attacked in an alley as a teenager. He survives the attack and says that this will never happen again. He builds his body strong with weight training and takes martial arts self-defense classes to ensure his safety. During all of his training he remains alert and on-guard for another attack.

The United State has had at least two significant surprise attacks in our history. First we were awaked under attack from the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7th,1941 and then again we were surprise attacked in New York City and at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001 by a group of radical Muslim terrorists. Very few countries can claim such a brutal surprise. In response, America has been left paralyzed in fear and paranoia for quite some time. Paranoia is at the root of gun ownership. We remain on edge as a culture waiting for the next attack. If every country were issued an emotional intelligence value America would be on the failing side of things. Paranoia sits at the bottom of gun ownership and the whole country needs a solid dose of Dr. Phil (television talk show therapist).

We live in a culture of delusional thinking, just like someone who drives around in his car without a spare tire and never believes that having a flat tire will ever happen to him. Just like we continue to base our economy on fossil fuels believing that they will never run out, most people delusionally believe that gun violence will not happen to them. This mind-bending thinking persists until you are in a movie theatre where a shooting breaks out, until your own brother-in-law goes on a shooting rampage where nobody saw this coming, until your own father kills your mother in a murder suicide because of the stress of her being sick.

If someone cannot find a way to legislate against having a bad day, stress and rejection then we are all in trouble. We are in trouble because our wacked-out rationalized world wants us to believe that there are some people who are good at maintaining control and others who are not. There are many who believe that emotions are black and white. The epidemic is not about guns but about delusion and lack of emotional support in our culture. Most people in America receive little or no emotional training and we wonder why we have mass shootings. The delusional gun owners wish us to believe that most gun owners are rational and responsible individuals. These same people also believe that there is a small amount of mentally ill people out there who should be identified, medicated and put on a list as to never being able to own a gun. These same delusional people do not realize that most gun murders come from very normal sane people who are just having a bad day and "snap." No mental health issues have been reported when most gun violence occurs. A gang war, a teenage suicide, a depressed husband or two angry neighbors having an argument are where most gun violence occurs.

Delusion also comes into play when you lead your life from a 275 year old document that is never changed or updated to represent modern times. Old prehistoric thinking wishes us to believe that an ancient document can still have relevance today. Unless you can update your governing laws on a regular basis you will continue to live in the past. Our gun laws are extremely outdated and we are paying a heavy price for it.

Delusion tells us that a mass shooting is not going to happen again. We continue to live in a country where the NRA is allowed to bully us and where politicians are more worried about the next election than enacting meaningful legislation. Uprising must come from the masses because the government has refused to act. We continue to live in delusion believing that another phony gun control measure that limits the sale of certain guns or the size of a bullet will work. Some naive politicians want to put a 25% tax on a gun purchase. This is like believing that if we were to just ban the sale of wine in a box (or increase its price) that all alcoholism will be curtailed or by limiting the number of Sudafed boxes a customer can buy that the production of meth will stop. Apparently delusion runs deep.

How many times do you have to be punched in the face before you finally say "No!" to the bully? The NRA is the bully and when do we rise up and say enough is enough. The fear and manipulation campaign of the NRA continues to make politicians and ordinary citizens cower.

Current thinking is to just do nothing, or at best perform more background checks on "crazy" people who do not deserve to own guns. The reality is that most gun murders are committed by people who are law abiding citizens, purchased their guns legally, are not on anyone's terrorist watch list and no one saw this coming.

How do you legislate against someone becoming angry and having a bad day? Most gun deaths are committed by someone who knows the victim. This includes domestic violence, murder/suicide, suicide, accidental gun deaths or someone who goes on a shooting rampage because he cannot find a girlfriend. Black and white thinking says we need to legislate against "those" people. Well, it could be your best friend or brother who has a bad day, a veteran with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) returning from war who cannot function and puts a gun to his head. Delusion tells us that it is those "other" people who are risky. A delusional society will not accept the fact that anyone of us is capable of having a bad day and using a gun under the most extreme of circumstances.

If not stopped now the carnage will not just continue but will escalate. We will continue to live in terror as more and more people having bad days will act out violently or create deadly acts because they want to be famous. Our numbness to the carnage is what is disturbing. With the slaughter of twenty-six children at Sandy Hook Elementary School remains a fresh reminder. When do we reach the

tipping point where we have finally had enough? When do we have the human decency to dismantle the *Second Amendment* and let it rest where other antiquated laws have died?

Solutions

1. *Ban all guns to private citizens*

Nobody is allowed to own a gun except law enforcement and military personnel.

2. *Exceptions: prove that you need a gun*

Some people might be granted an exception to own a single shot hunting rifle. This might occur if you can prove that you need a gun to hunt for your survival or that you live in a remote area where wild animals might be threatening.

3. *One year buy back program*

Gun owners will have one year to turn in their weapons where the government will pay you a fair price for them. The weapons will then be destroyed.

4. *Stiff penalties after one year*

If you do not turn in your weapons after the one year grace period you will receive stiff penalties if caught with a gun.

5. *Rewards for turning in gun owners*

Most gun owners have bragged about how many guns they own to their friends, gun clubs, family and often office workers. Guns are like children or pets to some where they are endeared, often have names to them and are treated like royalty. It would not be hard to locate most weapons of those who have not voluntarily sold them back. Offer a \$10,000 anonymous reward to anyone who will provide information to law enforcement of anyone still hiding a gun. What do Americans love more than their guns—money. A large anonymous reward will sniff out most hidden guns.

6. *World-wide study*

Send a coalition around the world to study what other countries have done to curb gun violence. Learn from what others are doing that is working.

7. *Declare gun violence a national epidemic*

Now you can devote your time and resources to solving the problem. Now you have the will to make something happen.

Resources

Paranoia and Gun Ownership: The Real Mental Health Issue

Article by Jon Burras

(<http://www.spectatorron.com/paranoia.htm>)

What would You Stand In Line For?

Article by Jon Burras

(<http://www.jonburras.com/pdfs/What-Would-You-Stand-in-Line-For.pdf>)