

## The Constitutional Right and Social Obligation to Carry a Gun

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### Carrying A Gun Is An Absolute Right

The framers of the Constitution were under no pressure from the NRA when they wrote "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

In the same spare sentence, they reaffirmed their historical preference for a "militia" over a standing army, and indicated that this militia should be composed of armed citizens -- citizens of a "free state" whose right to keep and bear arms must never be infringed. Anti-freedom zealots, including academic invalids and the hypocrites of the mis-named American Civil Liberties Union, have stood on their pointy heads in tortured attempts to misinterpret this sentence ever since. Those of us who know how to read the English language have no trouble at all.

The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE to keep and bear arms shall NOT be infringed. The right of the people TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS shall NOT be infringed. The right of the people to keep and bear arms SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED. What part of NOT do the illiterates out to subvert the Constitution NOT understand?

The Constitution of the state of Pennsylvania (adopted September 28, 1776) allocated more words to make the point even more unmistakable: "XIII. That the people have a right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the state; and as standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up; and that the military should be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power."

Indeed, the individual right to keep and bear arms for personal defense is based on exactly the same principle as civilian control of the military. One wonders if the ACLU would argue with that.

The Second Amendment, like most other articles in the Bill of Rights, was adopted from the English Bill of Rights of 1689 which, in turn, was based on centuries of English Common Law. English jurist Sir William Blackstone observed that the English Bill of Rights clearly meant that Englishmen possessed "the right of having and using arms for self-preservation and defense" and that "having arms suitable for their defense" was one of the five auxiliary rights people possessed "to protect and maintain inviolate the three great and primary rights," the first of which is "personal security."

Unfortunately for the English people, they have been persuaded by their own far-left government and insidious anti-gun activists to allow the English Bill of Rights

to be, as they might say, shat upon. Today, the English do not have the right to keep and bear arms for self-preservation and defense. As a direct result, they live in a crime-ridden society that grows worse with each passing day.

The recent 2000 International Crime Victims Survey published by the Dutch Ministry of Justice, a highly respected and accurate measurement of the percentage of people by nation who are victims of violent crimes, ranked England far ahead of the United States (which ranked 8th), and second only to Australia (where English-style anti-gun laws are also in effect) as the most violent nation. A recently disarmed England now has twice as much violent crime as the United States.

The English Home Office, which cooperated in the survey, has refused to publish these findings in England. It's better not to remind the gullible subjects how empty were the promises of safety and security for which they so eagerly traded away their very real and priceless freedoms and responsibilities. The great Roman philosopher and senator, Cicero, immortalized armed self-defense as an "inalienable right" more than 2,000 years before the U.S. Constitution did so. Cicero said: There exists a law, not written down anywhere but inborn in our hearts; a law which comes to us not by training or custom or reading but by derivation and absorption and adoption from nature itself; a law which has come to us not from theory but from practice, not by instruction but by natural intuition. I refer to the law which lays it down that, if our lives are endangered by plots or violence or armed robbers or enemies, any and every method of protecting ourselves is morally right.

Even people to whom armed self-defense is but a remote abstraction often endorse, without even realizing it, the unquestionable principles underlying the right to carry a gun. Jaron Lanier, writing in Discover Magazine (Feb. 2001) said in reference to new copyright-protection technology -- "In a democracy, citizens are supposed to act as partners in enforcing laws. Those forced to follow rules without being trusted even for a moment are, in fact, slaves."

It is perfectly obvious that we have a natural right to arm ourselves and to kill any criminal or other force that threatens us just as surely as an elephant has a right to kill an attacking lion and a mother bear has a right to kill a wolf grinning suspiciously at her cubs. Animal-rights extremists extend the animals' right to the killing of humans under such circumstances.

Even the Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Prize and all, said in May of 2001 during a speech about "nonviolent resolutions to conflict" to 7,600 Oregon and Washington high-school students -- "But if someone has a gun and is trying to kill you, it would be reasonable to shoot back with your own gun." So said the Dalai Lama. There are criminals among us who are both homicidal and incorrigible. Their parents took a shot at civilizing them and failed. Their school teachers took a shot at them and failed. The odds are overwhelming that government welfare programs and penal institutions took a shot at them and failed. If it ever becomes your turn to take a shot at them, don't fail. Carrying a Gun Has Always Been Both a Right And a Duty

There have been many societies in which not carrying a weapon was a serious and severely punishable crime. This was true in Greece, Rome, Europe, Britain and, though seldom enforced, is still true in certain places in America today. This is as it should be. A citizen who shirks his duty to contribute to the security of his community is little better than the criminal who threatens it, and is better off living in a society that places lesser demands on his capacity to accept responsibility.

### Armed Citizens Of The 21st Century

In 1987, a year after Glocks were introduced to the U.S., Florida enacted a pioneering "shall-issue" right-to-carry law that has served as the model for the rest of the country. The Florida law affirmed the right of a private citizen to carry a concealed gun and eliminated the abuses so typical of "discretionary" right-to-carry laws that resulted in gun permits being awarded arbitrarily to the political cronies of petty officials, limousine liberals, movie actors, athletes and various other celebrity representatives of the rich and famous crowd, but denied to so-called "ordinary" citizens. The Florida law made it crystal clear that any citizen with basic firearms training and a felony-free record would be issued a concealed-carry permit upon request, period.

Florida's landmark right-to-carry law was supported by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association and other law enforcement groups. And it was supported by Florida voters.

The media, however, was predictably vociferous in its opposition to the exercise of Constitutionally guaranteed rights, and in its total submission to the party line of radical anti-freedom, anti-self-defense and anti-gun forces. Headlines predicted vigilante justice and wild-west shootouts on every corner. "Florida will become the "Gunshine State." "A pistol-packing citizenry will mean itchier trigger fingers." "Florida's climate of smoldering fear will flash like napalm when every stranger totes a piece." "Every mental snap in traffic could lead to the crack of gunfire."

Such dire and colorful predictions, of course, proved totally false. Nevertheless, that same hysterical fear-mongering and bald-faced lying are used even today every time a new state gets ready to pass an enlightened right-to-carry law. In actual fact, the only notable thing that happened for the first five years after Florida passed its right-to-carry law was that, as homicide rates in the U.S. soared, Florida's homicide rate fell a dramatic 23 percent. A few of the opponents of concealed carry actually had the courage to admit they were wrong.

Thanks to the intensive lobbying efforts of the NRA, along with the tireless grassroots work of politically aware gun owners, 33 states now have Florida-style laws which require the prompt issuance to their citizens of legal permits to carry concealed weapons. Well over half of the U.S. population, more than 60 percent of all handgun owners, live in these free states, yet no more than one to five percent ever apply for such licenses.

Notwithstanding the fact that most people do not carry guns, the mere possibility that an intended victim could be armed with a handgun eliminates millions of crimes every year.

According to the FBI, states with "shall-issue" right-to-carry laws have a 26 percent lower total violent crime rate, a 20 percent lower homicide rate, a 39 percent lower robbery rate and a 22 percent lower aggravated assault rate than those states that do not allow their citizens to legally carry guns.

Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University, Gary Kleck, in *Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America* (Aldine de Gruyter Publishers, 1991) found that "robbery and assault victims who used a gun to resist were less likely to be attacked or to suffer an injury than those who used any other methods of self-protection or those who did not resist at all."

Convicted felons reveal in surveys that they are more afraid of armed citizens than they are of the police. And well they should be. Armed citizens kill 2,000 to 3,000 criminals each year, three times the number killed by the police. And only two percent of civilian shootings involve an innocent person mistakenly identified as a criminal, whereas the error rate for the police is more than five times that high.

Kleck's research shows that private citizens use firearms to protect themselves and thwart crime about 2.5 million times a year. Citizens use firearms to prevent mass killings, bank robberies, gang attacks, carjackings, rapes, kidnappings and hostage-takings. They use them to help capture prison escapees and murderers, to come to the aid of outnumbered or ambushed law enforcement officers. Yet only a handful of these 2.5 million life-saving uses of firearms are ever reported in the mainstream press.

If a lot more people carried guns, what kind of a society would we have? Certainly not the kind predicted by anti-gun fanatics. Those hysterical doomsayers have been proven absolutely wrong one hundred percent of the time. Would we have a crime-free society? Certainly not. Criminals are as natural and immune to total eradication as fruit flies. But a better-armed society would severely limit the violent damage criminals wreak before they are stopped. Criminals are naturally self-destructive. The reasons they are so doesn't matter. To assist them in their self-destructiveness is the polite and civilized thing to do. Thus another ageless axiom: An Armed Society Is A Polite Society.

In 1998, John R. Lott, Jr., senior research scholar in the School of Law at Yale University, authored the most comprehensive and exhaustive study of crime and gun control laws ever conceived, based on the largest data set on crime ever assembled. His landmark book, *More Guns, Less Crime* (The University of Chicago Press, 1998, 2000), now available in an updated second edition, includes thorough analyses of more than 54,000 observations and hundreds of variable factors across more than 3,000 counties in all 50 states for 18 years.

The assiduously researched conclusions reached by Lott immediately set off a wave of panic among anti-gun fanatics and drew organized, systematic personal attacks of the most vicious and dishonest nature, including death threats leveled at Lott and his wife and children. Yet not a single serious academic challenge of Lott's research, his methodology or his incontrovertible conclusions has ever been successfully mounted. In fact, Lott's conclusions have reluctantly been called "bulletproof" even by the liberal mainstream press.

Bottom line, in keeping with the title of his work, the more guns there are in society and the more these guns are carried by private citizens, the less crime there is.

These are some of the reasons why police, who fight crime for a living and are well aware of the realities of street criminals, support right-to-carry laws for private citizens by an overwhelming three-to-one margin. This is an even higher margin of support for right-to-carry than the strong support voiced by the civilian population.

Policemen are nobody's personal bodyguards. Their jobs are to find and arrest people who have committed crimes, not to prevent such potential crimes from happening in the first place. Clearly, the responsibility for victim-prevention lies with the victim-to-be.

The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals (*Bowers v. DeVito*, 1982) did not mince words when it ruled, "There is no Constitutional right to be protected by the state against being murdered by criminals or madmen."

### What It Means To Carry A Gun

That loaded pistol in your holster is a powerful expression of your Constitutionally guaranteed liberty as an American citizen, your recognition of the solemn duty you have to your fellow man, and your willingness to accept the full weight of a life-and-death responsibility.

When you are prepared to defend yourself, you are equally prepared to defend all of society and all of its guiding principles. Your responsibilities are therefore many -- moral, legal and tactical. That is why most people, including lifelong gun owners, experienced hunters and competitive shooters, even in states that freely issue concealed carry permits, do not choose to carry a gun.

Your moral responsibilities are to fire your gun into another human being only when the line of necessity has clearly been reached, and then to fire without hesitation and to full effect. Remember the words of Cicero.

Your legal responsibilities are to justify your actions to those who would call you a criminal at the drop of a hat, and quite possibly to a jury of your peers, most of whom have neither the competence nor the courage to carry a gun in their own defense. Read the findings of the Citizens' Self-Defense Act of 2001.

Your tactical responsibilities are to carry your gun with confidence, to be well trained in your ability to operate it effectively, and to have instilled in yourself an iron will to use deadly force to prevent or end violence committed against yourself or others. Most of this book is dedicated to your tactical responsibilities, because that's what will save your life.

Violence happens either at random, or directed toward the obviously vulnerable, or toward someone in particular for a reason. You can rest assured it will not happen at the shooting range when you are all suited up in your speed rig with a plan of action worked out for the coming run-and-gun stage. It will happen when you are home sleeping in your bed, shopping at the grocery store, walking out to get the mail, mowing the grass, at dinner, at church, at the theater.

The most dangerous places in the world are those called "gun-free safety zones" by their ignorant political creators and known by criminals and psychopaths as "safe-to-kill zones." Even an adolescent school kid can figure out that an advertised killing field where no one is allowed to shoot back is the safest location in the world to carry out a mass shooting. Don't even consider going to a place like that unarmed, whether it's your kid's school or a national park. If you can't handle breaking the law, don't go.

The assistant principal of a high school in Pearl, Mississippi, broke the law. He kept a .45 in his car parked on the school grounds. When a deranged student opened fire, Joel Myrick ran for his gun. Two students were killed because Myrick had to retrieve his gun from his car instead of his holster. But the .45 eventually prevailed, and Myrick stopped the massacre long before police arrived on the scene. God only knows how many lives he saved. But assistant principal Joel Myrick wasn't awarded any medals. Of the several hundred newspaper and television stories about the incident, only a few even mentioned his name. Almost none revealed the fact that he used a gun to stop the killings.

When you bodyguard someone for a while, or when you just live a normal life with your eyes wide open, you realize how vulnerable we all are to becoming another tidbit-of-opportunity in the relentless food chain that sustains the life of this unpredictable world. It's a realization not of paranoia but of reality. That's the way it is, always has been, always will be. You can ignore it out of faint-heartedness, deny it out of lunacy, submit to it out of a fatalistic contempt for your own life and the lives of others, or you can face it with courage and intelligence and prepare yourself to deal with capricious reality's predisposition toward danger.

Most of those dangers can be met with nothing more than a strong I'm-not-a-victim mindset and body language. Many others may shrivel with the demonstration of superior verbal skills. Still others may require a fundamental knowledge of martial arts, a container of pepper spray, a makeshift club, the presence of a well-wielded knife or the sight of a firearm. A few, perhaps one in a lifetime, will not be affected by any kind of less-than-lethal response and will not end until you churn your

attacker's dreams and determination into a chunky red stew and spew it all over the street with a couple of big-bore hollow points. The trouble is, you never know when or where that last one is coming.

If you ever find yourself under attack by an armed criminal, you will be on the defensive and he will be on the offensive. In other words, he will have a strong advantage going in. And, though he will not have trained himself to shoot nearly as well as you have trained, he will be far more experienced in the art of killing. The odds are, any criminal who is intent on killing you has probably killed men before, knows how to do it, knows how it feels and likes it. You're not going to talk him out of it, scare him out of it, or wound him out of it. You're going to have to kill him.

Studies show that simply brandishing a weapon saves many lives, but I am personally against the idea of waving a gun around while your adversary thinks. The way to overcome his offensive advantage is to strike without warning. Once you make the decision to free your Glock from its holster the entire situation should be over and done with in a second or two. The most important component in practicing your draw is firing the instant you have a sight picture on your target, and continuing to fire until your assailant no longer exists.

More than a century of military and police research tells us that most people, including up to 85 percent of trained soldiers and cops, are psychologically unable to use deadly force in a life-or-death situation no matter how compelling the circumstances may be. If you can't kill, there is no reason for you to carry a lethal weapon.

Carrying a loaded gun with the ability and will to use it is not a casual fling meant to bring some excitement into your boring life. It is an all-embracing lifestyle and must take precedence over your respect for law, your fear of social criticism, your love of humanity, your wardrobe and your drinking habits. You can never be unaware of the weight you carry on your hip or under your arm. You can never forget your responsibilities. You must wear your Glock with the same allegiance as your wedding ring. If you're not married, your Glock is your wedding ring. Wear it for life. Don't even think about leaving home without it. Be prepared to use it at a moment's notice. Carry it all the time. And shoot to kill.

"Liberty or death," the meaning of which is clear and absolute, is but a trivial phrase if you do not carry a gun. For freedom-loving Americans, the five most important words in the English language are, and always have been -- from my cold dead hands.

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